



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

# EVALUATION

OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE GLOBAL AND  
REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO  
**PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES**

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme





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# FOREWORD

For a quarter century, the global Human Development Reports (HDRs) and the Human Development Index have been a trademark of human development discourse and have captured the interest of policymakers, the media and academics. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published the first global HDR in 1990. Since then, 23 global HDRs and 33 regional HDRs have been produced. Some of these outstanding reports have contributed not only to public debate but also to instigating national- and regional-level policy processes.

One of the strengths of the global HDRs is their continuity in producing key messages on human development using different, annual themes. Global HDRs have contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. The uniqueness of the approach and the policy boundaries that the reports could push determined the global HDRs' level of contribution. Articulating a human development approach in a simple manner increased the use of HDRs and their level of influence on policy processes.

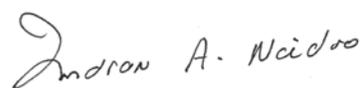
The reputation of UNDP as a neutral agency makes the regional HDRs particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions. Regional HDRs responded to issues that were relevant to multiple countries, too sensitive to address within a single country, those with inherent cross-border dimensions or where solutions to a country's problems depend on the cooperation of others. The regional HDRs' geographical and trans-boundary approach, which covered critical development challenges of relevance to a group of countries, increased their overall policy relevance. The evaluation found that the thought leadership and human development analysis of themes are key to the success of regional HDRs. It is imperative

that the reports maintain a strong human development perspective.

A challenge for annual publications is sustaining the interest of the intended audience. There is often greater demand for analysis that has direct public policy relevance and distinctive development concepts. Development actors typically have high expectations regarding the distinctness of the global and regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications. Successful HDRs were characterized by succinct messages, tools for analysing development issues, perspectives that differed from mainstream thinking and boldness in communicating difficult, often controversial messages.

The global development environment has changed significantly since the global HDRs were first published 25 years ago. While the polarization of ideological positions has decreased, the number of publications and databases that provide global analysis have considerably increased. Global HDRs therefore need to be distinctive and remain relevant by addressing and engaging with development issues as they emerge. Given an unquestionable reputation, the global HDRs have the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. To further contribute to transformative debates, the global HDRs should not shy away from difficult messages.

I sincerely hope this evaluation will inform UNDP's efforts to refine its intellectual contribution to development, and more broadly provide lessons for strengthening the impact of development publications.



Indran A. Naidoo  
Director, Independent Evaluation Office



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

1995-GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HDRO	Human Development Report Office
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP
IHDI	Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the importance of the global and regional Human Development Reports (HDRs), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Executive Board approved the evaluation of HDR contributions to public debate and public policy processes at its first regular session of 2014. The evaluation, part of the medium-term plan of the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP,<sup>i</sup> is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs. The evaluation took place within the overall provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

The evaluation assessed the contributions of global and regional HDRs published from 2004 to 2013. The period encompasses reports produced since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/264 of 20 December 2002, which affirmed the importance of global HDRs. As this is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs, the evaluation also took into account the contributions of HDRs between 1990 and 2003 and examined how HDRs have progressed over time. Specifically, the evaluation aimed to: (a) assess the contribution of global HDRs to intellectual and analytical public policy debates; (b) assess the contribution of regional HDRs to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level; (c) assess the contributions of global and regional HDRs to UNDP engagement in global and regional public discourse and advocacy and national public policy processes; (d) identify factors that explain the contributions of

global and regional HDRs; and (e) present key findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions.

The evaluation covered the use and contribution of thematic analysis, human development data (e.g. data on indices and on different themes); background papers for the global HDRs; thematic analysis and data of the regional HDRs; and development and policy actors in all five geographic regions where UNDP works (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Latin America and the Caribbean).

## II. BACKGROUND

In 1990, UNDP launched the first global Human Development Report (HDR). Since then, 23 global HDRs have been produced. These reports have sought to raise awareness and generate debate on a range of public policy issues and concerns. A 1994 General Assembly resolution<sup>ii</sup> observed that the Human Development Report is the result of an independent intellectual exercise that is separate and distinct from other UNDP activities. Following this, in 2003, a second General Assembly resolution further recognized the HDRs as “an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.”<sup>iii</sup> UNDP started to produce regional HDRs in 1994 and has since produced 33 regional and subregional reports. Over US\$130 million has been spent on global, regional and subregional HDRs produced since 2004.

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i Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS agenda item document, ‘Evaluation Office of UNDP: medium-term evaluation plan (2014-2017)’ (DP/2014/5), New York, January.

ii United Nations, 1995, General Assembly resolution 49/123, ‘United Nations Development Programme and the Human Development Report’ (A/RES/49/123).

iii United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, ‘Human Development Report’ (A/RES/57/264).

Global HDRs do not have a set of stated goals that would have enabled measuring their contributions against a predetermined set of aims. General Assembly Resolution 57/264 and UNDP Executive Board decisions specify broad objectives for the HDRs, resource allocations to the Human Development Report Office (HDRO), and consultative processes to be followed.<sup>iv</sup> Regional HDRs contribute to the outcomes of the regional programmes managed by the UNDP regional bureaux or, in a few cases, are an outcome of a regional programme.

The evaluation presupposed that the global and regional HDRs' contributions to generating development debate are of wide relevance across countries; that the HDRs' cross-country analysis contributes to processes that promote policies oriented towards human development; and that the global and regional HDRs have the potential to inform public policy processes. The evaluation therefore included analysis of HDR contributions to the following national policy process areas: (a) policy discourse and public policy debates; (b) policy advice; (c) advocacy; and (d) agenda setting. The following sections present the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the global and regional HDRs. The findings and conclusions distinguish between three interrelated aspects of the global HDRs: their perceived utility, their use and their actual contributions to public policy processes.

### **III. CONTRIBUTIONS OF GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES**

#### **FINDINGS**

##### **Reach and utility of global HDRs**

The global HDRs were used to a greater extent in national-level public policy processes than in global- and regional-level public debates. The degree to which global HDRs were used varied

considerably across the reports and among different groups of development actors. The Human Development Index (HDI) was the most used content of the reports. The global HDRs did not have a niche audience and the extent of use was low among policy intermediaries (e.g. civil society organizations (CSOs), academics, think tanks). In a majority of cases, their use by government actors was contingent upon use by policy intermediaries. Therefore, low use by policy intermediaries decreased the level of use by government actors and policymakers.

The global HDRs were not well targeted at different groups of development actors, thus reducing their potential use in public policy processes. CSO use of global HDRs has decreased over the years. Many civil society actors find the global HDRs increasingly lacking in striking messages that can be used in their advocacy work. Overall, the HDI was the most used content of the reports.

There was significant variation in how long a particular report remained relevant. The subjects covered by the global HDRs were a factor in determining the level of interest shown and development actors' longevity of use. The ability of the global HDRs to provide thought leadership largely rested on whether they followed the trend of contemporary development themes or they thought ahead to raise critical development issues that were not widely discussed in policy debates.

##### **Influence on public policy debates and processes**

The global HDRs contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. Uniqueness of approach and what policy boundaries (if any) that the report pushed determined the level of contribution. There were some outstanding reports that contributed to national-level policy processes.

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<sup>iv</sup> Until 2008, the global HDRs and the work of the HDRO were part of UNDP's Global Programme. They contributed to a broad set of outcomes to support the organization's institutional and development goals, provided conceptual underpinning to UNDP and contributed to broad knowledge sharing. After 2008, global HDRs have not been specifically mentioned in UNDP results frameworks.

The global HDRs familiarized the human development perspective in public policy.

Development actors typically had high expectations regarding the distinctness of the global HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications. Factors that distinguished those global HDRs that were more used and that contributed to public policy processes include distinctive human development concepts, tools for analysing development issues, perspectives that differ from mainstream thinking and boldness in communicating difficult, often controversial messages. Articulating the human development approach in a simple manner increased their use and level of influence on policy processes. In the more recent reports, overcautiousness diluted the messages of recent reports, at times resulting in compromises in prioritizing key messages. Trying to present too many broad ideas in a report was seen to dilute key messages, thus limiting its contributions to public policy debates. The focus of the reports moved from striking messages about enhancing human development to an array of information.

Global HDRs had limited influence on UNDP strategies and programmes. As there was no expectation that global HDRs should inform UNDP programmes, a systematic approach to using the global HDRs was lacking. When Country Offices invested time and resources to assimilate the information presented in the reports, they found them to be useful in clarifying concepts and providing examples of best practices from countries across regions.

The HDI has become the trademark of the global HDRs and has sustained the interest of policymakers, media and academics, particularly at the national level. When it was introduced in 1990, the HDI provided an alternate development measurement that would generate discussion on the human development dimensions of public policies and global benchmarking. Over the years, beyond its use in comparing performances of countries, the importance of HDI as an advocacy tool has declined. Interest in the HDI did not always result in generating policy debate beyond that which

education and health data already did. The HDI was seen to inadvertently divert attention away from development disparities and inequalities instead of highlighting them. Policymakers preferred using national data for development trends and performance monitoring; the HDI was not seen to provide additional insights.

Several factors reduced the standing of the HDI. Frequent revisions to HDI methodology in the past five years and the lack of adequate communication of the changes undermined its credibility and contributed to the perception of a lack of transparency in its calculation. The HDI methodology has been dynamic and has changed very frequently. This led to difficulties in comparing and interpreting the indices over time. Another issue was that outdated data used in HDI calculations undermined its credibility. UNDP did not engage in addressing country-level data constraints or management of development data. In most countries, national data was not used to calculate HDI, leading to significant data integrity issues. Policymakers raised serious concerns over discrepancies between the international data used to calculate HDI and national data.

The global Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) and Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) did not receive much attention from development actors, although national-level computation of these indices has generated interest in some countries. There was low interest in global IHDI and indices such as MPI, which were largely perceived as less useful for public policy than income, health and education data.

The global HDR policy recommendations informed policy processes when the report took a clear position on the subject discussed. The reports of the past five years are often seen as compromising on core messages and hence making limited contributions to transformative debates. Moreover, in a majority of cases the global HDRs did not provide practical solutions to human development challenges. While this was a deliberate strategy, most development actors perceived it as a weakness of the global HDRs.

## **Gender and human development**

The global HDRs made sustained efforts to develop gender-related composite indices. With the exception of development actors working on gender-related issues, the awareness of the gender indices was low across countries. Notwithstanding their methodological limitations, the 1995 Gender-related Development Index (1995-GDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) were used to benchmark women's progress in several countries and were used for development planning, advocacy and lobbying. In contrast, the thematic analyses of the global HDRs were not effective in communicating messages to address gender inequality. The global HDRs varied in the attention paid to gender inequality from a capability perspective. The reports addressed gender differences in terms of opportunities to achieve key functionings, such as being well sheltered and attaining good health and education. However, the reports often lacked analysis of social and individual factors that are critical for ensuring these functions for women.

## **Communicating global HDR messages**

The ineffective dissemination of key messages constrained the potential of global HDRs to influence thematic areas. UNDP did not adequately promote the reports beyond global and country report launches. Poor dissemination of global HDR messages was one of the factors in the level of use of the reports' thematic content.

## **Management of the global HDRs**

The credibility of the global HDRs depended on the analytical and intellectual leadership provided by the HDRO; the choices of the HDRO Director were seen as crucial for this. The editorial discretion of the global HDRs has been central to General Assembly resolution 57/264 (2003), and has been critical for the HDRs to avoid political pressures pertaining to report content. The extent to which this independence firewall was ensured varied across reports; recent reports inadequately maintained the editorial discretion that the HDRO could exercise.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

**Conclusion 1: For a quarter century, the global HDRs have made major contributions to shaping the global development debate. More specifically, the contribution of global HDRs in taking the concept of human development to mainstream development policy has been important. A strength of the reports is their power of repetition—continuously producing annual messages on human development using different themes.**

When first produced, the global HDRs promoted a human development framework that was distinctive at a time when the old development paradigm—structural adjustment and the free-market economy—was becoming discredited. Global HDRs provided the language to articulate limitations of the neoliberal economic model and provided a different paradigm about development and well-being. The use of a composite index of economic and social indicators has been particularly useful to this paradigm shift. Although the imperfections of the HDI are criticized by development actors at the country level, the report itself was widely perceived as an important innovation in development measurement. Although the concepts seem self-evident today, the global HDRs initiated the discussion of measurement of human development and comparison between countries.

The global HDRs presented a simple, understandable and relatable development narrative that is based on the capabilities approach. In general, global HDRs successfully adhered to the human development framework in the themes analyzed by individual reports, although this was stronger in some reports than others. Its consistent use of the human development framework is a particular strength of the HDR. The profile and authority of the founding authors of the report has been a key factor in generating widespread acceptance of the concept and its more popular measurement indices. UNDP should be credited for the institutional backing it provided to this intellectual exercise.

The global HDRs were political when first published and continue to be so. In gaining the acceptability of a range of countries (including greater acceptability by the countries of the global South), the reports have made immense contributions in promoting human development as a legitimate issue in the overall progress of a country. Despite its role as guardian of a more inclusive, Southern-owned model of development, prior to the HDRs the United Nations typically had not measured and ranked countries. In this regard, the global HDRs made accomplishments in fostering the human development movement. The contribution of global HDRs in reinforcing an alternative perspective to development in public policy discourse at the country level has been significant. There is a greater acceptance of the human development approach in development planning than there was two decades ago. Although this cannot be fully attributed to the global HDRs alone, their contribution has been important.

The global HDRs issued from 1990 to 1999 had a significant influence. The human security approach introduced in the 1994 HDR informed discussions in the United Nations. The approach was included in the 2005 World Summit Outcome as a concept to be discussed and formally defined. Similarly, the 1995 HDR focusing on gender was among the earliest global documents that prefaced the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the conference, which resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for promoting gender equality. The global HDRs during this period provided the intellectual groundwork for the Millennium Summit and the International Development Goals, which later were manifested in the Millennium Development Goals. Different groupings of Member States acknowledged the potential of the global HDRs to create a global consensus on development narratives.

The reports from 2000 to 2005 responded to the major global political situation at the time and managed to maintain the momentum of the

global HDRs. From 2006 to 2009, there was a shift in the approach of global HDRs and the reports covered a combination of themes, some related to the Millennium Development Goals. The themes had greater sectoral relevance. In the period that followed, since 2010, the global HDRs addressed a range of issues not always significant in terms of ongoing global debates or providing a new perspective, although this period was critical for the post-2015 agenda and the debates on sustainable development goals. This period also marked the erosion of the distinctiveness of the global HDRs and their contribution. While a vast body of knowledge was generated by the past five reports, the ability of the global HDRs to influence global debates and national public policy processes has been diluted significantly. The reports increasingly are losing their reputation as a distinctive human development publication.

**Conclusion 2: The global development environment has changed significantly since the global HDRs were first published 25 years ago. For example, today there is less polarization of ideological positions. There has been a considerable increase in the number of publications and databases that provide global analysis, and global HDRs consistently have to be distinctive to remain relevant. The global HDRs have not kept up with emerging development issues and the changing demands of the knowledge space that resulted from a significant increase in the number of research-based publications and numerous data and information channels.**

With the exception of three reports, the global HDRs in the past decade were unsuccessful in generating or contributing significantly to global public debates and national policy processes. Instead of providing thought leadership, the reports merely followed current trends and were unable to provide a different perspective on key emerging development issues. The global HDRs to a great extent are trading on the reputation of past reports and have been ineffective in using the intellectual space generated by earlier HDRs. To regain the transformative capacity of the

report, the factors responsible for their declining reputation need to be addressed.

The concept of human development has increasing appeal and extraordinary resilience. Unlike many other ideas that disappear quickly from the development discourse, human development is a well-accepted paradigm of development. The human development agenda has just begun and there is considerable work to be done in transforming debates and making public policies more people-oriented. Challenges remain in applying the human development approach to development policies; the global HDRs were not successful in sustaining the debate to meet these challenges.

The global HDRs did not prioritize core messages and hence contributed in a limited way to transformative debates. The reports became a mere consciousness-raising exercise rather than a framework for informing public debates and development policymaking. By being selective in interpreting the human development approach and available evidence, over the years the reports' arguments have become unpersuasive. There has been less innovation of late in advancing the human development approach and its application, even taking into account the MPI and the work on inequality. The contents of some of the reports in the past decade do not justify the 'human development' title.

The standing of the global HDRs has been considerably reduced. The global HDRs are increasingly compromised when dealing with conflicting perspectives, weakening the reports' relevance for public debate and policy. An increasing tendency for political correctness in the presentation of analysis and policy recommendations has reduced the reports' usefulness in informing policy changes, at times defeating the very purpose of the global HDRs.

The global HDRs have moved away from their original emphasis on the human development narrative to indices. Over the years, the indices have become an end in themselves. The excessive

attention to indices, although not intended, has undermined the original purpose of the report, to draw attention to the human development approach in public policies.

**Conclusion 3: Too many indices produced by the global HDRs have weakened their usefulness for human development discourse as well as their significance for public policy processes. The discussions on global HDRs increasingly have been diverted by indices rather than generating debate on the human development approach pertaining to the theme of the report. The HDI is losing its relevance and needs to be revisited.**

The HDI has been powerful in bringing attention to human development issues through a simple index and has remarkable political and advocacy appeal. While the decision to create an HDI broke new ground in the 1990s, its continued relevance lies in addressing the various limitations to suit the changed context. The HDI has ceased to serve the purpose for which it was developed. With the changed context and significant increase in GDP across countries, there is closer correlation of the HDI with GDP, without comparable improvement in actual human development. The disproportionate influence of the three elements has reduced the ability of index to capture a country's human development measure. The index in the present form has limitations in generating public policy debate or informing public policy processes and can be potentially misleading in setting policy agendas. At a time when there is greater recognition of the human development approach internationally, the HDI in its present form in some ways has become counterproductive. There is a need for a better composite index for human development.

Less significant revisions to HDI further diminished its credibility and the leadership the HDRs could have provided in measuring human development. What is needed are not minor modifications of the index, but rather an index that reduces GDP-driven variations in the human development measurement. The revisions made

to address the shortcomings of the index were not well thought out and did not address its fundamental issues.

In the past decade, global HDRs used six other indices besides HDI (six indices are currently used). The IHDI and MPI, while contributing to human development thinking, have limited relevance for national public policy debates. Given the long data time lag, they have limited utility as a global index. The IHDI and MPI are more suited for use at the national level, with appropriate adjustments to suite the particular situation of the country. Notwithstanding their conceptual and methodological limitations, the various gender indices (1995-GDI, GII, Gender Empowerment Measurement and the 2014 GDI)<sup>v</sup> provided a benchmark and global comparison on the progress of women. However, they did not provide any additional understanding of either well-being or empowerment.

Although not typical to global HDR indices, data time lag is a major issue in the relevance of most indices. Despite having published HDIs for a quarter century, UNDP did not proactively engage in addressing issues related to country-level data constraints or management. This is understandable given that UNDP does not have a role in generating or disseminating data. However, as a user of data for compiling HDIs, UNDP for a long period eluded its responsibility of ensuring that the data used are adequately current. UNDP did not work with other United Nations agencies in supporting national statistical institutions to strengthen their capacities and practices.

**Conclusion 4: There was limited interest shown by UNDP to promote the messages of the global HDRs; the disconnect between the HDRO and the UNDP programme units was a contributing factor.**

There has been a marked shift from the time when UNDP consciously signalled to the world the value it attached to human development. There is no formal institutional arrangement within UNDP to promote the practice of human development, although the organization underscores human development as its programming principle. With regard to the global HDRs, there is no mechanism to convert the ideas put forward in the reports into action, which significantly undermines their influence on UNDP programmes and strategies. The unexciting reports of recent years further contributed to the lack of interest among UNDP staff in the global HDRs; the ownership of the flagship report within UNDP has decreased considerably.

Managing various trade-offs by HDRO was critical to maximizing both the UNDP development presence globally and its extensive country presence. For the HDRO, there are trade-offs in being an independent office and at the same time depending on UNDP programme units for dissemination of messages and for drawing on the Country Offices' knowledge base. There are also trade-offs in producing thought-provoking reports that may not have relevance for UNDP programming or may generate controversies for UNDP programmes. HDRO has not been effective in managing the trade-offs with UNDP and increasingly has been alienated within the organization. One of the consequences is the decreasing interest in the global HDRs within UNDP.

The recommendations of the global HDRs remain in the realm of ideas and minimal efforts were made to contextualize them and make them actionable. Inadequate mechanisms to discuss the messages of the HDR and engage key policy actors have reduced the possibility of converting ideas into action and resulted in the reports often fading away after the launch.

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<sup>v</sup> The global HDR introduced two gender indices, the first in 1995 and the second in 2014. While both use the same acronym, the computation of the indices is different.

**Conclusion 5: In its resolution 57/264, the General Assembly recalled that the HDR is “the result of an independent intellectual exercise” and should be “undertaken in a neutral and transparent manner.” The resolution is significant and allows the reports to generate human development-oriented public debate. In recent years, the HDRO did not use the mandate to make the global HDRs thought-provoking reports with a clear and strong message.**

The legitimacy of the global HDRs lies in the forthrightness of its messages and transparent analysis to contribute to transformative debates. In recent years, the leadership of HDRO was not successful in fulfilling this role.

Intellectual inputs to the reports have weakened considerably over the years. A weak research base and the inability of the HDRO to bring fresh ideas to the global HDRs have reduced the reports’ intellectual rigour of analysis and policy positioning. The HDRO is not adequately equipped in terms of research capacities to be able to present human development analysis in new ways that will have a long-lasting influence on how people think about development. A related issue was the inability of the HDRO to draw on the scholarship of countries of the global South.

The influence of the global HDRs is inherently related to their use by policy intermediaries, and CSOs have always been the strongest allies of the reports. However, interest in the report and its messages among the civil society actors has declined considerably. Both the HDRO and UNDP have not cultivated this group adequately, resulting in the diminishing advocacy value of the reports.

The HDRO process for preparing the report does not reflect the General Assembly mandate to undertake full and effective consultations with Member States. The HDRO has been excessively guarded about the content of the report until the day of launch. Opportunities to share various drafts to generate debate, even if it was

contentious, were lost. The reports compromised on messages and tried to please everyone, a situation that can be avoided by sharing analysis and draft reports for discussion.

The cost implications of global HDR production are substantial and the quality of the report does not reflect the resources invested in it. Also, the imbalance between the production cost and the resources allocated for dissemination has done a great disservice to the report, seriously undermining its contribution.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: Given its positive reputation, the global HDR has the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. The time is ideal to relaunch the idea of human development much more strategically and to help UNDP regain the intellectual space in the global development discourse that it once commanded. It is also recommended that factors causing damage to the reputation of the report and its contribution be addressed.**

There is a gap in ideas and perspectives about human development and the policymaking process. Transformative ideas are needed to address the development challenges posed by the downside of globalization, e.g. increasing inequality and insecurity, as well as growing environmental and other threats. The global HDRs have a critical role to play in generating these ideas. UNDP should make concerted efforts to ensure that the global HDRs provide powerful messages to further human development, and should continue publishing the annual global HDR.

The legitimacy of the global HDR lies in the forthrightness of its messages and its transparent analysis. To contribute to transformative debates, the global HDR should not shy away from difficult messages. The indices cannot be a substitute for the new perspective and strong thematic analysis the report is expected to provide. Each report should aim to push the boundaries

of development thinking, focusing on issues and perspectives that previously were neglected in public policy debates. The reports should take a strong policy position, even if it does not align with current development thinking.

The strength of the global HDR is the human development framework. Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the reports have a strong human development perspective and widen the conceptualization and policy application of human development.

**Management response:** *UNDP welcomes this recommendation and agrees that the time has come to revisit the human development paradigm in terms of concepts and measurements to ensure the thought leadership of UNDP. UNDP will initiate discussions with leading scholars in this field and commission analytical papers on rethinking human development.*

**Recommendation 2: UNDP should revisit the purpose of human development indices and examine their added value to the messages of the reports. Given the issues related to computation and data, HDRO should not clutter the report with composite indices that have limited value.**

Composite indices such as the MPI, IHDI and GII, however sophisticated, have serious limitations when calculated at the global level because of data limitations, subjectivity in the choice of the variables and the weights attached. UNDP should reconsider using these measures at a global level.

The global MPI has limited value for national public policymaking or for global comparisons. As MPI works best when adapted to suit national contexts and specificities, UNDP should promote its use at the national level.

**Management response:** *UNDP management acknowledges that the robustness, relevance and value added of different composite indices need to be reexamined. UNDP will address this through discussions with renowned experts in this field.*

**Recommendation 3: There have been efforts by the HDRO in recent years to address various criticisms related to methodology of the HDI, and there have been revisions to the index. While important, these efforts are not sufficient to address the fundamental limitations of the HDI. To be able to achieve greater policy and analytical influence, consider reconstructing the HDI following a thorough review.**

The value of HDI lies in its ability to provide a simple and reliable measure of a country's human development and its potential to inform public debate. It is recommended that HDRO carry out a comprehensive review of HDI, carefully thinking through its various components and implications in terms of data and other issues, and then address fundamental methodological issues.

It is recommended that HDRO have a policy to ensure that the methodology of the indices is not changed frequently and that it set a fixed period of time for undertaking any revisions. Changes to the methodology should be well thought out to avoid frequent revisions. It is also recommended that HDRO should ensure transparency in the methodologies used to develop the indices.

**Management response:** *UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and recognizes the need for a review and revision of the HDI to reflect the changed realities of the development scenarios of the world. A review paper will be commissioned on the HDI and will be discussed at the Global Forum on Rethinking Human Development.*

**Recommendation 4: UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of the global HDR on the public policy process. The role of UNDP programme units is extremely important in this regard.**

UNDP should take measures to promote key messages of the global HDR. Each global HDR should be followed by a corporate policy brief on the messages the various programme units should pursue. Sufficient measures should be taken to

systematically improve the contextualization and dissemination of its messages.

UNDP should operationalize the corporate Knowledge Management Strategy, 2014–2017 to enhance the contribution of UNDP publications, including the global HDR. Because the resources allocated for the global HDR are not adequate for dissemination of the report’s messages, UNDP should address the imbalance between the report’s production costs and the funds for disseminating its messages. A related but equally important issue that needs to be addressed is setting aside additional funds for advancing the practice of human development.

**Management response:** *UNDP management takes note of the recommendation and will undertake specific efforts to promote and disseminate key messages of the global HDRs.*

**Recommendation 5: The management of the global HDRs needs to be adequately strengthened to provide a stable environment for preparation of the report and to enhance the reputation of the reports.**

To be influential, the global HDR must stimulate new ideas and provide thought-provoking analysis that can generate policy debates and inform public policy processes. By its very nature, the global HDR is bound to address important issues that will give rise to diverse views and interests. UNDP should guarantee strong leadership for the HDRO to guide the hugely intellectual and political exercise of preparing the global HDR.

Several management issues need to be addressed that are critical for producing global HDRs that are credible and thought provoking. The evaluation considered as key issues the tenure of the HDRO Director and the mechanisms in place to handle transition, scheduling of the report’s preparation and research and data management. To address these issues, the evaluation suggests the following:

- a) UNDP should revisit the current model of HDRO Director, who is the lead author of the report. Given the intensity of the task of leading the global HDR, this model has proven to be less than effective. UNDP should consider a model in which the HDRO Director manages the office and there are lead authors for each report. The lead author will be a senior researcher with international standing in the subject of the report, who will work closely with the HDRO in preparing the report. This will allow HDRO to plan the reports ahead of time as another lead author can work on the subsequent report. Having reputable researchers and experts as lead authors will enhance the credibility and standing of the global HDR. The Director of the HDRO can have a longer term (of five years) and the primary responsibility of managing the process and liaising with UNDP. This approach will also address leadership transition issues that face HDRO every time there is a change of Director;
- b) The report schedule needs to be addressed. There should be a clearly determined time-frame for producing the reports, allowing sufficient time for discussion of various drafts. HDRO should put in place mechanisms that will allow the preparation of a new report well ahead in time while the previous report is being concluded. This would require revamping the research team. The model suggested above will address some of these issues;
- c) There should be specific measures in place to ensure a credible research process, particularly in using illustrations. There should be adequate checks and balances to ensure robustness of research; and
- d) The HDRO should review its data sources and explore options to reduce the time lag and variances in national and international data. HDRO should engage with UNDP Country Offices to better collaborate with national statistical offices.

While retaining its editorial discretion, the HDRO should move away from the guarded approach to report production to more open consultations. Specific measures should be taken by HDRO to strengthen the consultation process. Robust mechanisms should be in place to share content as it evolves so as to generate debate. There should be extensive consultations in developing countries during the report preparation process, involving Governments, CSOs and scholars.

The HDRO should make specific efforts to broaden the academic research and intellectual base of global HDRs. The HDRO should develop more structured research partnerships to enable new ideas as well as to draw on a wider research. It is critical that HDRO use scholars from a wide range of countries, particularly from the South.

The permanent HDRO research team should include new additions for each report not only to bring fresh research perspectives, but also to build on networks of academics and researchers to strengthen the reports. Efforts should be made to develop a programme that would allow scholars to work for HDRO for a short period. This is essential to revitalize the team for every report and to strengthen the capacities of the HDRO.

**Management response:** *UNDP management takes note of the need for strengthened management of the HDR processes, and confirms that the organizational structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework, and the HDRO management team has been newly established with clear roles and responsibilities:*

- *A new Director with expertise in human development, historical substantive engagements with nine HDRs and institutional memory has been appointed (appointment was made in September 2014);*
- *A team leader with substantive analytical capabilities and extensive management experience has been recruited (recruitment took place in December 2014);*

- *The HDRO management team has been strengthened with clear responsibilities, mutually synergetic tasks and complementary roles for the Director and Deputy Director (these actions were completed in October 2014);*
- *The organization structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework (the structure was streamlined in December 2014).*

#### **IV. CONTRIBUTIONS OF REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES**

##### **FINDINGS**

##### **Reach and utility of regional HDRs**

The goals of the regional HDRs—to catalyse public discourse and policy processes through research and data compiled on topics that have policy relevance and to spur action on policy areas that are relevant for human development at the regional and national level—imply that a range of regional- and national-level actors engaged in public policy process will use the regional HDRs and that these actors will be pathways to inform regional policy discourse and national public policy processes.

National-level actors used the regional HDRs comparatively more than the regional-level actors. Overall, about a quarter of the regional HDRs were used. Across all regions there were some reports that were used more than others. Regional HDR use was contingent upon the report theme's policy relevance to the country. Poor awareness of regional HDRs significantly affected the level of their use.

Regional HDRs informed UNDP regional programmes where possible. Some regional HDRs enhanced UNDP's intellectual standing in the region. The regional HDRs enabled UNDP to engage with a wide range of regional development actors on issues of critical policy relevance. Country Offices used regional HDRs to identify further avenues of engagement with the government. Across regions, the regional HDRs were

perceived as used more by Country Offices than by other development actors.

### **Informing public policy processes**

In each region there were instances of contribution of regional HDRs to public policy processes. Overall, given the HDRs' limited use, it was extremely challenging for regional HDRs to contribute to regional- and national-level public policy processes. UNDP's reputation as a neutral agency makes it particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions. Regional HDR themes generally responded to issues that were relevant to multiple countries, (e.g. gender, corruption, citizen security), too sensitive to address within a country (e.g. freedom, human security, gender, corruption, inclusion, HIV/AIDS), those with inherent cross-border dimensions (as in *Trade on Human Terms* and the three *Citizen Security* reports) or where solutions to one country's problems depend on the cooperation of others (e.g. climate change).

Report quality, while important, was not always a factor in determining whether a regional HDR contributed to public policy debates or processes. Development actors considered the regional HDRs to be good sources for reference, but analysis and policy recommendations were not always adequate to generate policy debate. What distinguishes a regional HDR from other reports is its human development framework; there were mixed views on whether the regional HDRs actually provided a human development perspective.

The regional HDRs responded to the needs of countries that had limited resources assigned to research and analysis. The regional HDRs were also more useful to countries that had recently emerged from civil war where there was a need for 'neutral spaces' to lessen the legacies of polarization and to mediate among contending forces and to use data and analysis to learn from successful development models.

### **Gender and human development**

The two regional HDRs on women's empowerment were important in emphasizing gender equality in public policy. In a complex and

sensitive public policy environment, the *Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* provided a discursive space to debate issues that are fundamental to women's empowerment in the region. The report, *Power, Voices and Rights: A Turning Point for Equality in Asia and the Pacific* provided a comparative analysis of gender disparities and development in countries in the region.

Across regions there was a preference to use publications that analysed development themes from a gender perspective. The regional HDRs were seen to fall short in gender analysis, particularly from a human development perspective. The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the subjects covered, and there has been limited evidence that they contributed to gender-related policy processes.

### **Factors that affected regional HDR contributions**

It was hard for the regional HDRs to find a niche among various publications at the regional and national levels, and it was much harder than it was for global and national HDRs. Intergovernmental actors, policymakers and advocacy organizations had limited awareness of the regional HDRs. It was difficult for the regional HDRs to gain the attention of development actors, unlike the global HDRs (which have the advantage of the HDI to secure development actors' attention), or the national HDRs (which have direct policy relevance to the country).

The regional HDRs had the challenging task of remaining relevant in a policy context where other, regularly published publications with regional analysis on key development issues have increasingly become available. In many cases, development actors preferred reports from agencies with subject specialization.

When possible, partnership with regional institutions was used to promote regional HDR messages. However, regional institutions were not adequately engaged in regional HDR preparation processes, leading to poor ownership of the reports. The reports' timing topics are important

to successfully informing regional intergovernmental policy processes.

The regional HDR audience was not always clear. UNDP did not find the right balance in engaging different groups of development actors to promote regional HDR messages. UNDP did not proactively reach out to CSOs or think tanks during regional HDR preparation or message dissemination.

Policymakers and advocacy actors expressed a marked preference for regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Reports that had a subregional focus or included only a few countries were found to be more useful in informing public policy processes. Subregional reports that adopted a geographical and transboundary approach, covering critical development challenges that are relevant to a group of countries, were found to have greater policy relevance.

#### **Communicating regional HDR messages**

The regional HDRs lacked the profile of the global and national HDRs. The strategies used to disseminate regional HDRs and their messages were not sufficient to provide the visibility necessary to ensure use. Across regions, national and global HDRs were more discussed and considered comparatively more useful. The regional HDRs could not generate a similar appeal at the regional level (with the exception of those for the Arab States region).

UNDP's main communication strategy appears to be overwhelmingly focused on the mainstream media, whose attention span is limited. UNDP did not effectively use social media to disseminate key report messages. As many organizations publish regional-level reports, it was often difficult for the regional HDRs to attract the mainstream media's attention, even when the report was launched in the country.

Regional Bureaux have made specific efforts to engage Country Offices in preparing reports and in facilitating their use for UNDP programme support. While Country Offices acknowledged

this, the consultations were seen as insufficient to maximize the reports' use and influence. Similar to the global HDRs, there is lack of clarity on Country Offices' roles in report dissemination. In some regions, there was a lack of support to the Country Offices to build on the momentum the regional HDRs generated.

Different approaches were used to manage regional HDR production. Although there are guidelines of the quality criteria for regional HDRs, there was considerable variation across the bureaux in terms of their operationalization. The reports were better managed when there were dedicated senior-level staff engaged fully in report preparation processes. The lack of a systemic approach to regional HDRs has resulted in the reports becoming an output rather than a tool for UNDP to engage in public policy debates.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

**Conclusion 1: The regional HDRs have yet to distinguish themselves from other UNDP regional publications. The standard for what constitutes an HDR has yet to be fully internalized, although this is necessary to find a distinctive space among the array of regional-level publications.**

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications is the human development dimension which the reports bring to the analysis of development themes. The regional HDRs could not position themselves as distinctive publications at the regional or national levels. A key weakness of the regional HDRs was the lack of a strong human development framework. Besides bringing new perspectives and evidence-based policy options, it is critical that the regional HDRs are guided by the human development framework. The regional HDRs were not effective in achieving this and were thus less successful in bringing a new dimension to development policy.

Thought leadership and human development analysis of themes are key to the success of

regional HDRs. Those reports that contributed to transformative debates (as in the case of HDRs covering the Arab States) had powerful messages challenging existing development practices. With notable exceptions, the regional HDRs have made limited contributions to regional and national public policy process and to UNDP programmes. A lack of bold policy propositions, weak human development analysis and poor dissemination of the reports' messages undermined the use and contribution of the regional HDRs.

There is no corporate policy on the purposes of HDRs published at different levels, on the intended audience and how the HDRs are distinct from other UNDP publications. There is also no organization-wide perspective on how regional actors should be engaged or if regional HDRs are an appropriate tool for doing so. As a result, the purposes of regional HDRs are interpreted differently, and the objective of informing public policy process could not be achieved.

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* global and national HDRs is not adequately taken into account in the development of regional HDRs. While it is important to respond to region-specific issues, the reports were poorly aligned either with the themes of the global HDR or national HDR, and as standalone analysis were not able to create a niche in the development discourse. The regional HDRs, while located in the regional programmes, were not able to establish their value and have largely become merely another UNDP regional publication.

**Conclusion 2: Clarity on who are the primary users of the report is critical to ensure that the reports focus on their intended audience. It was not clear who is the audience of the reports. In the attempt to reach different groups of development actors at the regional and national levels, the regional HDRs have diluted their messages.**

The lack of a clear target audience undermined the influence of the regional HDRs. There is an ambiguity about how to relate to regional policy

actors, particularly regional intergovernmental bodies or civil society actors. The regional HDRs did not establish a niche audience, and were not successful in informing regional institutions' policy processes or policy advocacy at the regional and national levels.

**Conclusion 3: Lack of gender analysis from a human development perspective and related policy propositions diluted the contribution of the report. The regional HDRs missed the opportunity to expand the conceptual boundaries of gender-related constraints in pursuing individual goals and interests. The reports did not provide new policy perspectives that would challenge output-oriented development practices.**

The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the subject covered, and there has been limited evidence of their contribution to gender-related policy processes. The regional HDRs included gender-disaggregated analysis, but systematic analysis of gender from a human development framework was either limited or lacking altogether. With sparse policy recommendations and weak gender analysis, the advocacy value of the reports remained limited.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: UNDP should revisit the purpose of the regional HDRs and explore options to strengthen the contribution made by the reports. UNDP should not publish thematic regional HDRs unless there is something significant to talk about. It is imperative that the reports have a strong human development perspective. UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of regional HDRs on regional and national policy processes.**

To strengthen the contribution of the regional HDRs to public policy processes at the regional and national levels, UNDP should revisit the purposes of the regional HDRs in relation to the

global and national HDRs. UNDP should ensure that regional HDRs capitalize on the global and national reports and pay specific attention to strengthening the policy and advocacy dimension of the regional reports in terms of sustained follow-up activities. Specific efforts should be made to strengthen human development analysis and gender analysis in the regional HDRs.

Every region has issues that merit a regional publication. The regional HDRs should add value beyond what is offered by publications of other organizations. UNDP should not publish regional HDRs on themes that are widely researched and published, unless it brings an additional dimension to the debate. UNDP should explore the option of regional HDRs providing human development analysis and only periodically produce thematic reports that can contribute to development discourse and public policy and provide a new perspective.

**Management response:** *UNDP management concurs with the recommendation to revisit the overall purpose of the regional HDRs and consider the options for strengthening their contributions. UNDP management agrees that the thematic focus of regional HDRs should be driven by demand and supported by the process of consultations on the themes for greater use and impact. Regional priorities often differ from global priorities. Experience to date confirms that thematic regional HDRs served to stimulate discourse and inform policy and programming at national, regional and continental levels. These reports consistently had been framed around thematic areas pertinent to regional dialogues and firmly anchored in a human development perspective. The themes for the regional HDRs were chosen based on country-level consultations. The regional HDRs were used as an analytical and advocacy tool to promote the human development agenda as part of the Regional Programme, consistent with the priorities expressed in the strategic plan. Moreover, the human development lens and impartiality of the reports have been effectively used by UNDP to raise highly sensitive matters that few other credible policy actors were able to raise. These reports effectively focused on significant and distinctive cross-boundary and*

*regional issues, highlighting the need for the regional public goods to address these issues, and serving as a convening power around issues of common concern. Regional HDRs aimed to enhance the development debate and actions to prioritize eradication of poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The proposed themes will be carefully selected based on regional needs to enhance the contribution of these reports while ensuring a strong human development perspective in the analysis. Building on the lessons learned from previous evaluations, experience from the previous report and feedback from stakeholders, the process for developing the regional HDRs will be further enhanced.*

**Recommendation 2: The subregional scope of the regional HDRs proved to be a useful approach to cover and provide in-depth analysis of issues that are specific to a few countries or a subregion. This approach should be thought through and adequately strategized for a greater impact of regional HDRs.**

Important lessons can be drawn from the regional HDRs with a subregional focus in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean. Given the specificities of different groups of countries in the region, UNDP should consider publishing regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Regional HDRs should be used specifically to provide human development-oriented data and analysis for regions that are not adequately covered by global research and analysis.

**Management response:** *UNDP management concurs with the recommendation and underscores that a measure of subregional analysis is an important way to enhance relevance. UNDP has consistently framed a good deal of analysis around subregional groupings, which has helped to solidify relevance and uncover key points of regional development diversity. Several ongoing subregional initiatives covering the Sahel, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes will capitalize on these opportunities to produce specific analysis without subsuming the regional nature of the HDR and its intended audience.*

**Recommendation 3: Specific attention should be paid to developing systems and processes**

**to communicate and disseminate the messages of regional HDRs. Effective communication and dissemination of the messages is closely related to the knowledge management systems and capacities of UNDP; this needs to be strengthened.**

UNDP should effectively implement its Knowledge Management Strategy, 2014–2017 to address the larger issues related to dissemination of messages of its knowledge products. To improve the contribution of the regional HDRs it will be necessary to:

- Address issues related to poor dissemination of the messages of the regional HDRs. UNDP should develop a dissemination strategy for its flagship publications, addressing how the HDRs will be promoted through UNDP programmes and activities and clearly spelling out the roles and responsibilities of different programme units; and
- Provide resources to Country Offices for dissemination of the messages of reports. In the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, additional funds were provided to Country Offices for communicating the messages of the regional HDRs. Such approaches should be strengthened and institutionalized.

**Management response:** *UNDP management agrees with the recommendation that confirms the*

*central objective of regional HDRs to enhance their influence on regional and national policy. UNDP has consistently complemented regional launches with national launches and/or policy workshops intended to bring together key national stakeholders to unpack the regional analysis and develop policy insights tailored to the national level. UNDP will continue to do so and scale up relevant best practices as needed. For example, to enhance the impact of regional HDRs at the national level, operational programme guidance notes were prepared for Country Offices for operationalizing HDR recommendations (e.g. by Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific immediately after the launch of two most recent regional HDRs in that region). Concrete measures and initiatives include establishment of regional gender and climate change fund (immediately after the launch of regional HDRs on these themes in the Asia-Pacific region) to operationalize HDRs recommendations. Before and after preparation of HDRs, the regional bureaux organized multi-stakeholder consultations and policy symposiums, and provided financial support to Country Offices for translating HDRs into local languages and for launching HDRs at the national level. In response to the evaluation's findings and recommendations, the regional bureaux will further review and improve the current process of conceptualizing, preparing and following up the regional HDRs, building on its strong representation in the region including the regional service centres and network of advisers, in the context of further enhancing the influence on regional and national policy processes and UNDP programming.*

# **PART I:**

## **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

This report is divided into three parts. Part I includes this introduction and an overview of the human development approach that forms the basis of all Human Development Reports (HDRs) as well as its linkages to public policy processes. Part II (Chapters 3 to 5) analyses global HDR contributions to public policy processes; and Part III (Chapters 6 to 8) analyses the contributions of regional HDRs.



## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the first global Human Development Report (HDR). Since then, 23 global HDRs have been produced. These reports have sought to raise awareness and generate debate on a range of public policy issues and concerns. A 1994 General Assembly resolution<sup>1</sup> observed that the Human Development Report is the result of an independent intellectual exercise that is separate and distinct from other UNDP activities. Following this, in 2003, a second General Assembly resolution further recognized the HDRs as “an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.”<sup>2</sup> UNDP started to produce regional HDRs in 1994 and has since produced 33 regional and subregional reports. Over US\$130 million has been spent on global, regional and subregional HDRs produced since 2004.

This evaluation was carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP in order to assess the global and regional HDRs’ contributions to public policy processes. Approved by the UNDP Executive Board in January 2014 as part of the IEO medium-term plan,<sup>3</sup> this is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs. In approving the evaluation, the Executive Board recognized the important contributions of HDRs to public debate and public

policy.<sup>4</sup> The purposes of the evaluation are to: (a) guide UNDP in refining its intellectual contribution to development through the HDRs, and; (b) hold UNDP accountable for the use of its human and financial resources in preparing and disseminating the HDRs. The evaluation, carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy, will be presented at the UNDP Executive Board Annual Session in June 2015.

### 1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the contribution of global HDRs to intellectual and analytical public policy debates;
- Assess the contribution of regional HDRs to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level;
- Assess the contributions of global and regional HDRs to UNDP engagement in global and regional public discourse and advocacy and national public policy processes;
- Identify factors that explain the contributions of global and regional HDRs; and
- Present key findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions.

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1 United Nations, 1995, General Assembly resolution 49/123, ‘United Nations Development Programme and the Human Development Report’ (A/RES/49/123).

2 United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, ‘Human Development Report’ (A/RES/57/264).

3 Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS agenda item document, ‘Evaluation Office of UNDP: medium-term evaluation plan (2014-2017)’ (DP/2014/5), New York, January.

4 Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2014/1, ‘Report of the Second Regular Session 2013’ (DP/2014/1), New York, September.

The evaluation assessed the contributions of global and regional HDRs published from 2004 to 2013. This period encompasses reports produced since the 2003 General Assembly resolution affirming the importance of global HDRs. As this is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs, the evaluation took into account the contribution of HDRs between 1990 and 2003. Moving into the 25th year of the global HDR series, the evaluation also examined how the global HDRs have evolved, taking into account the considerable changes in the contexts in which the reports have been produced.

The evaluation covered the use of thematic analysis, human development data (e.g. data on indices and data on different themes), and background papers for the global and regional HDRs. The evaluation covered development policy actors in all five geographic regions where UNDP works (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Latin America and the Caribbean).

### 1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Global HDRs do not have a set of stated goals that would have enabled measuring their contributions against a predetermined set of aims. General Assembly resolution 57/264 and UNDP Executive Board decisions specify broad objectives for the HDRs, resource allocations to the Human Development Report Office (HDRO), and consultative processes to be followed.<sup>5</sup> Regional HDRs contribute to the outcomes of the regional programmes managed by the UNDP regional bureaux or, in a few cases, are an outcome of a regional programme.

The evaluation presupposed that the global and regional HDRs' contributions to generating development debate are of wide relevance across countries; that the HDRs' cross-country

analysis contributes to processes that promote policies oriented towards human development; and that the global and regional HDRs have the potential to inform public policy processes. The evaluation made two sets of assumptions on the distinct nature of the global and regional HDRs' objectives:

- **Global HDRs** contribute to global public policy debates, dialogues and discourses; provide a fresh perspective on the issues they cover; and provide perspectives for policymaking at the national and regional levels. Global HDRs contribute to national public policy processes from a human development perspective, particularly on hitherto ignored dimensions of the selected development theme.
- **Regional HDRs** contribute to human development-oriented policy debates and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level. Regional HDRs facilitate understanding of human development progress in regional contexts through tools and analysis.

National policy process areas included for assessment were (a) policy discourse and public policy debates; (b) policy advice; (c) advocacy; and (d) agenda setting.

#### THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL HDRS: A THEORY OF CHANGE

A theory of change was developed as a framework to guide the evaluation in outlining the HDRs' influence on public debates and policy processes; to explore policy process areas that showed great potential for HDR use and influence; and to understand HDR contributions to policy processes. The evaluation used separate theories of change for the global HDRs, regional HDRs and the roles of HDRs in UNDP's contribution to public policy processes. The theories of change are

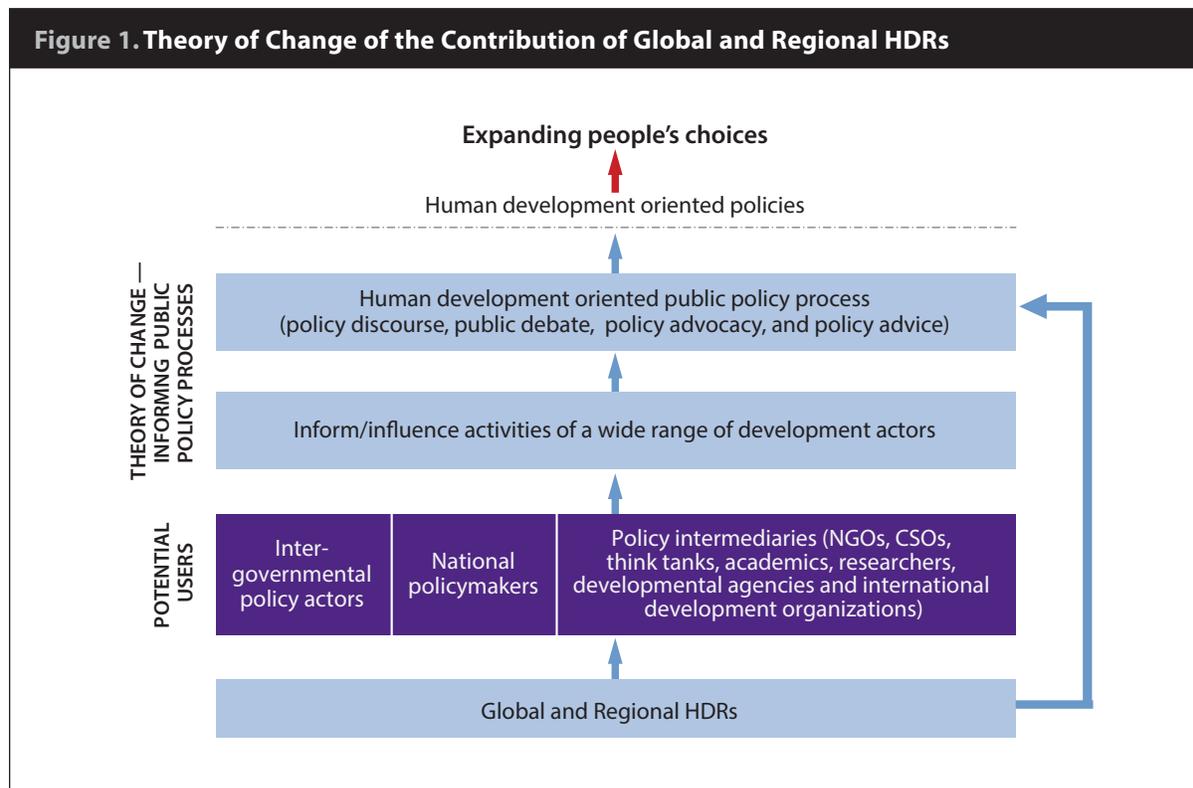
<sup>5</sup> Until 2008, the global HDRs and the work of the HDRO were part of UNDP's Global Programme. They contributed to a broad set of outcomes to support the organization's institutional and development goals, provided conceptual underpinning to UNDP and contributed to broad knowledge sharing. After 2008, global HDRs have not been specifically mentioned in UNDP results frameworks.

located within a broader understanding of public policy processes (see Figure 1). The theories of change draw on a range of development actors' perspectives regarding the general purposes of HDRs and draw on studies on the use of research and scientific evidence in policy processes.

The evaluation entailed an assessment of HDR contributions to policy discourse and public policy debates, policy advocacy, agenda setting and policy advice. The evaluation recognized that while the contributions at different levels were critical, global and regional policy debates do not operate in isolation, but rather coexist with nation-state processes. Therefore, global HDRs were examined at all three levels, and regional HDRs were examined at the regional and national levels.

In evaluating HDR contributions, the evaluation made a clear distinction between use of HDRs and others resources, use processes and outcomes of use (i.e. the subsequent consequences of changes in public debate and policy processes).

The causal linkages in HDR contributions entails outputs (publication of the reports), outcomes (the HDRs' contributions to human development-oriented policies), and results (improving the conditions of people or expanding their range of choices). The evaluation recognized the inherent limitations of linking the outcome-level contributions of global and regional HDRs to macro-level processes and changes related to human development-oriented policies. For example, a number of factors determine policy options and it is beyond the scope of this document to validate causal linkages between policy processes and policy choices. To better capture HDR contributions, the outcome-level linkages were further disaggregated into immediate outcomes (accessing the HDRs), intermediary outcomes (use and adoption of HDRs by a range of development actors in their work to inform or influence public policy processes), and outcomes (policy change in terms of furthering human development-oriented policies). The evaluation focused on the immediate and intermediate outcomes, where HDR contributions were more likely to be evident.



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

The evaluation considered two pathways through which HDRs inform and influence policy process: direct, when used by policymakers, and indirect, when used by policy intermediaries. Policy intermediaries include UNDP, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), think tanks, academics, research and policy institutions, donor agencies and multilateral and bilateral agencies. The evaluation recognized that some development actors are more active or persuasive than others and that not all causal linkages in the policy process fully lend themselves to credible assessment.

The policy actors of institutions and forums are the pathways through which the HDRs' potential to contribute to public debate is realized. From the regional to the global level, policy space consists of multi-layered interactions of governments, regional institutions, development institutions, advocacy coalitions and trans-border networks. At the national level, development actors and groups engaged in policy processes (both state and non-state actors) play an important role in mediating policymaking processes; their use of HDRs is important to informing and influencing national public policies.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation did not directly evaluate the overall relevance of the HDRs. It did, however, examine relevance in terms of the usefulness of the approach and themes of the HDRs to public debates and policy processes. Therefore, relevance was a factor in determining the effectiveness of global and regional HDR contributions. The usual definition of efficiency, which relates to the efficiency of moving from inputs to outputs and outcomes, was not applicable to this evaluation. Rather, the evaluation looked at the efficiency with which UNDP used its resources and how it leveraged these resources for a greater contribution of global and regional HDRs. The sustainability criterion relates to the sustainability of an HDR's key messages beyond the launch period. See Box 1 for evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions.

## 1.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

### ADDRESSING EVALUATION CHALLENGES

The evaluation faced challenges in determining the HDRs' precise contribution to activities or progress made in promoting human devel-

#### Box 1. Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions

##### Effectiveness

Did the global HDRs contribute to public debates from a human development perspective? Did the global HDRs contribute to generating public debates on hitherto ignored dimensions of a development theme? Did the global HDRs contribute to greater understandings of human development at the global, regional and national levels?

Did the regional HDRs contribute to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy processes at the national level? Did regional HDRs bring a human development perspective to regional-level policy discourse and advocacy and to national-level policy processes? Did the regional HDRs contribute to a greater understanding of human development at the global, regional and national levels?

##### Efficiency

Did UNDP make the best use of its resources in producing and disseminating the global and regional HDRs?

##### Sustainability

Were the messages of the global / regional HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?

opment-oriented policies. The varied nature of policy space, which demands multiple strategies to contribute to policy processes, would entail applying evaluation criteria and related indicators to an open-ended and highly varied set of processes. It was therefore infeasible for the evaluation to fully capture the dynamics of country-level policy processes or HDR contributions to regional- and global-level intergovernmental policy decisions. The lapse of time between the HDR exercise and policy processes exacerbated many of these challenges. Nonetheless, the evaluation captured HDR contributions by using sources such as HDR citation and content analysis, a survey of key development actors and interviews of policymakers. The evaluation also used country case studies to elucidate causation and its applicability.

HDRs encompass a wide range of issues; this variety is in itself one of the reports' most important contributions. In order to gain a better understanding of HDR contributions, the evaluation looked at specific factors in relation to thematic issues, respective stakeholders and relevance for different contexts (typology of countries in terms of greater relevance of a set of messages). Case studies of select HDRs and HDR themes were carried out to provide insights into factors that determined contribution to policy processes. The evaluation acknowledged that some HDRs had a greater level of contribution to policy processes than others, mainly because of the nature of the topic itself. This was not intended to preclude the contribution of any HDR in terms providing new insights into the topic covered.

Determining the range of development actors who are potential users of the HDRs—to whom an HDR can be an important source of information—was critical for the evaluation. This entailed mapping the range of users, some of whom were distinct groups for each HDR assessed. The evaluation recognized that the users of global and regional reports are wide, the common category being national-level stakeholders. The different categories of

users the evaluation included for analysis are policymakers and policy intermediaries (e.g. think tanks, non-governmental organizations, donors, academics).

## **DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources, including document reviews, analysis of relevant independent evaluations, analysis of case studies and success stories, surveys and semi-structured interviews (see Table 1 for the methods and data sources used).

### **Document review**

The evaluation team reviewed the following:

- A range of documents and publications related to human development concepts and measurements;
- Documents related to global and regional policies and policy debates;
- National development strategies and policy documents;
- Publications and documents of international agencies (including multilateral and bilateral organizations);
- UN programme documents and publications; and
- UNDP publications and programme documents at the global, regional and country levels, along with the monitoring information necessary to understanding how HDRs are located in programme planning and implementation.

### **Report case studies**

Global and regional HDRs selected for case studies include eight global HDRs produced and 15 regional HDRs produced since 2004. The selection was guided by the evaluability of HDRs in terms of the time of publication. See Tables 3 and 7 for a full list of the global and regional HDRs.

**Table 1. Data Collection Methods and Sources**

Method	Sources	
<b>Country case studies</b>	22 countries	Africa – Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania Arab States – Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco Asia and the Pacific – Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Fiji Europe and the CIS – Romania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan Latin America and the Caribbean – Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico
<b>In-depth desk reviews</b>	10 countries	Africa – Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia Arab States – UAE, Jordan Asia and the Pacific – Timor Leste Europe and the CIS – Bulgaria, Croatia Latin America and the Caribbean – Costa Rica, Haiti
<b>Case studies of global HDRs</b>	6 global HDRs	2005, 2006, 2007/08, 2009, 2013 global HDRs
<b>Interviews (including those carried out as part of case studies)</b>	700 public policy actors	Government and intergovernmental actors Civil society organizations, NGOs, Foundations Think tanks International organizations Executive Board members and UN Missions Donor agencies United Nations agencies UNDP management and staff (New York, Regional Service Centre, Country Offices)
<b>Surveys</b>	1,108 Surveys responses	Academics and researchers (110) Civil society organizations (747) Think tanks (104) UNDP Country Offices (112) UNDP policy staff in New York and Regional Service Centres (35) Global products survey carried out by UNDP
<b>Meta-analysis of evaluations</b>	103 evaluations	Assessments of Development Results (85) Regional Programme evaluations (8) Decentralized Regional Programme Outcome evaluations (7) Decentralized Regional HDR evaluations (2) Decentralized evaluations of national HDRs (1)
<b>Citation and cybermetric analysis</b>		Internet search analysis Analysis of media Citations in journals and other publication data bases Content analysis Comparator analysis with similar publications Google trends

### Meta-analysis of evaluations

The evaluation carried out a meta-analysis of regional programme evaluations, regional programme outcome evaluations, evaluations of regional HDRs, country level evaluations, Assessments of Development Results (country-level

evaluations) and global thematic evaluations related to HDR themes. The meta-analysis focused on the use of HDRs (including use by UNDP), factors facilitating or constraining use and the influence of HDRs in informing public policy processes.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

In addition to interviews that were conducted as part of the case studies, semi-structured interviews were carried out with over 80 development experts, including authors of global and regional HDRs and papers and experts in the themes covered by the HDRs.

### **Electronic surveys**

Electronic surveys of potential HDR users were carried out to collect additional information and to get a broader perspective. Table 1 provides the number of responses received for each category of survey carried out.

### **Country case studies**

The evaluation carried out country case studies to provide in-depth insights of HDR contributions. The country case studies looked at causality—at how and what factors lead to knowledge and information informing public policy debates and policy processes in different contexts and thematic areas. The case studies were not intended to draw general conclusions about HDR contributions, but rather to provide further insights into processes and outcomes, the relationships between the two and other factors in the use of HDRs. A small number of limited case studies were also carried out that involved visits to regional service centres (the Regional Service Centre for Africa, the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre and the Pacific Centre). Other country case studies we undertaken using only a desk review of secondary data. See Table 1 for a list of countries by region included for case studies.

The case studies, based on multiple sources of evidence, used multiple data collection methods. The case studies covered broad themes, including sustainability, equity, environment and climate change, international cooperation, gender equality (at the global level), anti-corruption, the Roma issue, food security, public and citizen security, HIV and AIDS and inclusiveness (at the regional level). Topics such as the Roma issue and public citizen security are specific to Europe and the CIS and Latin America respectively.

The selection of countries for visits and desk analysis was based on the following criteria: regional representation; countries representing different income categories, Human Development Index and Global Innovation Index; countries affected by global or regional crises; relevance of the regional HDR topic for the country; and the number of national HDRs published. Identifying countries for cases studies was based on a preliminary analysis of 50 countries across regions. As part of the case study, approximately 400 semi-structured interviews were carried out with different groups of stakeholders including: representatives of regional organizations; government representatives; think tanks, researchers and academics; non-governmental and civil society organizations; representatives of missions to the United Nations, donor agencies; UNDP management and programme staff in the policy and regional bureaux in New York; the five regional service centres (Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Cairo, Istanbul and Panama); and the staff of the relevant Country Offices.

### **Web analysis**

To examine the use and influence of the HDRs, the evaluation conducted a web analysis of citation, content use of global and regional HDRs and background papers of global HDRs. This analysis included:

- Analysis of web search patterns of global and regional HDRs and a comparative analysis with select global publications;
- Analysis of web search patterns of composite indices of global HDRs and a comparative analysis with select composite indices published by other organizations;
- Analysis of web-based sources for citation and content use. This analysed publicly available, unstructured data from the Internet—a sample of searches related to the titles and keywords of global and regional HDRs and the topics they covered. This was conducted in multiple languages and provided the volume and nature of public, online references related to the HDRs and, more specifically, regarding individual titles;

- A comparative analysis of citation of human development data and similar data sets;
- A content and citation search in journal and publications databases; and
- Analysis of social media on the use of HDRs, which included:
  - HDR use patterns from 2004 to 2014 (including volume of use, purpose/type of use, content used and the users); and
  - A comparative analysis of citation and content use of HDRs and similar publications.

See Annex 5 for further information on the web analysis.

### Data analysis

The evaluation assumed that global HDR contributions would take place via two main pathways. First, global HDRs have the potential to influence public policy dialogue at the global level and influence inter-government debates (regional HDR contributions are to inter-government policy processes). Second, the global and regional HDRs indirectly inform and influence global and regional debates and national public policy processes. The key steps in analysing global and regional HDR contributions is presented in Table 2.

### Evaluation management

The IEO played the lead role in all phases of the evaluation—conceptualization, design, analysis and report drafting. The IEO was supported by

a team of external consultants in various tasks of the evaluation. Two members of the IEO’s Evaluation Advisory Panel, Elliot Stern<sup>6</sup> and Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah<sup>7</sup> provided strategic, methodological and substantive advice to the evaluation process and reviewed key outputs, including the terms of reference and the main report.

Regional Bureaux, Policy Bureaux, the HDRO in New York and regional centres in five regions provided the necessary information and documents requested by the IEO and the evaluation team. The evaluation report was shared with the UNDP Organizational Performance Group and programme units for review and comment. Consultations with UNDP programme units at headquarters provided their perspectives on the evaluation findings.

## 1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into three parts. Part I includes this introduction and an overview of the human development approach that forms the basis of all Human Development Reports (HDRs) as well as its linkages to public policy processes. Part II (Chapters 3 to 5) analyses global HDR contributions to public policy processes. Chapter 3 reviews HDRs produced since 1990; Chapter 4 assesses the contributions of these reports; and Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations. Part III (Chapters 6 to 8) analyses the contributions of regional HDRs. Chapter 6 provides an overview of the regional HDRs; Chapter 7 assesses their contributions; Chapter 8 presents conclusions and recommendations for regional HDR future actions.

6 Elliot Stern is an Emeritus Professor of Evaluation Research at Lancaster University (UK) and currently Visiting Professor at University of Bristol. Elliot edits *Evaluation: The International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, a journal published by Sage (United Kingdom), and was founding President of both the UK Evaluation Society and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation. Elliot has worked extensively in the international development field with a particular interest in methodology and the institutionalization of evaluation.

7 Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah is a Minister of Education, Government of Morocco and Vice-chairman of the Moroccan Foundation for Advanced Science, Innovation and Research; member of the Economic and Social Council of the Kingdom of Morocco; member of the Hassan II Academy for Science and Technology; member of the board of the “Foundation of Three Cultures of the Mediterranean” (Spain); member of the Advisory Board of the Alliance for Research on North Africa (ARENA, University of Tsukuba, Japan); member of the Statistical Advisory Panel (UNDP); and member of the Advisory Council for Science Works (USA).

**Table 2. Contribution Analysis of Global and Regional HDRs**

<b>Global HDR</b>	<b>Regional HDR</b>
<p>Identify, to the extent possible, the global-level policy debates and inter-government policy processes</p> <p>Identify country-level policy issues and debates</p>	<p>Identify, to the extent possible, the policy processes and inter-government debates related to key regional issues</p> <p>Identify country-level policy processes</p>
<p>Identify key global policy actors and the concepts and knowledge that informed policy processes on the evaluated theme</p> <p>Identify national development policy actors and the documents on broader development issues and the theme evaluated; identify the concepts and knowledge that informed policy processes</p>	<p>Identify key regional policy actors and the concepts and knowledge that informed policy processes on the evaluated theme</p> <p>Identify national development policy actors and documents on broader development issues and the theme evaluated; identify the concepts and knowledge that informed the policy processes</p>
<p>Review documents and use preliminary interviews to identify contributions to global public policy debate processes</p>	<p>Review documents and use regional case studies to identify contributions to regional policy processes</p>
<p>Use data collected through national case studies to develop explanations of where contributions have occurred—how a human development perspective has informed national policy processes</p> <p>Identify how and why national policy processes might have drawn on the thematic analysis, indices or recommendations of specific global HDRs</p> <p>When identifying how the global HDR might have contributed, identify whether through policy discourse, policy advice, advocacy, public debate or agenda setting</p>	<p>Use data collected through national case studies to develop explanations of where contributions have occurred—how a human development perspective has informed national policy processes</p> <p>Identify how and why national policy processes might have drawn on the thematic analysis or data in specific regional HDRs</p> <p>When identifying how the regional HDR might have contributed, identify whether through policy discourse, policy advice, advocacy, public debate or agenda setting</p>
<p>Validate the contribution explanation using additional interviews and other sources of evidence (e.g. cybermetric and bibliometric analysis, survey data, analysis of interviews)</p>	<p>Validate the contribution using additional interviews and other sources of evidence (e.g. cybermetric and bibliometric analysis, survey data, analysis of interviews)</p>
<p>Identify limitations in terms of evidence available or difficulty in assessing performance</p>	<p>Identify limitations in terms of evidence available or difficulty in assessing performance</p>



## Chapter 2

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES

This chapter briefly describes the capability and human development approaches how they informed the HDRs. It sets out discussions of HDRs as tools for linking the approaches to public policy and practice and of the pathways through which HDRs influenced human development-oriented public policy processes.

### 2.1 THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

It has been long recognized that using income as the primary indicator of welfare was seriously limited—it needs to be supplemented with other welfare attributes (e.g. health and education). The basic needs approach (devised in the 1970s) expanded the definition of development beyond increases to income alone, rather as progress in different areas of human needs.<sup>8</sup> In the 1980s, Amartya Sen significantly elevated this departure from the single-minded focus on income through his capability approach. This approach evolved into the human development approach that has underpinned the HDRs from the very beginning.

Emerging from the critique of traditional welfare economics, Sen's capability approach holds the expansion of individual freedoms as the central objective of societal development.<sup>9</sup> The capability approach simultaneously challenges

two dominant perspectives on judging a society's well-being. One perspective, the resource-centric view, focuses on income; the other is a utilitarian perspective that uses a metric of happiness to judge a society's well-being. The capability approach argues that neither of these two approaches gets to the essence of human well-being. A focus on resources is inadequate because resources are only a means towards achieving the peoples' ultimate goals. A focus on happiness is inadequate because although people value happiness, it is not necessarily the only thing that they value (nor even the most important). Well-being, according to the capability approach, should be judged by the variety of 'beings' and 'doings' that people have reason to value—for example, being free from hunger, doing things to avoid premature mortality or being able to take part in the affairs of society. Thus defined as the extent of freedom people have to achieve well-being in this broad sense, capability can be seen as well-being freedom.

Seen as widely applicable, Sen's capability approach has been adopted with a considerable degree of internal pluralism. It has offered an intuitively appealing framework for developing methodologies to address poverty and inequality issues. As its policy relevance has been increasingly recognized, empirical work on the applicability of the approach has multiplied. A large

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8 Streeten, P.P., S.J. Burki, M. ul Haq, N. Hicks and F. Stewart, 1981, *First Things First: Meeting Basic Human Needs in Developing Countries*, New York: Oxford University Press; Stewart, F., 1985, *Planning to Meet Basic Needs*, London: Macmillan.

9 See Sen, A.K., 1983, 'Development: Which Way Now?', *Economic Journal*, 93, 745-62; Sen, A.K., 1984, *Resources, Values and Development*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell; Sen, A.K., 1985, *Commodities and Capabilities*, Oxford: Elsevier Science Publishers; Sen, A.K., 1988, 'The Concept of Development', in Hollis, C., and T.N. Srinivasan (eds.), *Handbook of Development Economics, Vol.1*, North Holland: Elsevier Science Publishers, pp. 10-26; Sen, A.K., 1990, 'Development as Capability Expansion', in Griffin, K., and J. Knight (eds.), *Human Development and the International Development Strategy for the 1990s*, London: Macmillan, pp. 41-58.

body of conceptual work has also been devoted to clarifying, augmenting and criticizing Sen's original approach.<sup>10</sup>

The alternate approaches vary in their sophistication, how they identify capabilities and in the participatory methods they use to capture the voices of the poor.<sup>11</sup> A thorough discussion on this is beyond the scope of this evaluation. Briefly, the main criticisms have centred on Sen's unwillingness to provide a complete list of capabilities;<sup>12</sup> an overemphasis on choice; obscurities in key concepts (e.g. capability and functioning); inadequacy as a theory of well-being or a conceptualization of human development;<sup>13</sup> its limited usefulness for making inter-personal comparisons of well-being;<sup>14</sup> and problems related to operationalizing the approach<sup>15</sup> (including data constraints).<sup>16</sup> Although the capability approach does not provide all answers and solutions, its success stems from having

displaced the mainstream welfare criteria that was based on either income or happiness (utility), and in so doing, providing a conceptual basis for the human development approach.

The human development approach builds upon the capability approach by combining well-being freedom with agency freedom. Sen distinguishes these two components as the 'evaluative aspect' and the 'agency aspect' of human development.<sup>17</sup> The evaluative aspect focuses on the extent of capabilities (defined as well-being freedom that can be enjoyed by people), and uses this concept for a variety of evaluative purposes. Examples of the evaluative aspect include evaluating the magnitude of poverty, inequality and deprivation; judging the extent of fairness and justice in a society's institutional arrangements; and assessing the magnitude of human progress in general. In contrast, the agency aspect views people as agents who may choose

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- 10 A number of authors have generated lists of human capabilities in an effort to apply Sen's framework. See Desai, M., 1995, 'Poverty and Capability: Towards An Empirically Implementable Measure', in *Poverty, Famine and Economic Development*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar, pp. 185-204; Nussbaum, M.C., 1995, 'Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings', in Nussbaum, M.C., and J. Glover (eds.), *Women, Culture and Development*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 61-104; Alkire, S., and R. Black, 1997, 'A Practical Reasoning Theory of Development Ethics: Furthering the Capabilities Approach', *Journal of International Development* 9(2): 263-79; Alkire, S., 2002, *Valuing Freedoms: Sen's Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 4; Nussbaum, M.C., 2000, *Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Clark, D.A., 2002, *Visions of Development: A Study of Human Values*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar; Nussbaum, M.C., 2003, 'Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlement: Sen and Social Justice', *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), 33-59; Clark, D.A., 2003, 'Concepts and Perceptions of Human Well-Being: Some Evidence from South Africa', *Oxford Development Studies*, 31(2), 173-196; Robeyns, I., 2003, 'Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities', *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), 61-92.
- 11 The most well-known and influential attempt to complete the capability approach can be found in the writings of the feminist philosopher, Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum's version of the capability approach differs from Sen's in several respects (see Nussbaum, M.C., 2000, *Women and Human Development: the Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Nussbaum, M.C., 2003, 'Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlement: Sen and Social Justice', *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), 33-59; Sen, A.K., 1993, 'Capability and Well-being', in Nussbaum, M.C., and A.K. Sen (eds.), *The Quality of Life*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 30-53.
- 12 Conversely, some have characterized this as a strength of the approach. See Williams, B., 1987, 'The Standard of Living: Interests and Capabilities', in Hawthorn, G., (ed.), *The Standard of Living*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 94-102; Nussbaum, M.C., 1988, 'Nature, Function and Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, Supl. Vol., 145.84; Qizilbash, M., 1998, 'The Concept of Well-Being', *Economics and Philosophy*, 14, 51-73. See for discussion on this Clark, D., 2005, 'The Capability Approach: Its Development, Critiques and Recent Advances', GPRG Working Paper Series WPS-032, Global Poverty Research Group, University of Oxford.
- 13 Gasper, D., 2002, 'Is Sen's Capability Approach an Adequate Basis for Considering Human Development?', *Review of Political Economy*, 14:4, 435-461.
- 14 Beitz, C.R., 1986, 'Amartya Sen's Resources, Values and Development', *Economics and Philosophy*, 2(2), pp. 282-91.
- 15 Sugden, R., 1993, 'Welfare, Resources, and Capabilities: A Review of Inequality Reexamined by Amartya Sen', *Journal of Economic Literature*, 31, 1947-1962.
- 16 Alkire, S., 2002, *Valuing Freedoms: Sen's Capability Approach and Poverty Reduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Sen, A.K., 1994, 'Well-Being, Capability and Public Policy', *Giornale Delgi Economist e Annali di Economia*, 53, 333-47.
- 17 Sen, A.K., 2003, 'Foreword', in Fukida-Parr, S., and S. Kumar, *Readings in Human Development*.

to pursue goals that go beyond the pursuit of their own well-being and work for broader causes (for example, freeing others from oppression and injustice, preserving the environment, caring for non-human species, etc.). Human development requires a broad-based expansion of both well-being freedom and agency freedom of all the people, not just of a few.<sup>18</sup>

Underpinning the global HDRs is the human development approach—that people are both the means and the ends of development. The explicit purpose of the first HDR was “to shift the focus of development economics from national income accounting to people centred policies.”<sup>19</sup> Using Sen’s capability approach, human development is conceived of as a process that, through the efforts and initiatives of people themselves, widens their choices and removes the development constraints that they face.<sup>20</sup> In principle, these choices can be infinite and change over time. “But at all levels of development, the three essential ones are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible.”<sup>21</sup> The conceptualization of human development is significant for having combined a critique of mainstream welfare economics with a broadened purpose of development. The human development approach has provided an alternative development paradigm by bringing a pluralist conception to the assessment of development progress, by emphasizing the people-centred approach to development and by substituting multidimensional indicators of poverty for simple income poverty.

## 2.2 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS: BRIDGING CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

The concept of human development espoused in the HDRs provided an alternative way of looking at development, particularly at a time when there was a fixation with economic growth models. The late 1980s were ripe for a counter-offensive. “The UN was left to take on the role of constructive dissent. In 1985, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) began promoting the need for ‘adjustment with a human face’. It was becoming obvious in several countries that human lives were shrivelling even as economic production was expanding.”<sup>22</sup> The timing was apt for presenting an alternate development paradigm to enable development economics to address the challenges of poverty and inequality. The human development focus as presented in the HDRs was precisely what was needed.

In addition to adopting the concept of human development and its measurement, the first HDR explored the relationship between economic growth and human development, showing that economic growth is necessary—but not sufficient—for human development. Successive HDRs focused on specific issues of human development in the larger perspective set forth in the first HDR.

The concept of human development has gained global acceptability over the past 24 years—even its critics have appropriated or co-opted some of its ideas. The idea of human development and the HDRs have become central to contemporary social development thinking. HDRs have focused

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18 For further elaboration of the distinction between well-being freedom and agency freedom as two components of development, see Sen, A.K., 1999, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press.

19 ul Haq, M., 1995, *Reflections on Human Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; ul Haq, M., and P. Streeten (eds.), 1982, *First Things First*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

20 UNDP, 1990, *Human Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New York (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>).

21 Ibid., p. 10.

22 ul Haq, M., 1995, *Reflections on Human Development*, p. 24, quoting Jolly, R., 2005, ‘The UN and Development Thinking and Practice’, *Forum for Development Thinking*, No.1 p. 54.

on a variety of central functionings. While coverage is necessarily restricted by data limitations, the ultimate objective is to include all crucial functionings that are central for the quality of life, varying from such elementary ones such as avoiding escapable morbidity and preventable mortality to being educated, having comfortable lives, achieving self-respect and respect from others, and being socially integrated.<sup>23</sup>

When it was first published, the HDR was considered a seminal contribution to the development discourse. Its contributions have not remained confined to espousing and elaborating the concept of human development; they have also addressed the issues of measurement and the concept's broader policy implications.<sup>24</sup> Over the years, the HDRs have aimed to maintain a strong policy focus.

### 2.3 HDRS AND THE PUBLIC POLICY INTERFACE

From a human development perspective, a major purpose of policy analysis is to help bring about policy change that expands people's freedoms. "Public policy formulation depends on a number of factors and influences, and not always within the realms of what is 'right' or what 'should' be done. There are political issues in policymaking, and political forces that shape policy. Therefore, a human development perspective requires a

political analysis of the forces that shape public policy; it especially demands a detailed analysis of the power relations at stake."<sup>25</sup> This perspective on policy analysis also holds that policies should respect people's agency and be specifically based on their ability to participate (giving particular voice to marginalized groups), and mandates that policies should be assessed according to whether they promote people's freedoms.<sup>26</sup>

As a knowledge and information resource and a global public good, the HDRs aim to bridge the gap between concept and practice in order to contribute to human development-oriented public debates and to inform and influence public policy processes. In addition to generating human development data and providing thematic analysis, HDRs intend to inform public policy and propel discourse by providing forward-looking, new concepts and ideas. HDRs cover issues of transboundary policy relevance and issues that call for international cooperation on national policy concerns.

Public policies are government statements regarding what it intends to do. At a broader level, public policies are common goods and play key roles in introducing change to societies and in altering individual and collective behaviours. There are many models on how policy decisions are taken.<sup>27</sup> It is apparent from the insights these models offer that the policymaking processes and the actors

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23 Anand, S., and A.K. Sen, 2000, 'The Income Component of the Human Development Index', *Journal of Human Development* 1(1): 83-106.

24 UNDP, 1990, *Human Development Report*, New York.

25 Sen, A., 1981, *Hunger and Public Action*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 19.

26 Deneulin, S., and L. Shahani, 2009, *An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach*, Earthscan Publications Ltd.

27 For example, in the institutional model, policy decisions are a technical process and predominantly rest on the balance between executive and legislative roles and responsibilities (see Newton, K., and J.W. van Deth, 2005, *Foundations of Comparative Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). The incrementalist model centres on policymakers as primary actors in policy decisions and assumes that policymakers look at a small number of options for dealing with a problem and tend to choose options that differ only marginally from existing policy (see Walt, G., 1994, *Health Policy. An Introduction to Process and Power. People, Governments and International Agencies – Who Drives Policy and How It Is Made*, London: Witwatersrand University Press; Lindblom, C.E., 1980, *The Policy-Making Process*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall). The rational model, on the other hand, considers that policymaking entails an exhaustive deliberation of all possible options, taking into account all their consequences, and selecting the best possible option. There is a bounded learning, where governments engaged in information gathering activities predominantly depend on other country's experience in taking policy decisions (see Weyland, K., 2004, 'Learning from Foreign Models in Latin American Policy Reform: An Introduction', in idem (ed.), *Learning from Foreign Models in Latin American Policy*

that are involved are as important as the policy decisions themselves. The policymaking process—the progression of how policies are shaped and implemented—is central to understanding the influences a policy decision is subjected to. At any given time the policy process entails a combination of components, such as policy discourse, policy advice, policy advocacy, lobbying and agenda setting. Several factors determine policy decisions (e.g. institutional dynamics, policymaker capacities, contextual undercurrents and responsiveness to the demands of various groups). The extent to which public policy is informed by the knowledge and information arising from policy processes is context- and issue specific.

Global-, regional- and national-level public debates provide forums where public opinions, interests and expectations are expressed on issues that concern the whole or part of the society. At the national level, as part of the policy process, public debate adds legitimacy to decisions and has an effect on policies.<sup>28</sup> At the global and regional level, public debate provides a deliberative space for the active participation of people and development actors in shaping inter-governmental decisions and decisions pertaining to development cooperation. Public debate also facilitates discussion of previously underempha-

sized development and policy issues. Central to the idea of (and participation in) public debate is being informed about different perspectives and options on key development issues and building opinions regarding policy implications. Knowledge and information play key roles in informing public debate and are tools for participants to more meaningfully engage in discourse. Depending on the subjects under discussion, the composition of what constitutes ‘public’ differs.

Discussions pertaining to the use of knowledge and information are heavily policy-driven, with the goal of facilitating better and more defensible policy decisions that are grounded in evidence. It has been widely acknowledged that the knowledge and information generated by research and publications have the potential to inform policy processes. While knowledge and information cannot always resolve development problems, they nonetheless have the potential to provide options for selecting effective public policy.<sup>29</sup>

## 2.4 BROADER THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In general, a policy does not change merely because there is sufficient evidence to make the case for change, but because there are powerful

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*Reform*. Washington; DC/Baltimore MD: Woodrow Wilson Center/Johns Hopkins University Press, 1-34; Meseguer Yebra, C., 2003, ‘Learning and Economic Policy Choices: A Bayesian Approach’, EUI Working Paper RSC No. 2003/5, European University Institute, San Domenico). There are models that build on the complexity of policymaking. Drawing from systems thinking ideas, policymaking is considered as a dynamic processes and multiple interdependencies; and that it is actors-context-sector-site-issue dependent and cannot be generalized (Mulgan, G., 2001, ‘Systems Thinking and the Practice of Government’, *Systemist*, 23:23-29; Checkland, P., 1981, *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*, London: John Wiley & Sons). There are theories that explored the responsiveness of policymaking to the demands of various groups, and that policies are the result of an equilibrium reached in group struggle, which is determined by the relative strength of each interest group (Knill, C., and J. Tosun, 2008, ‘Policy Making’, Working Paper 01, Chair of Comparative Public Policy and Administration Department of Politics and Management University of Konstanz, Germany; Levin, P., 1997, *Making social policy. The mechanisms of government and politics, and how to investigate them*, Buckingham: Open University Press). Group theory presumes that policymakers are constantly responding to group pressures (Dye, T.R., 2005, *Understanding Public Policy*, Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall).

- 28 Sunay, R., 2012, ‘The Importance of Public Debate in Democratic Regimes’, *European Scientific Journal*, Vol 8, No 9; Habermas, J., 1999, *Kamusalığın Yapısal Dönüşümü (Structural Transformation of Publicity)*, 2nd ed., translated by Tanıl Bora-Mithat Sancar, İstanbul: İletişim Publications.
- 29 Majone, G., 1989, *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Prewitt, K., T.A. Schwandt and M.L. Straf (eds), 2012, *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*, National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC; Davies, H.T.O., S.M. Nutley and P.C. Smith, 2000, *What Works: Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Public Services*, Bristol: The Policy Press; Dunworth, T., J. Hannaway, J. Holanhan and M.A. Turner, 2008, *The Case for Evidence-Based Policy: Beyond Ideology, Politics, and Guesswork. Revised edition*, The Urban Institute, Washington, DC.

groups that have a special interest in changing the policy. This is where various pathways and the related actors become important in determining the ability of HDRs to inform the policy process. Once an HDR is published, it is necessary to bring its key messages into the public domain in order to mobilize public opinion and address the special interests that are behind it. The HDRs contribute to public debates and policy processes—when used by a range of development stakeholders who are engaged in policy processes. The key suppositions regarding HDRs informing public policy process are:

- Policymaking is an outcome of the policy process and the use of knowledge negotiated between actors in multiple policy spaces.<sup>30</sup> Policy decision-making is characterized by non-decisional processes and the establishment of new or progressive practises. In these instances, research-based knowledge provides concepts, theory and data that slowly engages public discourse. Policy discourse and policy debates, direct or indirect, contribute to expanding the policy capacities of development actors (including policy-makers).<sup>31</sup> The public policy processes used comprise different elements that inform policy choices, such as policy discourse, policy advice, policy advocacy and agenda setting. The knowledge and information generated by HDRs have the potential to inform public policy processes.
- Despite their potential to contribute to policy decisions, HDRs are more relevant to

influencing public debate and agenda setting. The value of the knowledge and information generated by HDRs provides an intellectual setting for concepts, propositions, orientations and empirical generalizations. HDRs have the potential to inform how policymakers define problems and the options they examine for addressing them. Changes in policy and institutions depend on the ‘right’ conditions being in place.<sup>32</sup> HDRs will have greater catalytic effect when the policy environment is more favourable.

- HDRs are among the sources of knowledge and information that can inform public debates and policy processes. While there may be instances where research or publications trigger policy decisions or public debates, a direct influence cannot always be discerned. In policy processes, a research-based publication is one of many inputs. Policymaking does not happen in a mechanistic way as a result of knowledge and information utilization. In most decision-making situations, the use of policy evidence involves high levels of interdependency and interconnectedness among a range of participants.<sup>33</sup>
- In public policy processes, knowledge and information take various forms depending on who the users are and what the knowledge and information will be used for. Knowledge-policy dynamics encompass a broad range of actors pursuing multiple pathways in order to contribute to public policy processes.<sup>34</sup> Potential users of knowledge and

30 Jones, H., 2009, ‘Policy-making as discourse: a review of recent knowledge-to-policy literature’, Working Paper, 5, ODI-IKM: London; Jones, N., H. Jones, L. Steer and A. Datta, 2009, *Knowledge, policy and power: Six dimensions of the knowledge-development policy interface*, ODI: London; Cornwall, A., and V. Coelho (eds), 2006, *Spaces for change? The politics of citizen participation in new democratic arenas*, London: Zed Books.

31 See Carden, F., and C. Duggan, 2013, ‘Evaluating Policy Influence’, in Donaldson, S.I., T. Azzam and R.F. Conner (eds), *Emerging practices in International Development Evaluation*, Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.

32 Jones, H., 2009, *ibid.*

33 See also: Jones, N., H. Jones, L. Steer and A. Datta, 2009, *Knowledge, policy and power: Six dimensions of the knowledge-development policy interface*, ODI: London; and Contandriopoulos, D., M. Lemire, J.L. Denis and E. Tremblay, 2010, ‘Knowledge Exchange Processes in Organizations and Policy Arenas: A Narrative Systematic Review of the Literature’, *The Milbank Quarterly*, 88(4), 444-483, p. 447.

34 Nutley, S., I. Walter and H.T.O. Davies, 2007, *Using Evidence: How Research Can Inform Public Services*, Bristol, UK: The Policy Press; Davies, H.T.O., and S.M. Nutley, 2008, *Learning more about how research-based knowledge gets used: Guidance in the development of new empirical research*, New York: W. T. Grant Foundation.

information generated by HDRs engage in one or more dimensions of public policy processes and policy debates.

- There is a significant possibility that research-based knowledge and information will be absorbed and internalized into tacit professional knowledge, because knowledge and information coalesce with many other sources of knowledge (for example, experience, official reviews and conventional wisdom).<sup>35</sup> Applicability of knowledge and information proposed by an HDR to a particular policy choice has a tendency to be either over- or understated. Information is translated, condensed, repackaged and reinterpreted before it is used. Disentangling the specific outcomes of an HDR's contributions in the non-linear context of policy processes or public debates in the causal chain of contribution has limitations.

While the complexity and contextual underpinnings vary significantly, the above suppositions are largely relevant for understanding where the potential for HDR use and influence occurs in terms of HDR interface with public debates and public policy processes. Assessing the outcomes of HDR use pathways can be complicated because the use of knowledge and information from HDRs in policy debates (and other dimensions of public policy processes) is often

integrated with other data and knowledge and often influenced by several other factors.

Developing mechanisms that would understand and engage with the political context of policy processes will be a factor in the contribution of HDRs. Government institutions and other development actors are under pressure to use new concepts, research and information to devise evidence-based policy. In order to be timely and responsive to policy actors' needs, and in order to deliver to receptive policy environments, HDRs need the 'right' partners and collaborators (this is similar to other research-based outputs). The HDRs developed the human development statistics to convey the human development message. The use of 'killer statistics'—using statistics in a comparative mode to make people aware of a problem—is a strategy to convey human development messages.<sup>36</sup>

After 25 years of publication, the HDR's strength to influence policy lies in its intellectual evolution. In the past two decades, the human development work has grown, and the HDRs' ability to provide intellectual leadership and to be of policy relevance depends on its contribution to keeping the concept of human development dynamic.<sup>37</sup> To be of policy relevance, the concept should evolve, expanding the horizons of human development and the methodologies of its application.

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35 Jones, N., H. Jones, L. Steer and A. Datta, 2009, *Knowledge, policy and power: Six dimensions of the knowledge–development policy interface*, ODI: London; Mitton, C., C.E. Adair, E. McKenzie, S.B. Patten and B. Waye, 2007, 'Knowledge Transfer and Exchange: Review and Synthesis of the Literature', *Milbank Quarterly*, 85 (4):729–768; Landry R., N. Amara, A. Pablos-Mendes, R. Shademani and I. Gold, 2006, 'The Knowledge-Value Chain: A Conceptual Framework for Knowledge Translation in Health', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 84(8):597–602.

36 Deneulin, S., and L. Shahani, 2009, *An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach*, Earthscan Publications Ltd.

37 Sen, A.K., 2000, 'A decade of human development', *Journal of Human Development*, 1(1), pp. 17–23.



**PART II:**  
**THE CONTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO  
PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES**



## Chapter 3

# GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

For over two decades, UNDP has promoted the concept of human development as a people-centred approach to development. As discussed in Chapter 2, using Sen's capability approach, human development is conceived of as a process for—as well as an outcome of—widening people's choices. Guided by this approach, global HDRs have measured and monitored progress in human development, including developing and refining the methodologies of composite human development indices.

This chapter begins by looking at the General Assembly resolutions and UNDP Executive board decisions that have defined the purposes of the global HDRs. The section that follows describes the components of the global HDRs and their evolution (*viz.*, thematic coverage, human development concepts used and human development measurements), and briefly examines the changing context within which the reports are being produced. The last section of the chapter provides an overview of HDR production management, quality assurance mechanisms, communication strategy and finances.

### 3.1 THE MANDATE AND PURPOSES OF GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

The global HDRs have been published nearly every year since their 1990 inception. At the time of the first report's publication, there was no

long-term plan to produce a series of reports. In 1995, there were efforts to formalize the global HDRs as an annual publication, resulting in the 1995 General Assembly resolution (49/123),<sup>38</sup> which observed that the HDRs are an independent intellectual exercise and noted that Member States would continue to set the policies governing the operational activities for development. The resolution affirmed the HDRs as separate and distinct exercises that are not official documents of the United Nations.<sup>39</sup>

The 2003 General Assembly resolution (57/264) further reaffirmed the 1995 resolution, noting that the global HDRs are an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.<sup>40</sup> The resolution recognized that UNDP funds, publishes, launches and promotes the HDRs and disseminates them internationally. The resolution further stated that HDR preparation should be neutrally and transparently undertaken in full and effective consultation with Member States and with due regard to the impartial nature and use of sources. The resolution specifically asked that as of 2003, UNDP includes in its annual work plan a separate agenda item on the HDR to improve the consultation process with Member States regarding the HDR.

Subsequent to the General Assembly resolutions, UNDP Executive Board decisions have focused on the reports' quality, editorial independence, the

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38 United Nations, 1995, General Assembly resolution 49/123, 'United Nations Development Programme and the Human Development Report' (A/RES/49/123).

39 United Nations, 1992, General Assembly resolution 47/199, 'Triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations development system' (A/RES/47/199) United Nations, 1993, General Assembly resolution (A/RES/48/162). 'Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields' (A/RES/48/162).

40 United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, 'Human Development Report' (A/RES/57/264).

independence of the HDRO<sup>41</sup> and on improving the process of consultations with Member States. UNDP Executive Board decision 94/15 emphasized improving the process of consultation with Member States;<sup>42</sup> 2011/12 highlighted preserving HDR “quality and accuracy, as well as preserving its credibility and impartiality without compromising its editorial independence.”<sup>43</sup> Executive Board decision 2011/12 called upon the HDRO “to further improve the consultation process with Member States ... in an inclusive and transparent manner.”<sup>44</sup>

Some global HDRs attracted more scrutiny from the Executive Board, particularly regarding consultations in the preparation of the reports. For example, at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2011, there was debate regarding whether Member States had been consulted in the course of preparing the 2010 HDR. In follow-up debate, the Executive Board recognized the efforts of HDRO, the UNDP Executive Office and the Partnerships Bureau in organizing consultations with regional groups, the UNDP Executive Board, governments and other stakeholders (e.g. the National Statistics Offices and the UN Regional Commissions). The HDRO was asked to continue holding regular, open transparent and inclusive consultations with stakeholders in order to ensure that the HDR would continue to contribute effectively to internationally agreed upon development goals.<sup>45</sup>

Considering that the global HDRs use development data produced by the World Bank and UN agencies in computing the indices, the United Nations Statistical Commission periodically reviewed the data used with the aim of ensuring compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the Principles Governing International Statistical Activities. The United Nations Statistical Commission discussed human development indicators at its 31st (2000), 32nd (2001), 33rd (2002), 39th (2008) and 42nd (2010) sessions.<sup>46</sup> At its 42nd (2010) session, the Commission raised a range of concerns pertaining to the data used and omission of countries from the 2010 Human Development Index (HDI) ranking. The 42nd session also raised Member States’ concerns related to a perceived lack of transparency and consultations, discrepancies between national and international data sources and the omission of some states.<sup>47</sup> In its decision, the Statistical Commission asked that UNDP take steps to enhance the transparency and consultative nature of the process.

The Statistical Commission established an Expert Group, which recommended improved dialogue between HDRO and the official statistical community to help refine the conceptual and methodological basis of the HDI. The Expert Group further recommended that UNDP reactivate the Statistical Advisory Panel

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41 See Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decisions: ‘United Nations Office for Project Services’ (DP/95/1); ‘UNDP global programme, 2005-2007’ (DP/2005/2), which took note of the update by the UNDP Administrator on the Human Development Report consultations (‘UNDP Administrator on the Human Development Report Consultations’ [DP/2004/22]); and ‘Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board in 2011’ (DP/2012/2), Human Development Report, p. 13.

42 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2005, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/95/1, ‘United Nations Office for Project Services’ (DP/95/1).

43 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2012, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2012/2, ‘Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board in 2011’ (DP/2012/2), 2011/12 Human Development Report, p. 13.

44 Ibid.

45 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2011, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2011/32, ‘Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 2011 (6 to 17 June 2011)’ (DP/2011/32), 2011/17 Update on the Human Development Report, p. 6.

46 United Nations Statistical Commission, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission.htm>.

47 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2012, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2012/2, ‘Decisions Adopted by the Executive Board in 2011’ (DP/2012/2).

for the HDR.<sup>48</sup> HDRO responded to the recommendations by broadening consultations and re-establishing the Panel.<sup>49</sup> HDRO also improved engagement with national statistical offices and international data providers in order to enhance transparency and to ensure that HDI calculations make the widest possible use of internationally recognized comparable data.

### 3.2 GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS: 1990 TO 2014

The key components of the global HDRs are the thematic analysis and policy recommendations and the human development data.

#### THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The first three global HDRs covered the human development concept, financing and global dimensions. In addition to articulating the human development perspective, each subsequent HDR focused on one theme in order to advocate for its improvement. The scope of the analysis included themes of wider relevance to United Nations programmes (see Table 3 for themes covered by the global HDRs from 1990 to 2014). HDRs seek to raise awareness and generate debate on public policy issues and concerns related to the theme covered. The forewords of the HDRs and the Executive Board briefings indicate that global HDR objectives also aim to influence policy-making at the local, national, regional and global levels and to facilitate exchanges among development actors that enable experience-sharing and relationship building.

The reports were more or less consistent in the use of human development concepts, although

the dimensions mentioned in the main statements of human development in each report revealed that the language and categories have evolved over time. The 1990 global HDR began with a clear definition of human development as the process of enlarging people's choices, emphasizing the freedom to be healthy, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Subsequent HDRs abridged this definition, and over time, the definition "enlarging people's choices" became widely used by the HDRs. A review of the dimensions of human development covered in the reports from 1990 to 2009 points that the abridged definition did not explicitly include the need to sustain outcomes across years and generations within the confines of limited resources or principles such as equity, human agency, collective action or process freedoms.<sup>50</sup> The 2011 report included sustainability and equity as report themes, although these concepts did not inform the analysis of other reports.

The HDRs recognize that the dimensions of human development used in the reports, although fundamental, are insufficient to capture the complexity of human development. Human development is considered to be about sustaining positive outcomes steadily over time and combating processes that impoverish people or underpin oppression and structural injustice. Plural principles such as equity, sustainability and respect for human rights are thus key to furthering human development.<sup>51</sup> The reports varied in the extent to which they included this in their analysis. However, the dimensions mentioned in the main statements of human development in each report reveal that the language and categories have evolved over time.

From a public policy perspective, the other key component of the HDRs is their policy recom-

48 United Nations Statistical Commission, 2011, 'Report of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission on statistics of human development, Forty-second session' (E/CN.3/2011/14), see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc11/2011-14-Bureau-HumanDevelopment-E.pdf>.

49 UNDP, 2011, 'Report of the Human Development Report Office to the UN Statistical Commission'. Human Development Report Office. New York.

50 Alkire, S., 2010, *Human Development: Definitions, Critiques, and Related Concepts*, UNDP-HDRO Occasional Papers No. 2010/1.

51 UNDP, 2010, *The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development*, New York, p. 2.

**Table 3. List of Global HDRs 1990–2014**

Year	Title of the global HDR
1990	Concept and Measurement of Human Development
1991	Financing Human Development
1992	Global Dimensions of Human Development
1993	People's Participation
1994	New Dimensions of Human Security
1995	Gender and Human Development
1996	Economic Growth and Human Development
1997	Human Development to Eradicate Poverty
1998	Consumption for Human Development
1999	Globalization with a Human Face
2000	Human Rights and Human Development
2001	Making New Technologies Work for Human Development
2002	Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World
2003	Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty
2004*	Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World
2005*	International cooperation at a crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World
2006*	Beyond scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis
2007–2008*	Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World
2009*	Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development
2010*	The Real Wealth of Nations: Pathways to Human Development
2011*	Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All
2013*	The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World
2014*	Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience

Note: \* Included in this evaluation

mentations. Each global HDR includes policy recommendations pertaining to the theme covered. These recommendations are intended to generate public policy debate and to provide a basis for alternative policy considerations. Policy recommendations are broadly stated, although some reports took a policy position.

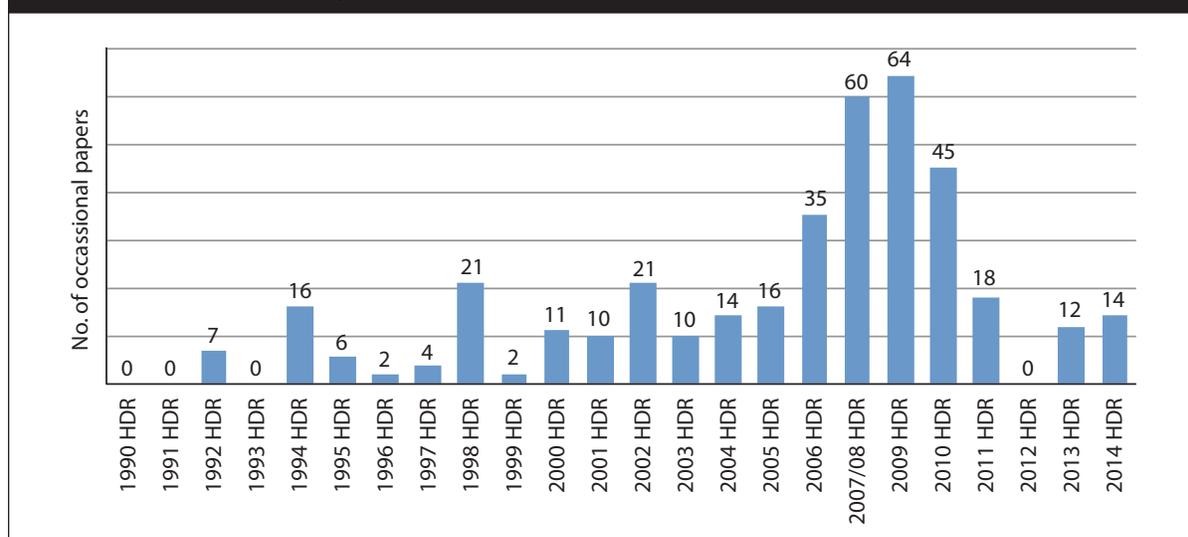
The global HDRs are based on an HDRO review and analysis of existing studies, data and other literature on the theme and several background papers that are commissioned specifically to inform report analysis. The number of occasional papers was small for the first nine years (1994 and 1998 excepted); a total of 59 papers were commissioned. The number of commissioned papers has increased since 2000. The highest

number of papers was commissioned from 2006 to 2010, when a total of 204 papers were commissioned. Subsequent to the 2010 HDR, there was a decline—44 papers were commissioned between 2011 and 2014 (see Figure 2).

The number of papers commissioned indicates the approach followed by HDRO in preparing the reports. For some reports, a large number of background papers were commissioned to get diverse perspectives. In contrast, some reports used only a small number of background papers on one perspective; other perspectives were drawn from the literature review.

Background papers that meet HDRO's quality criteria are published as occasional papers and

**Figure 2. Number of Background Papers Commissioned in the Preparation of the Global HDRs**



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

made available on the HDR website. Social science publication databases have been indexing the occasional papers for the past five years. In addition to releasing electronic versions of background papers, HDRO published a volume of papers in 2013 and 2014.

While the HDRO has the discretion to use the content from the background papers, better planning of research and inputs for the report can help it optimally utilize its resources. Only a subset of papers were published on the HDRO website; several papers were commissioned but not made public due to quality issues or because they were treated as internal documents.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DATA

The HDRs introduced several measurements to capture human development. In addition to HDI, nine other composite indices have been introduced; five are currently in use (see Annex 7 for the complete list of indices). The indices that were included in HDRs during the evaluation period (2004 to 2014) are presented in Box 2.

The HDI was introduced in the first report and has been calculated every year since. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) have been in use from 1995 to 2009. The 2010 HDR introduced three new measures: the Multidimensional Poverty Index, the Gender Inequality Index and the Inequality-adjusted HDI. These new measurements were intended to bring new insights and address concerns with earlier indices.<sup>52</sup>

To facilitate comparisons across countries and over time, the indices (to the extent possible) are prepared on the basis of internationally comparable data produced by international data agencies or other specialized institutions. Data produced by UN agencies and the World Bank is used in computing indices. For example, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics provides the HDRs with education data (e.g. literacy, enrolment and government expenditures in education), the United Nations Population Division provides the main demographic estimates and projections (e.g. life expectancy and population growth rates), and World Bank data provides the

<sup>52</sup> UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2011, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2011/25, 'Update on Human Development Report Preparations and Consultations' (DP/2011/25), New York.

## Box 2. Indices Used from 2004 to 2014

### **Human Development Index (HDI) (1990 to present)**

HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development. HDI was developed to emphasize that rather than economic growth alone, people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing a country's development.

### **Gender-related Development Index (GDI) (1995–2009)**

GDI, a composite index that measures human development in the same dimensions as the HDI, adjusts for gender inequality in those basic dimensions.

### **Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (1995–2009)**

GEM is a composite indicator that captures gender inequality in three key areas: the extent of women's political participation and decision-making, economic participation and decision-making power, and the power exerted by women over economic resources.

### **Inequality Adjusted HDI (IHDI) (2010 to present)**

IHDI adjusts the HDI for inequality in the distribution of each dimension. It takes into account not only the average achievements of a country on health, education and income, but also how those achievements are distributed among its population by discounting each dimension's average value according to its level of inequality.

### **Gender Inequality Index (GII) (2010 to present)**

GII, built on the same framework as the HDI and the IHDI, measures the human development costs of gender inequality. The index reflects gender differences in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and labour market engagement. It shows the loss in these dimensions due to disparity between female and male achievements in the dimensions. It varies between 0, when women and men fare equally, to 1, when one sex fares as poorly as possible in all three dimensions in comparison to the other.

### **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) (2010 to the present)**

MPI identifies individuals that suffer multiple deprivations in the same dimensions as the HDI (education, health and living standards).

### **Gender Development Index (GDI) (2014 to the present)**

Using the same statistical methodology as HDI to calculate values, GDI first determines a value for men and women separately and then derives the ratio of the two. GDI treats gender gaps equally, whether the gaps hurt men or women. Countries are ranked based on the absolute deviation from gender parity in HDI.

Source: Human Development Report Office

majority of the economic indicators, including gross domestic product (GDP) per capita and purchasing power parities.<sup>53</sup>

Many data gaps remain in some basic areas of the human development indicators. However, the HDRO is a user of—not a producer of—statistics. While advocating actively for the improvement of human development data, as a principle and for practical reasons HDRO does not collect data directly from countries or make estimates to fill these data gaps in the HDRs.<sup>54</sup>

The HDRO has made efforts to include as many countries as possible in HDI calculations. Coverage has increased from 107 countries in 1990 to 177 countries in 2004 to 187 countries since 2011. For a country to be included, data ideally should be available from the relevant international data agencies for all four components of the index. However, this is not the case for a significant number of countries. Considering countries' demand for HDI, the HDRO has endeavoured to use estimates to bridge data gaps when data is unavailable. This was done in consultation with

53 Source, Human Development Report Office.

54 Source, Human Development Report Office.

regional and national statistical offices or other experts, and HDRO has been collaborating with international agencies, the regional commissions and UNDP Country Offices to identify reasonable estimates where possible.

Discrepancies between national data and international estimates have been a long-standing issue. When compiling international data series, international data agencies often need to apply internationally adopted standards and harmonization procedures in order to ensure comparability across countries. Although national statistics are usually used as the basis for international data, adjustments are sometimes made. When data are missing from a country, an international agency may produce an estimate if other relevant information can be used. In addition, because of the deficiencies in the working processes between national and international data agencies, the more up-to-date national data might not always be incorporated in the international series in time to be useful to the HDR. There have been efforts by the HDRO to link the national and international data authorities whenever an issue arises, which has in a number of cases led to revised international estimates or the production of new estimates. The specific role of HDRO in addressing discrepancies in the data between national and international estimates is not immediately evident.

Typically, HDI is calculated to 15 decimal places, but only three are presented in the measurement. This practice occasionally leads to ties in HDI values. In order to avoid ties in rankings, HDI used the fourth, fifth and even the sixth decimal place. Since 2013, the global HDRs have used only three decimals of the HDI for ranking countries; countries of equal ranking are presented alphabetically within the rank. Robustness and reliability analysis have shown that for most countries, the HDI's third decimal is not statistically significant.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.3 MANAGEMENT OF GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Guided by the 2003 General Assembly resolution (57/264), the HDRO produces the global HDRs. The HDRO was established in 1995 and has had an independent status since 2003. Autonomous from UNDP policy and programme units, the HDRO reports to the UNDP Administrator. Its analysis and conclusions reflect the views of the HDRO and it is specifically stated that its content is not the official position of UNDP or the UN at large. According to the HDRO website, its mission is:

“to advance human development. The goal is to contribute towards the expansion of opportunities, choice and freedom. The office works towards this goal by promoting innovative new ideas, advocating practical policy changes, and constructively challenging policies and approaches that constrain human development. The office works with others to achieve change through writing and research, data analysis and presentation, support to national and regional analysis and outreach and advocacy work.”<sup>56</sup>

#### QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

The HDRO is supported by an Advisory Panel and a Statistical Advisory Panel, which provide it with strategic guidance related to the HDR, and a Readers Group, which provides a critical review of draft reports. In addition, the HDRO briefs the UN Statistical Commission on the statistical procedures used in HDRs for transparency and for engagement with the statistical community.

#### Advisory Panel

A 10- to 14-member Advisory Panel is constituted for the preparation of each report, bringing together renowned experts on the chosen theme

55 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2011, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2011/25, 'Update on Human Development Report Preparations and Consultations' (DP/2011/25), New York.

56 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/contacts/about>.

and providing the HDRO with intellectual advice and guidance. Advisory Panel members are drawn from academic and policy advocacy circles, with particular attention to regional diversity, gender balance and diversity of approach. The Advisory Panel works closely with the HDR Team, particularly the HDRO Director. Consultative only, the Advisory Panel cannot be held accountable for the text of the report.

The Advisory Panel usually meets twice during the course of report preparation. The Advisory Panel's main task is to advise the HDR Team in all aspects of HDR production, particularly on theme selection, central messages, issues and concepts; relevant evidence and theory from current academic literature; policy advocacy stances that the HDR could most usefully adopt; coherence of argumentation; regional perspectives and sensitivities on various issues; and in establishing contacts with individuals and research institutions currently researching relevant thematic areas. The Advisory Panel is also expected to be available for consultation during the course of report preparation, particularly in the final stages of preparation when the messages are being refined and arguments sharpened.

#### **Statistical Advisory Panel**

In 2000, the HDRO established the Statistical Advisory Panel to help guide its statistical work in the HDRs. Unlike the Advisory Panel, the Statistical Advisory Panel has been constituted intermittently. Since being revived in 2011 upon the recommendation of the Expert Group on the Human Development Index, the Statistical Advisory Panel has facilitated early and full consultations with the official statistical community during HDR preparation.

The Statistical Advisory Panel is comprised of esteemed international and national statisticians from around the world (including programme countries), heads of national statistics offices, academics and staff of international organizations. The Statistical Advisory Panel meets twice a year at different stages of report preparation and are available for consultation during the entire

course of report preparation. At least three statistical peer reviewers review and comment on the use of and underlying evidence for statistics used in the HDR. In recent years, there has been greater emphasis to include heads of national statistical offices on the Statistical Advisory Panel. For example, the 2012–2013 Statistical Advisory Panel comprised 14 members, nine of which were drawn from national statistical offices.

#### **Readers Group**

The Readers Group, an internal peer review process in place since 2001, is drawn from UNDP staff from regional bureaux with subject expertise. The readers group is usually made up of 10 to 12 UNDP professional staff with strong academic and analytical credentials. The group meets twice a year, reviews draft HDRs at key points and helps distil regionally relevant messages.

#### **CONSULTATIONS**

The HDRO holds both formal and informal consultations with a range of development actors who are potential users or disseminators of the report. Consultations reviewed topic selection; shared report concepts, analysis and the processes that were followed; discussed emerging and final messages; and collected diverse perspectives.

#### **UNDP Executive Board**

There have been consultations with the Executive Board since the inception of the reports. In 2009, following discussions with the Executive Board, it was agreed that HDRO will hold two to three informal consultations with the Executive Board on the process of each report. The consultations are related to the theme of the report, conceptualization of the theme and draft reporting (including indices and key messages once the report is finalized). Consultations are also held with the Board's regional groups to deepen the dialogue and to consider region-specific feedback and initiatives. The HDRO has been encouraging representatives of United Nations permanent missions to meet with HDRO staff regarding the theme, broad outlines of the HDR or to discuss more specific statistical concerns.

### **Policymakers and policy intermediaries**

According to HDRO, consultations are held with a range of potential users. HDRO has continued to pursue opportunities to expand the range of groups consulted. There have been efforts to systematically engage policymakers, but information on the scale of such consultations was not available for all HDRs within the evaluation period. Broadly, the consultations included bilateral meetings with policymakers in programme countries and regional headquarters, donor governments and bodies at their headquarters, the UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee, UN regional commissions, international institutions and universities and other academic institutions. The number of consultations has varied across reports.

### **National statistics offices**

Consultations have been established with national statistical offices since 2011. HDRO sends letters to national statistical offices, including through the permanent missions to the UN, advising them about the international data sources that will be used to calculate HDI and related indices. The communications also include a calendar with deadlines for when international data will be obtained from the source agencies, advanced notice on the likely need to estimate missing data and a final notice to countries for which the HDI could not be computed because the countries are missing data for two or more HDI components. HDRO annually convenes a side event for Chief Statisticians during the meeting of the Statistical Commission in the spring (intended for one region but open to all).

## **3.4 OUTREACH OF GLOBAL HDRS**

### **REPORT DISSEMINATION**

The report launch is the key communication activity of the HDRO. HDRs are launched by the UNDP Administrator (with the exception of

the 20th Anniversary issue, which was launched jointly by the United Nations Secretary-General and the UNDP Administrator). In cooperation with the UNDP Regional Bureaux and the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy-Office of Communications, HDRO provides support to simultaneous or subsequent major launch events in donor countries, regional and national launches in each of UNDP's five programme regions. Additional launch events often take place at international multilateral or academic conferences. Historic information about launches and consultations is not available for all reports.

Subsequent to the global launch, HDRs are presented and discussed at regional and national events. The global launch is attended by the head of state in the country where it is launched; senior government representatives and a range of development actors attend regional- and national-level launches. There is no data available on the number of countries that launched the report each year; HDRO estimates that about 100 countries launched the 2013 HDR.

International symposiums were held every year in donor headquarters as part of the launch. In addition, Global Human Development Forum discussed the report. For example, the Global Human Development Forum 2011 was held in Istanbul in collaboration with the Government of Turkey. The 2011 HDR recommendations formed the basis for policy discussions on equity and sustainability among politicians, policymakers, opinion leaders and partners. The report of the Global Human Development Forum informed a side event at the Rio+20 conference co-convened with the Government of Turkey.

The Human Development Resource Network,<sup>57</sup> the *Let's Talk Human Development* blog<sup>58</sup> and the Human Development Report Facebook page<sup>59</sup>

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57 <http://hdrnet.org>.

58 [blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/category/tags/human-development](https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/category/tags/human-development).

59 [facebook.com/HumanDevelopmentReport](https://www.facebook.com/HumanDevelopmentReport).

are used for broader discussions about the HDRs and the issues covered. According HDRO, more than 13,000 e-mail subscribers receive regular updates about background papers, blog updates, consultation announcements and notices of new materials posting to the HDR website. The HDR Facebook page has 190,000 followers.

## PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

The global HDRs are published in six languages (five UN languages and Portuguese) while the summaries of the reports are published in over 15 languages. HDRO manages (and funds) translations into the official UN languages, with the exception of Arabic, where the UN Economic Commission for Western Asia's Arabic translation services have been used. HDRO collaborates with regional bureaux to ensure that politically sensitive references and technical terminology are translated correctly. Two reviewers from the

regional bureau review the translated version for clarity of presentation, to identify major mistakes and to avoid inadvertent misinterpretations.<sup>60</sup>

Oxford University Press and then Palgrave Macmillan published the HDRs until 2009. Since 2010, the HDRO Communications and Publications unit has handled publication and distribution.

## 3.5 FINANCING GLOBAL HDRS

According to the HDRO, from 2004 to 2014 \$60 million from core and \$6 million from non-core resources have been spent for HDR publication and related expenses (see Table 4). Core resources had steadily increased from 2004 until 2010 and then have decreased since 2011 (see Table 4). The reductions in resources were mainly due to organization-wide funding

**Table 4. Allocations per Year (US\$ 000)**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Core budget	4,321	5,553	4,646	4,532	6,063	6,723	6,510	5,352	5,598	5,253	5550	60,101
Non-core budget	621	248	996	871	209	23	710	559	753	643	382	6,015
Total expenditure	4,942	5,801	5,642	5,403	6,272	6,746	7,220	5,911	6,351	5,896	5932	66,116

Source: Human Development Report Office

**Table 5. Expenditure Year (US\$ 000)**

Activities	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Staff cost	3,034	2,671	2,701	2,292	3,328	3,899	3,866	3,560	4,074	3,850	30,574
Office rent	154	334	347	412	382	369	368	427	423	419	3,635
Unspecified activities	1,754	2,795	2,592	2,698	2,561	2,477	2,985	1,923	1,853	1,626	23,264
Total expenditure	4,942	5,801	5,642	5,403	6,272	6,746	7,220	5,911	6,351	5,896	54,383

Source: Human Development Report Office

60 UNDP, 2014, 'Launching the Human Development Report — Who Does What (and Why and When)', Human Development Report Office, New York.

cuts and were not specific to HDRO. Similarly, non-core resources have substantially reduced since 2008.

The HDRO has not actively sought donor funding purposively to uphold editorial independence, although it accepted support from donor countries and foundations for specific activities (for example, report translation and event organization). Income from royalties has been small (about \$3,500 for 2013 and 2014 combined).

Salaries comprised approximately 55 percent of total HDRO expenditures; unspecified expenses (e.g. hiring consultants for background papers and other tasks) accounted for approximately 43 percent of expenditures (see Table 5). The average staff costs remained at \$3 million annually with a peak in 2012; overall staff costs were higher from 2009 to 2013. HDRO has had 18 staff members from 2006 through January 2015. The nature of staff contracts changed and staff costs increased with the 2009 contractual reform.



## Chapter 4

# CONTRIBUTION OF THE GLOBAL HDRS TO PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES

This chapter presents the main evaluation findings of global HDR contributions to public policy processes. The analysis and findings distinguish between three interrelated aspects of the global HDRs: their perceived utility, their use and their actual contributions to public policy processes. Use of the report and the extent of their contributions denote the outcome of the use—how the global HDRs informed policy processes and influenced policymaking.

The evaluation findings confirm the theory of change developed for this evaluation, that policymaking processes take place in different settings, are not necessarily confined to government processes and that deliberations taking place in different settings mutually influence each other. Although the evaluation did not carry out a detailed analysis of national-level policy processes, three patterns were nonetheless evident. These patterns are important to understanding global HDR contributions.

First, given the complex and dynamic processes of policymaking, it follows that different actors actively participate in shaping and applying policies. In addition to government officials and political representatives, development actors engaged in policy processes include international development agencies, NGOs and CSOs, think tanks and research institutions and academics. In terms of use of research and data, these policy intermediaries had key roles to play in debating policy issues, forming public opinion and providing policy options. This implies that the use of global HDRs by different groups of development actors is critical to informing policy processes. Case study countries varied in terms of how policy decisions are made, particularly the level of influence non-governmental development actors have in policymaking. Despite this variation, policy

intermediaries were actively engaged in policy processes in most countries. Second, the incidence of latent use or diffusion of global HDR messages is closely related to the level of use by development actors. Third, in terms of national-level development actors' use of data, research and analysis, there are often strong preferences for certain sources of information; such preferences varied for each sector in the policymaking terrain.

This chapter is structured in the following five sections:

1. The first section presents a set of findings that examines the reach, use and utility of the global HDRs to a range of development actors who are pathways to informing and influencing public debates and policy processes. The section analyses what is used most in the reports and the level of that use. This section also includes the extent to which UNDP uses the global HDRs;
2. The second section analyses global HDR contributions to public debates and policy processes and the factors that affect these contributions. The findings are presented on three key components of the reports: thematic analysis, human development data and policy recommendations. This section also includes the extent to which the global HDRs informed UNDP programmes;
3. The third section presents findings on how the global HDRs promoted gender equality from a human development perspective. This includes the contributions of gender indices;
4. The fourth section analyses the communication and dissemination of global HDR messages; and
5. The fifth, concluding section presents findings related to the management of the global

HDRs as a factor in facilitating their use and contribution to policy processes.

#### 4.1 REACH AND UTILITY OF THE GLOBAL HDRS

**Finding 1: The global HDRs were used to a greater extent in national-level public policy processes than in global- and regional-level public debates. The degree to which global HDRs were used varied considerably across the reports and among different groups of development actors. The HDI was the most used content of the reports.**

The global HDRs were used by key development actors, including government officials, academia, UN agencies, think tanks and civil society. The degree of use was considerably low for more than half of the reports assessed. The evaluation found that across the case study countries, global HDRs did not have a niche audience and that the extent of use was low among policy intermediaries. Even when global HDRs were used, the purpose of use varied from mere citation for comparative analysis to informing policy processes (the latter was confined to a small number of reports). In the majority of cases, government actors' use was contingent upon use by policy intermediaries. In many countries, this included use by academics and researchers who were advisers to the government and who were engaged in direct policy work as part of think tanks. Therefore, low use by policy intermediaries decreased the level of use by government actors and policymakers.

Although there were regional variations, the global HDRs that generated more interest among development actors were *International Cooperation, Beyond Scarcity, Fighting Climate Change and the Real Wealth of Nations*. The *Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* reports were more used in the Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions. These reports had wider appeal and were used by different groups of development actors; the reports were most popular among civil society organizations. The *Rise of the South* was discussed to a

greater extent in Africa and Asia and the Pacific and to a lesser extent in other regions. *Rise of the South* was particularly popular among the government actors, although the report was not necessarily used for policy purpose, cited or used by other development actors. Overall, global HDRs generated limited interest in parts of Europe and the CIS compared to other regions.

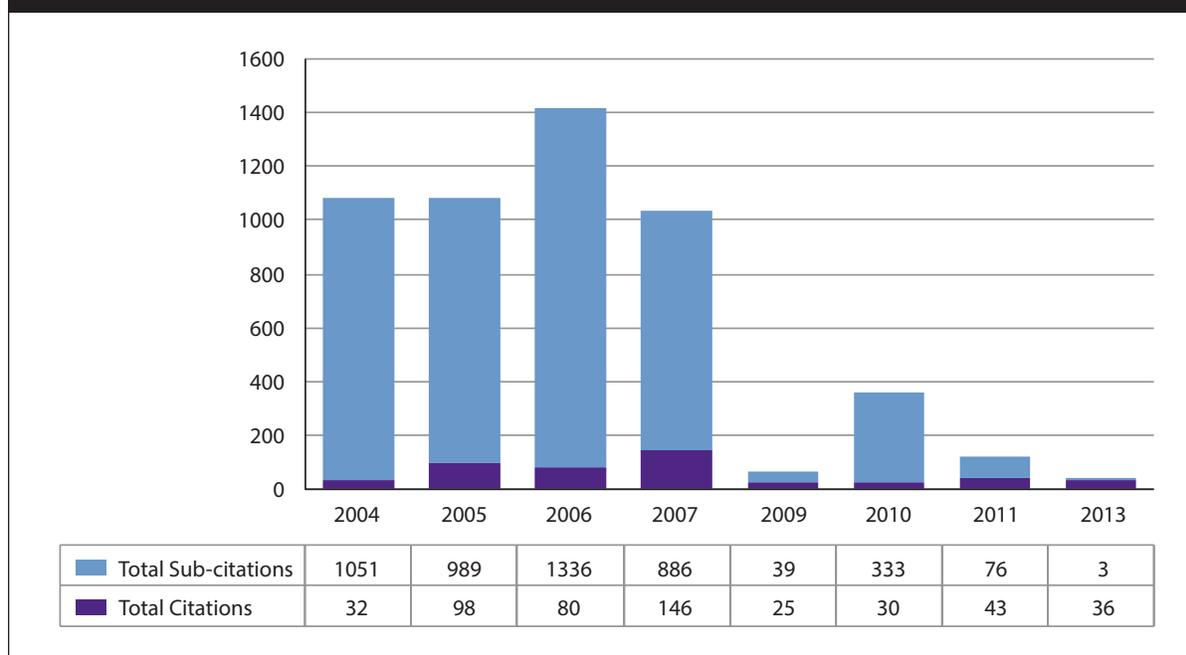
The global HDRs were not well targeted at different groups of development actors, thus reducing their potential use in public policy processes. Thematic discussions of the global HDRs in the past five years have lost traction, particularly among NGOs, international organizations, researchers and think tanks. These groups are policy intermediaries in many countries, and their use of the HDRs is often critical to global HDRs informing national policy processes.

It was evident that while policymakers valued the global HDRs, they needed policy recommendations in a form that could be applied to their country context or illustrations they could draw from. These inputs often came through policy briefs prepared by think tanks, international organizations and in some cases NGOs. Several international and national NGOs were reluctant to invest time in discussions related to global HDRs, as the messages were seen as commonplace and that global HDRs were not pushing the boundaries of development debate. CSO use of global HDRs has decreased over the years.

Although download statistics from the HDRO website were not available for all reports, the average number of downloads per report (where information was available) was 300,000, indicating continued interest in the reports in general. The case studies and Internet analysis show that this interest did not always translate into use of the reports.

The country case studies consistently found that the *International Cooperation, Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* reports were more used for their thematic analysis and policy recommendations. With the exception of *International*

**Figure 3. Citations and Sub-citations of Global HDRs**



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

**Table 6. Comparison of Citations with Other Publications**

	Average citations per paper	Sub-citations per paper	H – Index per paper	M – index per paper
World Development Reports	13	63	2.8	0.5
Global HDRs	60.3	580.1	9.3	1.5
Regional HDRs	5.3	9.4	0.9	0.2
Occasional Papers	12.6	88.7	2.7	0.5

*Cooperation, Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change*, the level of use of the global HDRs among academics and researchers at the national level was found to be low. Academics and researchers in all regions considered that the global HDRs have lost their reputation in international development and in regional- and national-level policy processes. This is substantiated partly by the journal citation pattern of the global HDRs and occasional papers. While the global HDRs reached across social science disciplines, had a high academic impact and scored high in terms of citation and sub-citations (which placed them among the most cited publications in the social sciences), there has been a decrease in the citation pattern of more recent reports.

Although academic publication takes much longer (the publication process itself takes time compared to media releases or blogging), there has been a decrease in academic citation of the global HDRs since 2009. Of the eight reports assessed since 2004, only three showed an average of at least 80 citations. The *Fighting Climate Change* and the *International Cooperation* reports had a high number of citations, followed by *Beyond Scarcity* (see Figure 3). In terms of regional variations, academics and researchers in the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions used the reports to a greater extent compared to other regions. The global HDRs, however, were comparatively more cited than the World Bank's World Development Reports (see Table 6).

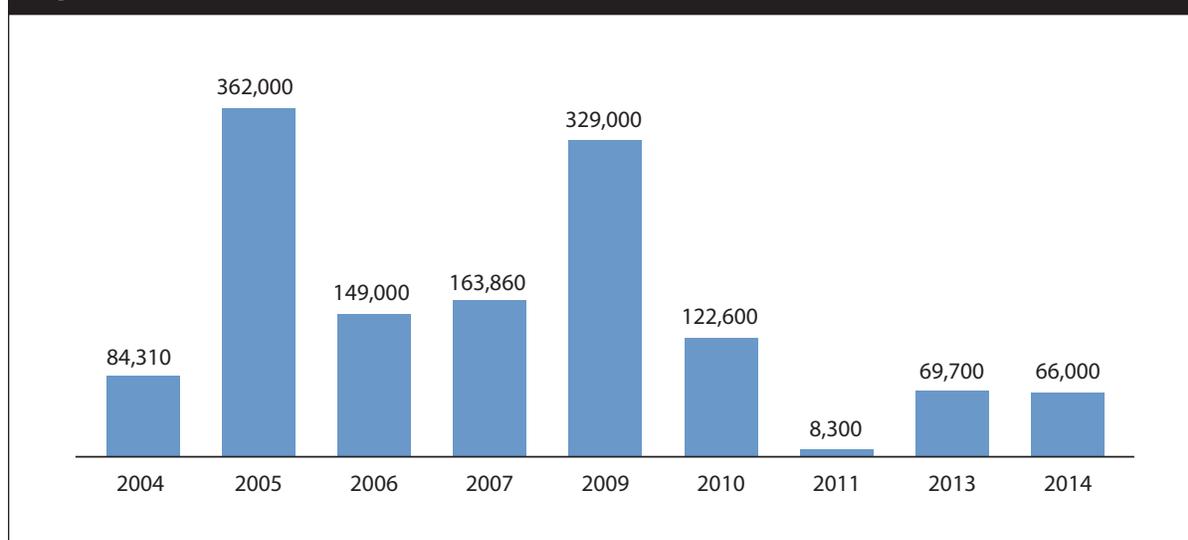
Internet analysis provides additional insights on use patterns. The evaluation analysed 739 valid Internet results (i.e. search results that were not machine feeds or repetitions); 44 percent comprised development actors and 55 percent comprised mainstream and social media.<sup>61</sup> Although there were a few variations, the reports that generated broad academic interest correlated with reports that country-level development actors saw as more useful for policy processes.<sup>62</sup> Use of the global HDRs continued to decline from 2011 to 2014 and generated minimal interest.

Internet search results do not necessarily reflect the global HDRs' contributions to policy processes. For example, although *Overcoming Barriers* had high Internet results, the case studies show limited evidence of its use in informing policy

processes. A problem with some themes (such as migration, climate change or water), is the difficulty in competing for policy actors' attention against other international agencies' regularly published, specialized publications that are frequently accessed by development actors.

The Hirsch index, or h-index, is a common measure used to assess the publication record of academic researchers. It considers both the number of publications by the researcher and the citations accrued by those publications. The h-index can be applied to units of analysis other than individual researchers; this analysis uses it to measure the performance of individual works. This is done by treating each publication as the unit of analysis. The h-index is then calculated by combining the number of citing publications and the number

**Figure 4. Internet Searches for the Global HDRs**



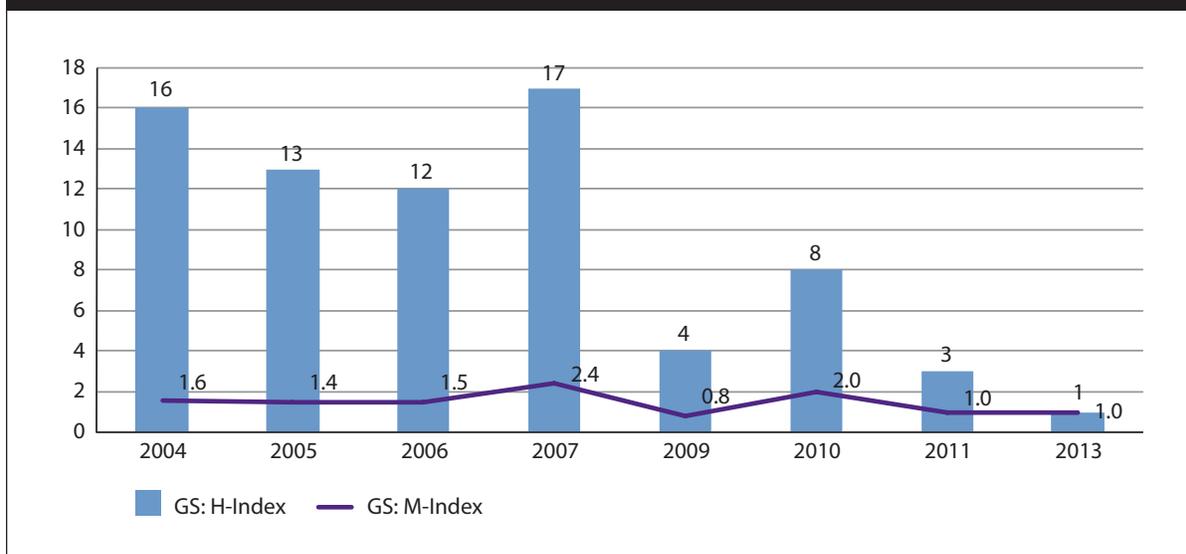
Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

61 The global users of HDRs include NGOs, CSOs, academics and researchers, universities and research institutions, governments, UN agencies and think tanks. Overall, academics, researchers and universities comprised the largest category of users (33 percent) followed by NGOs and CSOs (29 percent), UN agencies (10 percent), governments (9 percent), international organizations (7 percent), think tanks (3 percent) and others (10 percent).

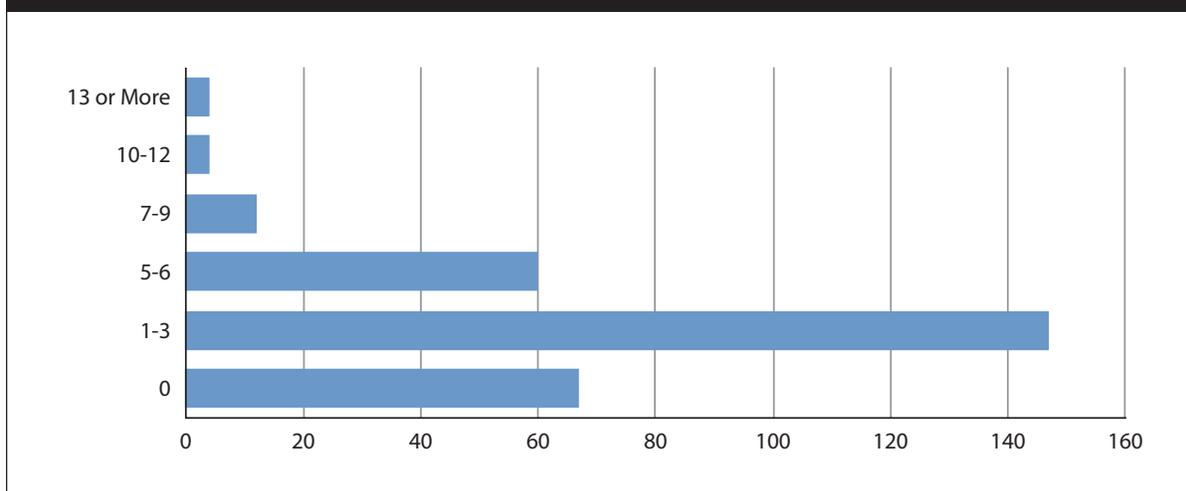
Of the 398 media-related search results analysed, 40 percent was related to print and television news media, 28 percent was Twitter, 3 percent was YouTube, 2 percent was Facebook (the remaining was related to forum discussions). Coverage and discussion related to Global HDR launch events largely comprised media and social media. There was an increase in media reporting on global HDRs that correlated to the time of the launch of the reports. The global HDRs did not generate much discussion on the Internet, with the exception of a few blogs.

62 Some of this disparity may be due to the fact that global HDRs includes the indices, whereas the World Bank also has the world development indicators separately available, which are often directly referenced.

**Figure 5. Citation Pattern of Global HDRs: H-index and M-index**



**Figure 6. H-index Distribution for Occasional Papers**



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

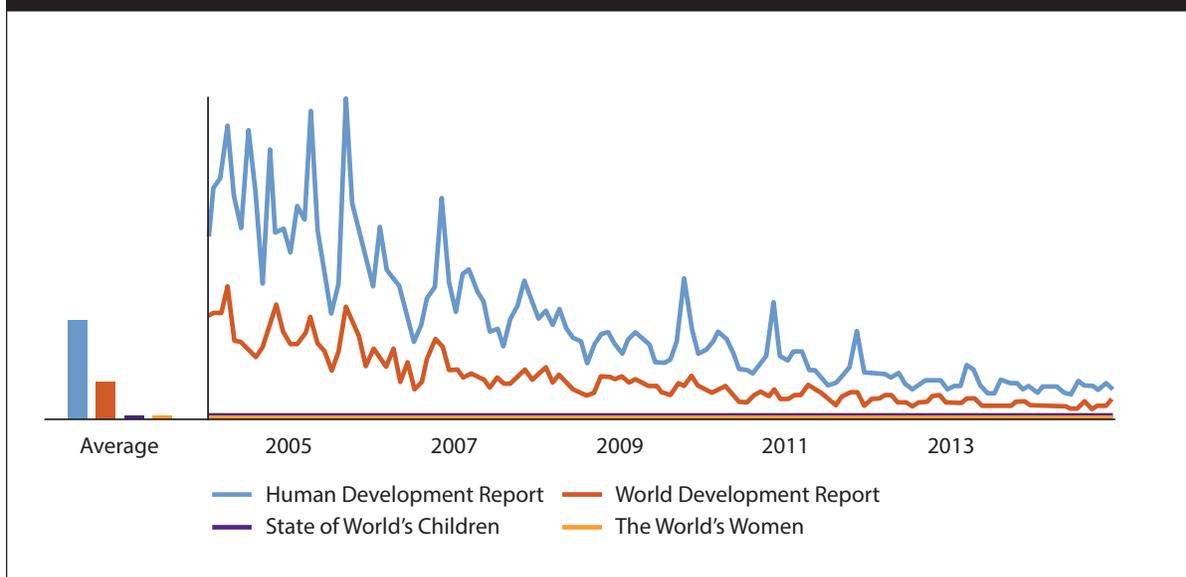
of citations accrued by each citing publication. In this adaptation of Hirsch's 2005 definition, a paper with an index of  $h$  has been cited by  $h$  secondary papers each of which has in turn been cited in other (tertiary) papers at least  $h$  times.

The  $m$ -index is an indicator calculated by dividing the  $h$ -index measurement by the amount of time that has passed since the article's publication. The  $m$ -index is intended to prevent an undue weight from being given to publications that have had significantly more time (and therefore opportunity) to be cited.

There was an overall decrease in the use of global publications, a trend seen in the use of global HDRs as well as in the World Development Reports. Google trends for the global HDRs, World Development Reports, UNICEF's State of the World's Children reports, and UN DESA's World's Women reports show a marked decrease in searches (See Figure 7).

At the country level, HDI was discussed more than the HDR's thematic analysis, although not always in the context of policymaking. There were several factors that influenced development actors'

Figure 7. Google Trends Comparing Global HDRs with Other Publications



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

use of HDR thematic analysis, such as thematic relevance to the country's policy priorities, message clarity, effectiveness of message dissemination and the perceived domain expertise of UNDP. Across the case study countries, policymakers preferred the thematic analysis of publications by organizations with thematic specialization. Often, policymakers expressed a marked preference for specific international publications and data sources. For example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature continues to be the preferred resource point for climate change-related data and publications; International Labour Organization publications are preferred for employment and work; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development publications are generally preferred for trade related analysis; and OECD publications are preferred for information and analysis on international cooperation. Reasons for the preference include the notion that specialist organizations provided in-depth analysis based on primary research and that their analysis already takes into consideration other studies and opinion on the subject.

Country-level development actors' use of the reports was greater when the report theme related to global forums or intergovernmental confer-

ences in which the country participated. In India, Nepal, Samoa and Tajikistan, there were examples of increased use by NGOs and government actors of *Fighting Climate Change* coinciding with the countries' participation in international forums and deliberations on national commitments under the Kyoto protocol. In general, unless followed up by regional or country papers, the number of direct users of the global HDRs was fairly small.

Use of HDRs within the UN system remains limited, at both headquarters and country levels. While there were instances of country-level UN agencies using global HDRs, each agency had their own flagship publications to promote—the agencies did not feel compelled to use global or regional HDRs. Further, in countries where there were controversies around the HDI or any component of the thematic analysis, UN agencies did not want to be seen as being associated with the report or as endorsing its messages. When reports were popular with the government, UN agencies expressed a sense of resentment that UNDP was not sharing the recognition despite the expectation that UN agencies should own the reports. UN agencies' involvement in report preparation was considered as essential for report

ownership and country-level use, particularly by agencies whose mandated area was covered by the HDR. But the larger opinion was that involving too many agencies would decrease the effectiveness and originality of the HDRs and would risk the global HDRs becoming negotiated documents.

The use of the global HDRs in UN debates and by regional economic commissions' bodies was limited. The United Nations Secretariat prepares a large number of reports each year for the Secretary-General and prepares a number of reports to inform various deliberations. A joint Executive Board paper estimated that UN agencies produce about 17,000 reports annually.<sup>63</sup> A review of General Assembly documents and discussions with Member States points to the limited use of global HDRs. In General Assembly discussions, representatives of Member States found that documents prepared for the Secretary-General were more useful, as they were directly relevant to the topics discussed and were more precise. In the case of regional economic commissions, there was no specific interest in the global HDRs. There was a preference for reports that were prepared by the commissions and other regional publications that were prepared in collaboration with the commissions.

Although several publications preceded UN-sponsored global conferences, the use of global HDRs was not always evident. In addition, the choice of which publication to use in global debates often has political implications; different country groupings prefer different publications. The limited use of global HDRs by UN agencies should be seen in this context because such limited use may not necessarily reflect on the report's quality or usability.

**Finding 2: The global HDRs were not well targeted at different groups of development actors, thus reducing potential use in public policy processes. The use of global HDRs by civil society organizations has decreased.**

Although the HDRO website has a sizeable number of CSO e-mail subscribers of HDR news, interest in global HDRs among civil society actors has decreased over the past five years.<sup>64</sup> Many civil society actors find the global HDRs increasingly lacking in striking messages that can be used in their advocacy work. According to the country case studies and report case studies, the CSOs had reservations about using global HDRs for advocacy and lobbying work. The survey of civil society actors corroborates this. About 70 percent of respondents did not use global HDRs for advocacy work.

For example, in the recent global debates to define the post-2015 global development agenda, many participants (particularly civil society actors) advocated for including an explicit goal of reducing inequality. A UN Team was assigned the responsibility of coordinating a series of consultations on this matter and synthesizing the conclusions of the deliberations. The synthesis report, which came out in 2013, testifies to the strong desire of people from around the world to see that their leaders take the issue of inequality seriously.<sup>65</sup> Various suggestions have been offered about how to reduce inequality, from many different perspectives, which the synthesis report ably summarized.

The perspective of two-way causation between equity and sustainability that *Sustainability and Equity* tried to promote found very little place in these deliberations. The synthesis devoted a couple of pages to the discussion of inequalities

63 UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN Women and WFP, 2013, 'Operationalizing the decisions of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)', Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, 4 February, New York.

64 The HDRO currently has nearly 30,000 civil society subscribers—Africa (6,816), Asia and the Middle East (5,937), Europe (6,684), Latin America and the Caribbean (5,650), North America (3,475) and Oceania (615).

65 UNICEF and UN Women, 2013, 'Addressing Inequalities: Synthesis Report of Global Public Consultation'. Co-led by UNICEF and UN Women with support from the Government of Denmark and the Government of Ghana.

in what it calls the ‘environmental domain’, but the focus here is on the well-known fact that the effects of environmental degradation fall inequitably on the disadvantaged segments of the population. The specific contribution that *Sustainability and Equity* tried to make by drawing attention to the existence of synergies between equity and environment did not seem to have substantively informed these discussions. It is revealing that in the recent reports on inequality prepared by other international organizations, there is an extensive list of references to relevant literature but not to *Sustainability and Equity*.<sup>66</sup>

**Finding 3: There was significant variation in how long a particular report remained relevant. The subjects covered by the global HDRs were a factor in determining the level of interest shown and development actors’ longevity of use.**

Topics such as *Resilience and Vulnerability*, *Migration* and *Sustainability and Equity* did not have the expected level of policy resonance given the importance of these topics to public policy and planning. The uses of these concepts in the reports was not easily comprehensible for policy application. Most development actors considered simplifying complex concepts and providing practical ideas from a human development perspective—ideas that could be applied in policymaking—was key to generating interest in the global HDRs.

The ability of the global HDRs to provide thought leadership largely rested on whether they followed the trend of contemporary development themes or they thought ahead to raise critical development issues that were not widely discussed in policy debates. Some global HDRs raised issues that were not widely covered in the development discourse (e.g. culture and human rights reports). While most reports followed

currently popular subjects, the more successful reports either conceptualized issues differently or explored issues that had yet to be widely covered or discussed. The longevity of the report use was related to the approach taken. For example, the *Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* reports provided new dimensions to the much-discussed topics.

Topic selection for the global HDRs was a vague process. Although there were consultations to identify potential topics, selection appears to have been done on instinct of what was considered important at the time of report commencement. Although the topics covered were key development issues, they were often already extensively researched and published on; some topics are published annually by organizations with domain expertise in the area. What is key to generating interest even with topics that have been written about extensively is to narrow down and shrewdly select issues to discuss. However, this was not always systematically thought through. Further, the reports’ focus was not always evident. Those familiar with the topic selection process were of the view that background research in identifying a short list of topics was lacking.

There were instances where the topic covered by the global HDRs was in response to a UN conference theme. *Gender and Human Development*, prepared for the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, had a greater impact on policy debate than any other global HDR. Some development actors from the global South perceived conference-focused topic selection as agenda-driven and a narrow way of selecting development issues for coverage by the reports. Nonetheless, global HDRs based on topics of upcoming UN conferences were particularly useful to UNDP’s contributions to global conferences and positioning.

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66 Interestingly, in the Annex on Economic Inequalities, the section on Recommendations and Conclusions contains a sentence that would appear at first sight to have been taken straight out of *Sustainability and Equity*: “There was a clear demand for a new vision for promoting human development through the joint lens of sustainability and equity.” However, a careful scrutiny of the text reveals that this sentence is almost a *sui generis*; it does not follow from any of the analysis that precedes it. In fact, its Box 1, which offers a priority action list for addressing economic inequalities, does not even mention environment or sustainability. See UNICEF and UN Women, 2013, ‘Addressing Inequalities: Synthesis Report of Global Public Consultation’, Annex 5.

Producing a useful report on a development topic that has an existing and ongoing body of literature entails developing unique content and perspectives; the global HDRs did not always achieve this end. For example, *Sustainability and Equity* was preceded and followed by several global and regional reports by other organizations that focused on the common concern over equity. While the explicit concern with equity is in common with the advocacy of equity by the global HDR, the perspectives underlying the advocacy of the other reports are very different.

Overall, there was a greater preference for equity reports that looked at the issue from different angles. A manifestation of the inadequate reach of the *Sustainability and Equity* report was that none of the high-profile reports on inequality that have come out in recent years from various international institutions seems to have drawn from the insights offered by it. At least four such reports have come out after 2011 (one from the Asian Development Bank, one from the UN Task Force on inequality, one from UNDESA, and one from the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy).<sup>67</sup> Evidently, all the hard work—and arguably high quality work—that went into *Sustainability and Equity* found no reflection in the work of those who carried forward the global discourse on inequality in subsequent years. In fact, these reports hardly mention *Sustainability and Equity* in their large and wide-ranging bibliographies. Out of the four reports, only the one by UNDESA mentions *Sustainability and Equity*—only once—and that too for referring to

a piece of data, not for the substantive issues discussed.<sup>68</sup> The longevity of use of reports was very short in terms of a lack of visibility of the reports on the global stage. Further, the abundance of publications on similar themes reduced the longevity of HDR usability.

The *Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* reports provide an example of a conceptualization of human development that increased both report use and duration (see Figure 8). The reports focused on widely published themes, including themes that are included in regular annual publications.<sup>69</sup> Yet despite numerous topical publications, the HDRs were used for the human development perspective they provided, which was seen as a new dimension that the regular technical publications had overlooked. The reports were widely cited in subsequent publications on water, environment and climate change, including UNESCO's Water Assessments, Rio+20 publications and the UN Water report. The country case studies show that *Beyond Scarcity* made an impression on development actors when it was published, and although it is nearly 10 years old, its arguments and the issues it raised are still considered highly relevant. The report has been used by development intermediaries and has had great use in policy processes. The report gave a clear strategic message for addressing the concerns of water and provided the first global assessment of the topic linked with human development.

Patterns of citation over time provide further insights into the longevity of use of the reports.

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67 Asian Development Bank, 2012, *Asian Development Outlook 2012: Confronting Rising Inequality in Asia*, Manila; United Nations, 2012, *Addressing Inequalities: The Heart of the Post-2015 Agenda and the Future We Want for All*, UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, New York; United Nations, 2013, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, UN-DESA, New York; UNDP, 2013, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, BDP, New York.

68 "An analysis of trends in educational inequality since the 1970s, measured in years of schooling, shows declining disparities in most countries (UNDP, 2011)." See United Nations, 2013, *Inequality Matters: Report of the World Social Situation 2013*, p. 53.

69 Water-focused reports include World Water Development Reports, 2011 Status Report on the application of Integrated Water Approaches to Resource Management, UNESCO World Water Assessment Report, WHO Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS Reports), WHO/UNICEF Progress Reports on the Joint Monitoring Programmes for Water Supply and Sanitation (JMP) and FAO (AQUASAT) and University of Yale (Environment Performance Indicators). Climate change-related reports include UNEP Global Environmental Outlooks (geos).

**Figure 8. Longevity of the Global HDRs: Citation Patterns over the Years**

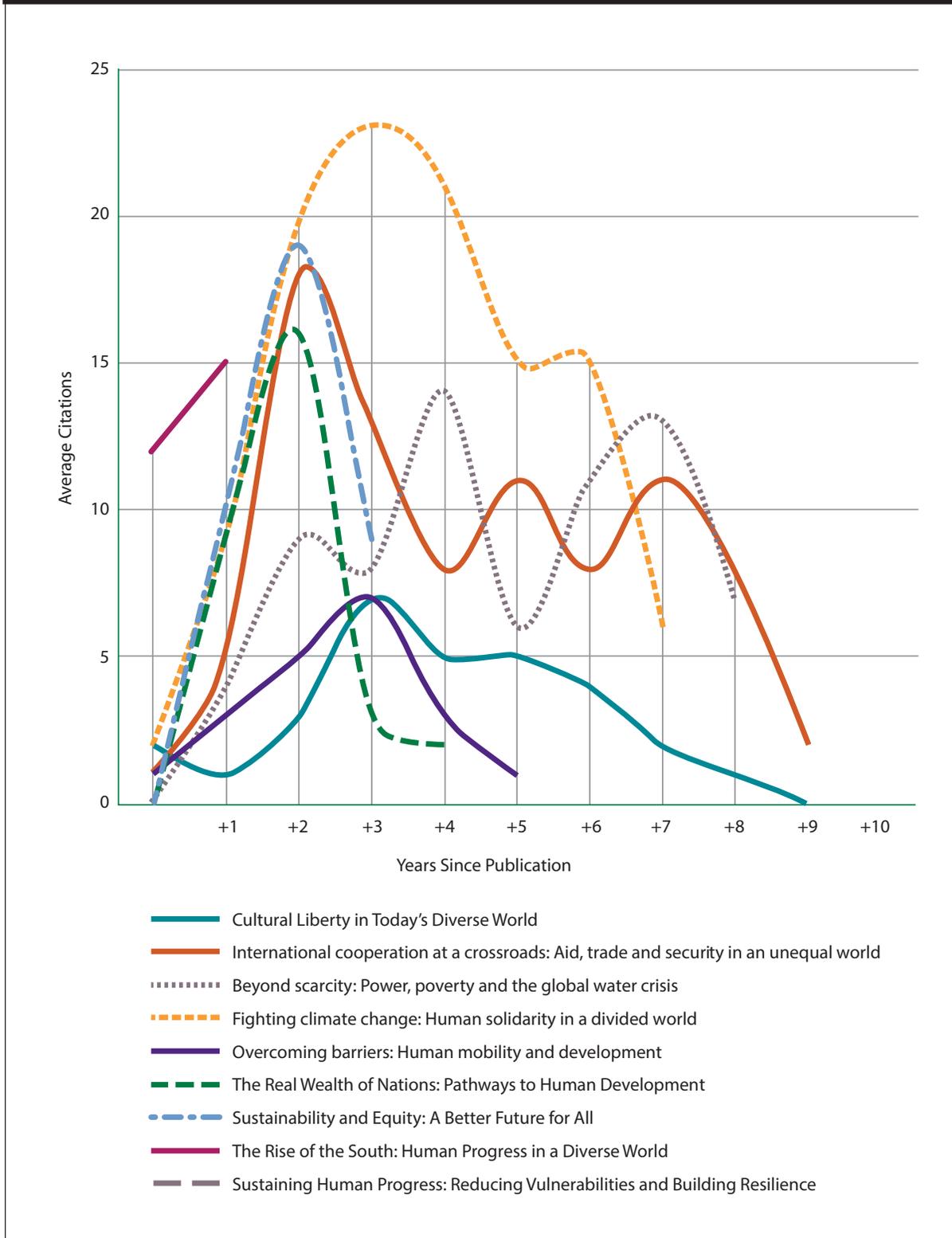
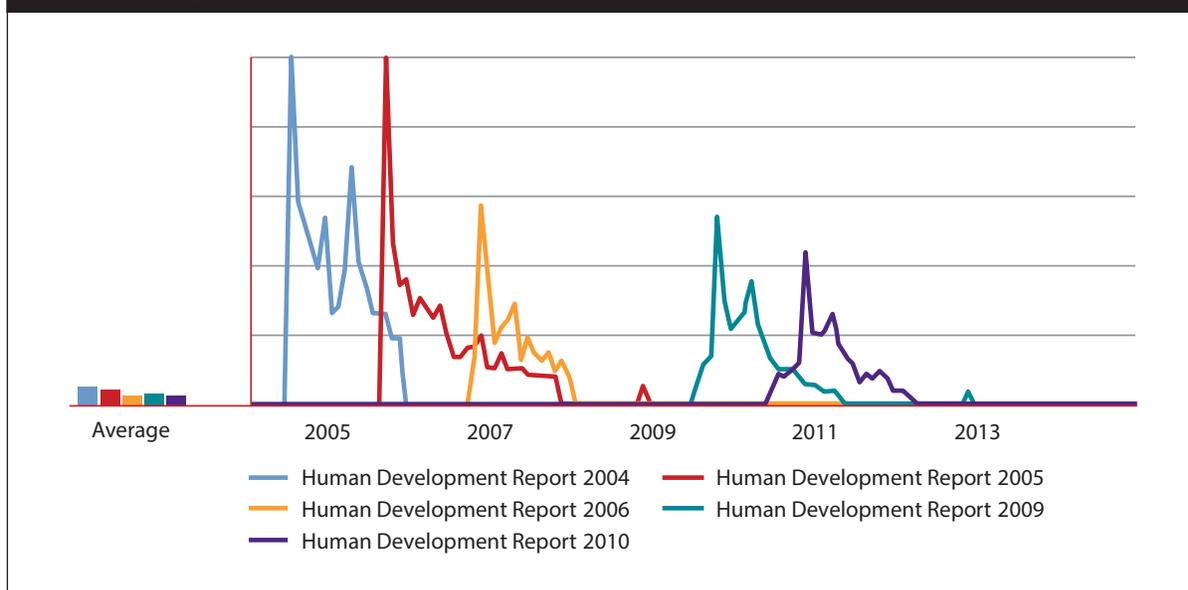


Figure 9. Google Trends of Different Reports



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

Beginning at the point of publication, most academic papers experience a rapid rise in citation rate as the paper is noticed by other academics who, in turn, cite the original paper in their own research. After peaking around three years after publication, citation rates decline as the paper becomes outdated. Highly impactful publications have rapid increases in citation rate and can maintain high citation rates over relatively long periods of time (see Figure 8). *Cultural Liberty*, *International Cooperation at a Crossroads*, *Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* had greater longevity of use compared to other reports. A possible contributing factor to this longevity is that some reports provided new tools (for example, *Fighting Climate Change* report).

## 4.2 INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC POLICY DEBATES AND PROCESS

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS

**Finding 4: The global HDRs contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. Uniqueness of approach and what policy boundaries (if any) that the report pushed determined the level of contribution. There were some outstanding**

**reports that contributed to national-level policy processes.**

The global HDRs familiarized the human development perspective in public policy. Every report included data-supported human development messages on the selected development theme. Different groups of development actors credited the global HDRs for taking up controversial topics and measurements. Building on the human development approach, the global HDRs took risks by challenging some practices and by bringing heretofore ignored issues into public debate (at times risking a possible backlash). Over time, global dialogues and national policy processes adopted the human development paradigm—a significant change from when the global HDRs were first published. Although the espousal of a human development perspective in the development domain cannot be fully attributed to the HDRs, the role of the HDRs has nonetheless been important.

The global HDRs influenced global- and national-level public policy processes in five ways, although with different degrees of influence. The global HDRs influenced policy processes by applying

a human development perspective to the report topic (the most common influence); drawing attention to previously underemphasized issues; increasing the salience of the human development perspective in the discussions on the development theme covered; informing debates on international cooperation; and informing global policy debates on these issues.

By its nature, the global HDRs' thematic analysis addressed public policy issues in the realm of global debates; they did not address the specificities of public policy at the country- or regional level. However, because global debates are often closely related to and have a bearing on national public policy debates and policy processes, the global HDR themes were relevant to national-level policy processes (although policy dynamics minimized direct impact on policy-making). Some global HDRs achieved intermediate impact by influencing the broad climate of policy opinions of experts, activists and policy-makers. Therefore, it is likely that global HDR impacts have percolated through to the level of national public policies, even though this may not be directly traceable.

**Finding 5: Development actors typically had high expectations regarding the distinctness of the global HDRs vis-à-vis other publications. Factors that distinguished those global HDRs that were more used and that contributed to public policy processes include distinctive human development concepts, tools for analysing development issues, perspectives that differ from mainstream thinking and boldness in communicating difficult, often controversial messages.**

Global HDRs that articulated capabilities language in a simple manner increased their use

and level of influence on policy processes. By framing the issue as “water for life,” *Beyond Scarcity* simplified the capabilities discourse by focusing on issues related to water scarcity, power and inequalities in water access. The Report's users, particularly advocacy actors and international development agencies, considered that it shifted the water governance agenda by framing it as a power issue rather than as a scarcity issue. Identifying the issue within the report theme and then framing it in a way that attracted policy actors' attention were critical to the Report's success.

*Fighting Climate Change* presented the carbon budget and used a social justice framework to discuss adaptation issues. While the carbon budget is commonly used now, *Fighting Climate Change* was one of the first to develop it.<sup>70</sup> One of the widely supported key documents at the Bali Climate Conference, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change used *Fighting Climate Change's* arguments and carbon budget.<sup>71</sup> Further, the Report contributed to the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative.

The novelty of the analysis in *Sustainability and Equity*, linking equity and sustainability as a two-way causation and emphasizing the importance of bringing the human development perspective to discussions, was found to be interesting to a few academics working on the subject. For example, the report went beyond the traditional analysis of the environmental Kuznets curve (which correlate emissions to national income) to provide fresh insights by relating emissions separately to different components of HDI. The Report's analysis highlighted the importance of the linkage between equity and sustainability by drawing attention to the danger of reversing the cross-country convergence in

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70 The Carbon Budget was developed in partnership with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (who modelled carbon emissions).

71 *Fighting Climate Change* was considered as an important source in the IPCC's 2011 'Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation', for a chapter on human security in the IPCC AR5 (5th Assessment Report) Working Group 2 (assesses the vulnerability of socio-economic and natural systems to climate change, negative and positive consequences of climate change, options for adapting to it and taking into consideration the inter-relationship between vulnerability, adaptation and sustainable development).

income and human development that had been recently observed.

Despite its strengths, *Sustainability and Equity* was perceived to have a number of weaknesses in how it framed its analysis, its use of measurements and its policy recommendations. The use of the report among development actors for policy processes was low. For example, the somewhat simplistic nature of its scenario analysis was unconvincing (the alternative scenarios were distinguished solely according to the level of the environmental threat, as if the disastrous or benign futures were exogenously determined). On data and indices, a common criticism was that report missed an opportunity to present an index of human development that incorporates a sustainability measure.

Some reports had greater acceptability among governments in terms of political rhetoric, but were nonetheless not used by policymakers or other development actors. For example, *Rise of the South* was well received, particularly by government representatives, and it had a wide appeal in Asia and Africa. The message was seen as optimistic and as giving the South its due place as drivers of development and shapers of the global future. Other development stakeholders, however, found the report as merely repeating information that was already available. Some of the content was seen as attempting to appease. The report was not bold in raising issues related to disparities in the South.

While it is too early to make observations regarding *Sustaining Human Progress*, its potential users, even in countries with high geographical vulnerability, found the report's messages uninteresting. Further, the Report was seen to lack clear messages (e.g. on how people who are not resilient can be made so). Further, the report lacked clarity in providing solutions not already in practice. The Report did not inform

the discussions of the August 2014 small island developing states conference. Although it is understandable that the conference's papers did not quote the reports (the report was published very close to the conference date), the report was not even discussed at the conference.

It was evident that global HDR contributions were limited when they failed to build on the comparative advantage of their human development framework. For example, while *Overcoming Barriers* discussed the free mobility of labour, it did not address how it would affect the real well-being of the people who are migrating. In *Sustainability and Equity*, it might have been useful to construct scenarios based on alternative conceptualizations of human development. Although all global HDRs had a human development framework, many lacked clarity regarding their key messages. This lack of clarity in messaging also diverted attention from the human development perspective the reports aimed to provide.

A key problem in recent global HDRs is that the human development concept has stopped evolving. The global HDRs began in the 1990s with a certain set of basic ideas—the concept of human development—and there were certain set ways of expressing it. After a few reports began repeating the same rhetoric and tightly adhering to the established conceptual framework, the global HDRs began to be perceived as repetitive. After 23 volumes, the global HDRs are not sufficiently engaging with the concept.

While there is a benefit to repeating the human development message, successfully and effectively communicating it requires presenting it differently and constantly advancing the concept.<sup>72</sup> Some reports achieved this better than others (e.g. the water and climate change reports), although they were nonetheless subject to criticism for not adhering to the original human development framework.

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72 Comparisons were made with UNICEF's State of the World's Children, which had the same message every year (e.g. immunization), but effort was made to present it differently.

**Finding 6: Over time, the global HDRs' easy to understand style changed to a more academic style. The messages of the report became lost in the details. The focus of the report moved from striking messages about enhancing human development to an array of information.**

In the past decade, most reports' style changed considerably. It was not evident who the primary audience of the reports was. The reports were seen to be academic, lengthy and lacking a lucid style. Although considerable data was used, the reports' messages were unclear or became lost in the details. Those who were familiar with the global HDRs made reference to the reports of 1990s, when the reports were more focused on the messages they endorsed rather than on the amount of data that was used. Although report length was considerably reduced over the years (to almost half since the 2006 report), there is a continued perception that the reports are overly long. There was a real challenge of coping with 'information overload' and long reports were less attractive. The global HDR summaries were perceived of as insipid and had the same problem of the main reports in succinctly communicating key messages.

Across development actors there was dissatisfaction with the reports' style. Whereas academics thought that the reports were not robust enough, advocacy NGOs and civil society actors thought that the reports were too academic. Think tanks and CSOs found the reports lacking in new ideas that would have had policy and advocacy appeal. Government actors considered the reports' concepts as too abstract and their examples lacking in context for application to policymaking. It has been difficult for the global HDRs to satisfy the differing demands of various target audiences. Overcautiousness diluted the messages of recent reports, at times resulting in compromises in prioritizing key messages. Trying to present too many broad ideas in a report was seen to dilute key messages, thus limiting its contributions to public policy debates.

The global HDRs' audience and knowledge space have changed considerably since the early 1990s.

Different groups often had conflicting expectations from the reports. While many users demand simple messages, there was also an expectation that everything would be backed by evidence and all analysis would display technical rigour. The simpler contents of global HDRs was perceived as invaluable by some generalists and policymakers. For example, *Fighting Climate Change* was viewed more positively for putting complex ideas into a language that lay readers (policymakers in particular) could understand. At the same time, some development actors considered the global HDRs as more general and drawing largely on anecdotal evidence. For example, the *Equity and Development* World Development Report was seen as much richer than the *Sustainability and Equity* HDR in its thematic data and had a more compelling technical narrative. The quality of research of global HDRs was not robust when compared to similar publications. When comparing HDRs to other documents on similar themes, experts in the report's themes considered the global HDRs to be somewhat elementary.

The global HDRs were credited for being ideology free and not pushing a corporate position, view or agenda (as was perceived in the case of reports by financial institutions). Despite the perceived lack of robustness of analysis, development actors in general credited global HDRs for its freedom from ideological organization agenda. Ideological neutrality is especially valued in Latin America, where the country case studies found that elements of the left (particularly those linked to labour and other popular organizations), harbour deep mistrust of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and, to some extent, the Inter-American Development Bank. This mistrust is due the agencies' advocating for neo-liberalism in Latin America during the closing decades of the 20th century. UNDP's espousal of an alternative agenda during this period was viewed with great appreciation by opponents of the neo-liberal agenda.

Selecting powerful topics and presenting forceful, forward-thinking ideas were considered important to changing the development discourse and to informing public policy debate. The global

HDRs that generated debate and, at times, controversy for the ideas they discussed were more successful than reports that exhibited data sophistication but that did not generate debate. However, the reports were increasingly seen to be mired in a comfort realm and becoming providers of information rather than ideas.

**Finding 7: The global HDRs had limited influence on UNDP strategies and programmes.**

The ongoing Strategic Plan (2014–2017), unlike the three earlier corporate programme frameworks (Multi-year Funding Frameworks (2000–2003 and 2004–2007) and Strategic Plans (2008–2013), specifically states that all UNDP-supported programmes and projects must be designed using a sustainable human development framework. In practice, this means programmes and projects must promote sustainability and address the opportunities and capabilities of the poor and excluded. There is, however, no evidence that global HDR thematic analyses or human development data influenced UNDP programmes’ scope or focus. See Box 3 for relevant findings from the *Evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013*.

UNDP Country Offices considered global HDRs as an analytical tool for UNDP programmatic

engagement. Although there were a few examples of global HDRs being used while developing UNDP projects, there was limited evidence of specific reports informing project formulation or determining programme scope and focus. As there was no expectation that global HDRs should inform UNDP programmes, a systematic approach to using the global HDRs was lacking. In Europe and the CIS, for example, there was minimal reference to human development concepts in UNDAF Country Assessments or in UNDP country programmes. Country Offices in eastern and southern Europe did not consider the global HDRs relevant for facilitating UNDP programmes for policy support and engagement with the government and other programme partners. The Pacific countries found the reports inadequately covered small island developing states.

Of the 112 Country Offices who responded to the survey, 66 were satisfied with the global HDRs in terms of quality of research, analysis and data; and their usefulness as a reference document; 12 considered the policy recommendations in the global HDR as not well articulated; the remaining were neither favourable nor negative. However, a large number of Country Offices (80 out of 112) considered the national HDRs as more useful than global and regional HDRs. An oft-cited reason for the preference was the

**Box 3. Human Development Orientation in UNDP Programmes: Findings from Evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013**

UNDP has not put in place systems to actively encourage a human development-based programming approach across the organization or to check that it is used. While human development may be considered implicitly in programming processes, there is no evidence of an explicit and systematic approach to programming based on its principles. For example, of the 13 [country programme documents] approved in 2012, only four (31 percent) made explicit reference to human development as an approach to programming.

At the country level, programming takes place in partnership with key stakeholders. The absence of systems that explicitly set out what is different when using a human development-based programming approach suggest that it would be more challenging to explain to partners and gain their buy-in. As an example of the lack of human development-based programming, the *‘Evaluation of UNDP Partnership with Global Funds and Philanthropic Foundations’* found that UNDP had missed opportunities to maximize the benefits of partnership by consistently integrating a human development perspective and fostering a more holistic development approach.

Source: UNDP. 2013. *‘Evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013’*. Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

direct relevance of the analysis in the national HDRs. The analysis in global HDRs was seen as insufficiently specific about the country context. Country-level government and development actors typically preferred using country-specific data, reports and surveys. The global HDRs, because of the nature of the publication, often lacked the specificity and depth needed for national-level policymaking.

Although country-specific analysis cannot be expected of global publications, UNDP did not produce country-specific publications that drew on the global HDRs. Country Office staff did not have time or resources to draw lessons from the global HDRs. In Brazil, El Salvador, Kenya and Mexico, UNDP staff considered that they could have benefited from greater internal discussion of the global and regional HDRs. Country Office staff did not consider it to be their responsibility to prepare country papers based on the global HDRs; the Offices were hoping the papers would be prepared by headquarters offices.

When Country Offices invested time and resources to assimilate the information presented in the reports, they found them to be useful in clarifying concepts and providing examples of best practices from countries across regions. In El Salvador, *Fighting Climate Change* inspired the UNDP environmental policy team to reassess its programme activities and its criteria for evaluating the government's performance on this issue. There were sustained efforts by the Country Office to promote the central message of the report. As a result of these engagements, some government ministries (including the ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education and Public Works and the National Council of Energy) created specialized units to deal with climate change. UNDP El Salvador considers the *Fighting Climate Change* report as a turning point, as it

led many government officials to dispel the idea that climate change is a myth. In Sri Lanka, the report's evidence-based policy framework facilitated UNDP support to a climate change policy and practice.<sup>73</sup>

Global HDR indices, such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) inspired some UNDP Country Offices to pursue them at the country level. In Malaysia and Singapore, for example, the MPI enabled high-level dialogue with the government on its development models and how important it was to expand measurement beyond absolute poverty to include other dimensions of vulnerability.

The level of use in the country programmes also depended on how the global HDRs discussed their country. If a government contested the HDI or other data presented in the report, or there were disagreements with the illustrations pertaining to their country, Country Offices generally expressed caution in using or citing the report. In contrast, when the global HDRs provided a more positive perspective of the country's progress, there was greater use of the report. Even in countries not sensitive to the content in the report, Country Offices attributed a lack of post-launch follow-up to the report topic's relevance to the country.

Indifference to the global HDRs was noticeable in headquarters units (including regional and policy bureaux) and the Regional Service Centres. The survey of the policy staff shows that the global HDRs were used in a limited way in programme strategizing or in policy advice to Country Offices. For example, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, published by the UNDP policy bureau, hardly discusses *Sustainability and Equity* and does not refer to any other global HDR.

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73 Reports that were frequently mentioned by Country Offices as useful for their work were *Fighting Climate Change*, *Sustainability and Equity*, *Rise of the South*, *Overcoming Barriers*, *Beyond Scarcity* and the recent *Sustaining Human Progress*. *Fighting Climate Change* was mentioned by a large number of Country Offices for its immediate usefulness to their programme. In Egypt, *Fighting Climate Change* was used to start the debate on the subject and initiate policy work in the area. Similarly, Peru found the report useful to engage with the government; the recommendations were used to inform government implementation strategies.

This indifference was seen in some of the policy bureau's other publications.<sup>74</sup>

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MEASUREMENTS

**Finding 8: The HDI has become the trademark of the global HDRs and has sustained the interest of policymakers, media and academics, particularly at the national level. The index provides global benchmarking and an alternate measurement that generates discussion on human development dimensions of public policies. Despite its analytical weakness, the HDI had a strong advocacy value. However, other than its use in comparing country performance, the importance of HDI as an advocacy tool has declined. Anomalies related to the computation of the index are a factor in the overall decline in the index.**

Human development measurement, particularly the HDI, has been the subject of intense scholarly discussion since it was first introduced. A number of papers have critiqued HDI positively and negatively, its information properties, its components and its measurement properties as an index, and many papers have presented alternatives in terms of composition of the index. One criticism that has been consistently raised since the HDI was first published is that the HDI does not provide additional insights that GDP or data on health and education levels does not already provide. The construction of the HDI has not been well considered and risks misleading policy even with human development as the objective.

HDI proponents consider that the index successfully captures large and small human development performance and HDRO considers that the index was not conceived to guide national policy or planning. Further, HDRO is of the view that when HDI is disaggregated it can effectively show inequalities and disparities on various planes and guide many types of policies. The evaluation acknowledges both the perspectives, as there is no one correct perspective; there are

valid points in both perspectives. The evaluation did not analyse the methodology of the index, its strengths or weaknesses. It rather analysed the perceptions of the development actors about the index and its utility in public policy processes.

The country case studies show that HDI is often discussed as an illustration of the multidimensional nature of development and is the most frequently quoted composite measure of human development. Internet analysis shows that the HDI does far better than other development indices, such as the World Economic Forum's Environmental Sustainability Index, the Social Progressive Imperative's Social Progress Index or the UNDP/Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's Multidimensional Poverty Index. Despite methodological and data issues, the HDI is generally recognized as an important tool for benchmarking and comparison. The HDI opened new perspectives on measuring and analysing development by recognizing the interlinkages between economic growth and social development in improving and sustaining quality of life.

Across case study countries, the HDI received overwhelming attention compared to other indices and the thematic analysis of the global HDR. Countries used the HDI for political purposes whether their HDI was high or low. When it was high, governments used it to demonstrate the success of policies; when it was low or trending downward, opposition parties used it as a signal of government policy failure. There was, however, limited evidence regarding the extent to which HDI ranking or measure lead to debate on specific policy changes or improvements.

The media widely quotes and discusses the HDI at the time of report launch. In comparison to MDG data, the national and subnational snapshots provided by the HDI are seen as the best macro-level proxy for development. One of the HDI's strengths is facilitating comparison of

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74 UNDP, 2013, *Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequality in Developing Countries*, BDP, New York.

development across countries and comparison of regional and subnational development.

Global HDR contributions have been evident in the popularization of HDI use. Several countries that prepare national HDRs with national and subnational HDI calculations have accepted and emulated its concepts, definitions and measurement frameworks. The evaluation found that about 60 countries have calculated subnational HDIs as part of the national HDR process, with regional, state and municipal-level HDIs that are calculated on the basis of disaggregated per-capita GDP data.

Use of subnational HDIs in development policy and planning could be verified only for case study countries. Among the case study countries for which analysis was carried out, a subnational HDI was used in Brazil, Bulgaria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico and Moldova. In India, the state-level HDI calculations inform allocation of state funds for public health and education (India also uses the HDI for district-level planning). In Indonesia, the subnational HDI is integrated into the government's political agenda focused on an equal and sustainable distribution of growth. Tools such as the HDI provide an internationally legitimate standard of development outcomes to facilitate the conceptualization and measurement of such an agenda. In determining allocations for decentralization funds, the Indonesian Ministry of Finance uses its subnational HDI as an outcome indicator that is representative of people's welfare in jurisdictions. The subnational HDI had limitations, particularly for the lowest administrative levels in small countries.

Several agencies quote the HDI in situation analyses for project formulation. In apportioning development funds, some donors (e.g. the European Union and Japan), used it as one of several

determinants of human potential and well-being in the country. The fact that the HDI metric is prepared by a UN agency and backed by statistical support from the UN Statistics Office added to its credibility for donor countries. The International climate accord designs following the Kyoto Agreement have included a proposal for linking countries' abatement responsibilities according to their HDI.<sup>75</sup> There are also studies that point that the HDI informs international pricing.<sup>76</sup>

Disagreement with the HDI ranking or contestation of the methodology did not reduce interest in the HDI. The importance attached to the HDI and its wide acknowledgement were often reasons for strong reactions in many countries when their HDI ranking dropped or remained static.

As highlighted by the Country Office survey, the controversies generated when countries were not included in the index are another indication of the importance attached to the index.<sup>77</sup> Over time, the HDI has become a mark of being part of an international development debate; not being included in the index was seen as a far more serious matter than receiving a low or decreasing ranking. Given this attention, the extent to which the HDI is able to provide a robust measure was a contentious issue. The predominant view is that the revisions of the index were insufficient to address its limitations and left users confused.

**Finding 9: Interest in the HDI did not always result in generating policy debate beyond that which education and health data already did. The HDI was seen to inadvertently divert attention away from development disparities and inequalities instead of highlighting them.**

Policymakers preferred using national data for development trends and performance monitoring; the HDI was not seen to provide additional

75 See Hu, A., 2009, 'A new approach at Copenhagen', *China Dialogue*, vol. 2892, Part 1, April 06, Rutgers Climate and Social Policy Initiative, available at [chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/2892](http://chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/2892).

76 See Bate, R., and K. Boateng, 2007, 'Drug pricing and its discontents. At home and abroad', *Health Policy Outlook*, vol. 9, August, pp. 1-9.

77 The survey of the UNDP Country Offices highlighted this issue.

insights. In general, development actors were concerned with the anomalies of countries with high HDI rankings and serious human security and rights issues. This dichotomy was seen as contradicting the human development paradigm the index aims to promote and was repeatedly mentioned as an example of the Index's weakness.

There was counter discourse to the HDI in some countries, although the human development approach was used in national development programmes. In Morocco, for example, intangible capital was considered as a better alternative to capture human development progress in the country. Intangible capital takes into consideration factors related to a population's living conditions that impact public policies, such as security, stability, human resources, institutional development, quality of life and the environment.<sup>78</sup> There were efforts to demonstrate the development processes and conditions under which development changes take place. The quality of social development achievements were seen to be important, and hence should be captured in a human development index.

One reason for looking for alternative measurements was that social indicators remain static for a long period, while there is progress within various dimensions of an indicator such as health or education. Citing examples of countries that had high HDI yet witnessed popular revolts, government representatives made a strong case that the HDI did not fully capture issues of human rights and voice. Whether paradigms such as intangible capital offer better alternatives is hard to say, as perception-based indices have their own shortcomings.

The fundamental premise of the HDI is to illustrate that economic development or wealth by itself is not a key determinant of well-being; that merely generating wealth at the national level is insufficient to ensure well-being; and that what

is important is how wealth is distributed. The HDI was criticized for giving equal weight to GDP per capita, as the annual fluctuation in HDI and variation in rankings across countries were mostly determined by the GDP per capita component—a measure the HDI had originally sought to substitute for in development discourse. Therefore, as a measure intended as an advocacy tool to integrate human development elements into development thinking, the HDI in effect no longer does so. Policymakers, technocrats and researchers across countries, including countries with high HDI ranking, had serious reservations over the methodology and continued relevance of the HDI.

Analysing the HDI, the report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress asserts that the HDI's simplicity is its advantage. The report also discusses the limitations of the index pertaining to tracking the accumulation of disadvantages by certain sub-groups, the choice of weights for various domains, interpretation of changes in these aggregate indicators and not accommodating diversity of viewpoints about the relative importance of various dimensions of quality of life (see Box 4).

There has been massive convergence in human development indicators, while at the same time there has been no similar convergence in GDP per capita. The cross-national variance of HDI is the sum of three indicators—the equally weighted average of the variances of the sub-components. Therefore, if the variance of two sub-components falls and the variance of one remains the same (or rises), then the total variance of the indicator is dominated by the sub component with the largest variance. Health and education indicators used in the HDI are less susceptible to yearly variation. So, if one chooses to combine 'years of schooling' and 'GDP per capita', then as more and more countries reach the limit of the indicator that is truncated above

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78 Full text of The Throne Day Speech delivered by HM King Mohammed VI, on 30/7/2014, [https://www.moroccanembassy.sa/index.php?route=information/news&news\\_id=213](https://www.moroccanembassy.sa/index.php?route=information/news&news_id=213).

#### Box 4. Observations on HDI by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress Report

Indicators like the UNDP's Human Development Index have attracted huge media attention and generated country rankings that depart significantly from those based on conventional economic measures. Most applications of this approach rely on objective data for various domains, but they could easily be extended to incorporate subjective well-being as one domain. Because of the simplicity of this approach, it is easily communicated and understood by the general public and many grass-root movements have favoured various applications of this approach. Nevertheless, this approach has a number of limits.

The first limit is that by retaining the notion of a 'representative agent', HDI cannot track the accumulation of disadvantages by certain subgroups. The combined index will not improve if the correlation of inequalities across domains falls while average performance in each domain remains the same. In practice, these composite indicators try to compensate for this limit by including measures of inequality or poverty as a specific component. However, this does not overcome the methodological problem of neglecting individual conditions.

A second limit is related to the choice of weights for various domains. The weights used to aggregate averages for various domains are conventional, and even the choice of using unweighted data is a value judgement with important implications. For example, the HDI is a simple average of life expectancy—the ratio life expectancy minus 20, divided by 85 (maximal life expectancy) minus 20—education—two-thirds of the adult literacy rate plus one-third of the enrolment rate for primary, secondary and tertiary—and income (the log of per capita GDP minus the log of 100, divided by the log of \$40,000 minus the log of 100). However, adding the logarithm of GDP to the level of life expectancy implicitly values an additional year of life in each country by its GDP per capita,<sup>79</sup> thus treating an additional year of life expectancy in the US as worth 20 times a year of life expectancy in India and nearly 50 times a year of life expectancy in Tanzania.

A third limit has to do with the interpretation of changes in these aggregate indicators. For example, levels of the HDI give a fresh look at the world, since the country rankings it generates are quite different from those based on GDP per capita. However, as time passes and the HDI is updated year to year, its movements have tended to be dominated by changes in the GDP component, at least for those developed countries (such as France and the United States) whose performance in the health and education domains is close to the top. However, when extended to the full range of countries at different levels of economic development, the correlation between GDP growth and changes in the HDI over the period 1990–2006 is only 0.44. In particular, some poor countries, such as Egypt, Tunisia and Bangladesh, have recorded significant improvements in their HDI with only moderate economic growth, while others have experienced significant economic growth and seen their HDI drop. This highlights the fact that, over reasonably long time periods, GDP growth can correlate poorly with changes in the non-income dimensions of well-being.

A final drawback is that this approach does not allow for a diversity of viewpoints about the relative importance of various dimensions of [quality of life]. A single set of weights is applied to the whole society, independently of the heterogeneity of people's attitudes towards income, leisure, health, education, etc. While, in principle, different weights could be used for different countries, this would make the choice of weights even more delicate and effectively prevent any comparisons across countries.

Reference: Stiglitz, J.E., A.K. Sen and J.P. Fitoussi, 2008. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*, pp. 208-209. [www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr](http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr)

then the index becomes increasingly just GDP per capita. This holds even if the weights on each component remain the same. Therefore, the correlation of HDI with GDP per capita is increasingly on the rise. Although many working on development measurements considered the HDI

as useful for human development rhetoric, in reality it is just GDP per capita.

The HDRO considers that the assertion about GDP dominating the HDI is not necessarily accurate or important. Since HDI is an ordinal

79 Ravallion, M., 1997, 'Good and bad growth: the human development reports', *World Development*, 25(5).

measure, what really matters is the correlation of rankings according to the GDP (or GNI) and according to the HDI. The value of this correlation is very low. From 2003 to 2014, it was in the range -0.1 and -0.2, indicating that the other two dimensions (life expectancy and education) made significant contributions to measuring human development. The differences in rankings by GDP (or GNI) and by HDI vary in the range of -50 to 50.

The volatility of HDI rankings created political reactions without any real basis. There were several instances of positive reporting by both the press and government of apparent improvement in the HDI and ranking as a performance measure, while in reality there was not much change in the country's performance (except for GNI per capita). For example, China's ranking jumped in one year from 101 to 91 (2012–2013), even though all its underlying indicators (mean and expected years of schooling, and life expectancy values) remained practically unchanged since 2010. The big change was caused by gross national income per capita in purchasing power parity terms, which increased from \$6785 to \$7945 from 2010 to 2012 (China's nominal GDP per capita was less than \$4000). There is also the problem of the GDP numbers themselves—huge increases in, for example Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria in recent years are due to statistical revisions, essentially rebasing and not actual growth.

Statisticians and policymakers who were well informed about national data trends understood that these are artificial jumps or that the jumps were caused by purchasing power parity adjustment of incomes. Computations based on this create wide variations year to year, which is seen as illogical. It was also problematic to consider countries that moved up in ranking by over 20 ranks as having dramatically improved their human development situation in one year. For example, although progress in Cuba, which moved from 59 in 2013 to 44 in 2014, was received positively, the measure was not taken literally by the government as there is recognition that the improvement was due to GDP

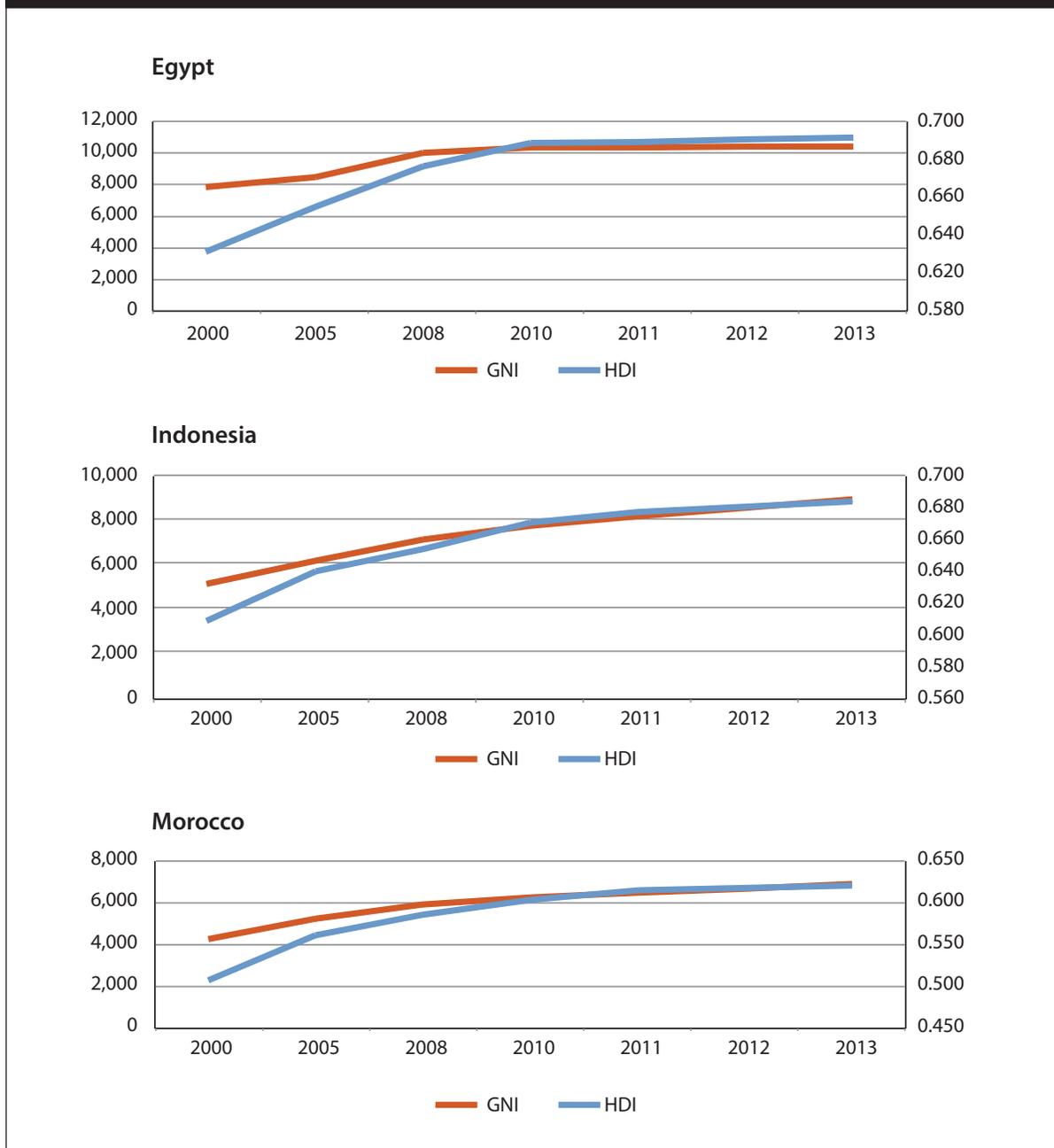
data. While the country aspires to be even higher among first 30 countries, the HDI was perceived to reflect economic indicators and not human development progress in the country. A senior official in Brazil stated that if the HDI were to compute a broader scope of quality of life issues (such as public insecurity and fear, the time its citizens must spend to get to their workplace or wait to get medical help), Brazil's position in the global ranking would worsen considerably. Such candid accounts by countries only point to the need for a better human development measurement.

Although not an intended purpose of the HDI, in its present composition the index had limited relevance to national public policy and planning or the country's policy agenda, including policy-making in the education or health sectors. For example, in the education sector, most countries have gone past the enrolment agenda and now 'learning per year of school' is the real agenda of nearly all countries. In contrast, the HDI takes 'mean years of schooling' as its indicator, which does not at all reflect on what is learned in those years of schooling.

A widely held view is that the HDI ranking is misleading as it allows some countries with high rank to conceal their shortcomings in human development. In the Arab States and the Latin America regions, it was considered that the methodology of the HDI has limitations in capturing human development progress in middle and upper income countries that do not face income challenges.

In the Arab States region, it was pointed that HDI does not fully capture the complexity of human development progress in, for example, Libya or Saudi Arabia. The very high human development categorization of several oil economies was questioned, as the progress is not due to improvements in well-being. For example, although most of the countries in the Arab States region can be located within the medium to high human development range as per the HDI, according to the 2013 Voice and Accountability indicator the Arab

**Figure 10. GNI Per Capita and HDI Comparison – Egypt, Indonesia and Morocco**



Source: HDRO data

States region had the lowest governance indicators among all regions of the world. Similar issues were raised about emerging economies that have middle or high human development categorization, as most of these countries have serious social development issues. It was viewed that the HDI inadvertently has become an endorsement of human development progress for such countries.

Some questioned the utility of annually calculating HDI ranking, as it is becoming more politicized rather than generating public debate. Further, rankings for many countries have remained static despite improvements in the absolute values of HDI. Policymakers and government representatives were more in favour of the classification than the ranking of the countries. Classification was

seen to have the advantage of tracking patterns of development challenges in each group as well as the progression of countries. The larger point is that proxy indicators are inadequate to capture the heterogeneity of countries in the Latin America region within the same category. There is considerable difference, for example, between Brazil and Mexico in terms of development context and what is prioritized as social development and well-being.

The HDI was unique in the 1990s when it challenged the mainstream, economic views of development. Currently, however, the HDI is considered to represent a bygone development context, one that has not evolved with contemporary development discourse and changed context.

**Finding 10: Frequent revisions to HDI methodology in the past five years and the lack of adequate communication of the changes undermined its credibility and contributed to the perception of a lack of transparency in its calculation.**

The HDI methodology has been dynamic and has changed very frequently. This led to difficulties in comparing and interpreting the indices over time. There was a strong perception that changes in a country's HDI were due to revisions in index methodology and did not reflect the country's progress in human development (or, more specifically, its health and education indicators). For example, in 2009, Timor Leste ranked 120. The 2010 revision of HDI methodology reduced the effect of oil income, and made the index somewhat more useful than it was the previous year—the country's 2010 ranking was 147. After another methodological change in 2011, Timor Leste improved 13 ranks to 134. Such changes made it problematic to compare HDI between years.<sup>80</sup>

The global HDR technical notes state that it would be misleading to compare values and rankings with those of previously published reports. The technical notes ask users to refer to the Statistical Annex for real changes in values and ranks over time. This caution is either lost in the controversies created by the ranking or has been misinterpreted. Most users, including policymakers, often focused only on comparing current rank to the previous year's rank, as it is the only reference benchmark.

**Finding 11: Given the prominence of the HDI, it is important that the data has full integrity. Outdated data used in HDI calculations undermined its credibility. UNDP did not engage in addressing country-level data constraints or management of development data.**

In most countries, national data was not used to calculate HDI, leading to significant data integrity issues. Policymakers raised serious concerns over discrepancies between the international data used to calculate HDI and national data. Such concerns were more intense when the latest data was available but not used (e.g. in Brazil, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kuwait and Rwanda). There were countries, for example Zambia, where new national data was released at same time as the 2013 global HDR, which had used old data to calculate the index. Likewise in Rwanda, the 2013 global HDR continued to use 2007 statistics in its rankings, even though Rwanda's national census for 2012 was available. In such situations it was often difficult for the government to manage public perceptions about development progress in the country. There was a strong perception that the index was not reliable, as it is based on outdated and less reliable international data sets.

Other issues include disagreement with estimates made in the international data set to fill gaps in the national data, for example mean

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80 The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an Assessment of Development Results in Timor-Leste. This volatility was one of the issues that frequently came up during discussions with national development actors during the evaluation. See UNDP, 2014, 'Assessment of Development Results – Evaluation of UNDP Contribution: Timor-Leste', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

years of schooling. HDRO's assertion that they are users of data—not data generators—did not seem to have affected the perception of UNDP being responsible for using old data.

Another criticism is that global HDR data was not robust enough to rank countries, and the absence of due consultation with national statistics agencies undermined the credibility of analysis. The key factor behind this critique is that although the data HDRO uses is made available to it by a certain deadline, the onus of providing the data within that time-frame was not clarified. There was considerable dissatisfaction on the reliance on UNESCO's outdated data and, in some cases, on data not generated by a national statistics office. Data for mean years of schooling is not available for all countries (it is unavailable for 47 out of 187 countries). Although the evaluation was unable to verify this, government representatives pointed out that there was inconsistent rounding in education figures, which affected the measure (this was also considered an example of bias against developing countries).

International agencies took considerable time compiling data, a major challenge for any data set. Although the data time lag has been considerably reduced, several countries still have a lag period of over three years. Such time lag made the indices redundant. Data issues are not confined to the HDI alone; similar issues were evident in the case of the Gender-adjusted Human Development Index, the Multidimensional Poverty Index and the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI). The time lag is more serious in the case of the Multidimensional Poverty Index, which lags by five to seven years for a large number of countries. Likewise, there was considerable variation in data used for the Multidimensional Poverty Index and the IHDI, making global comparisons problematic. Arbitrarily using multiple data sources raised transparency as well as consistency issues. There were misgivings that data in some countries may not be reliable, which may improve their rank against countries whose data is better managed.

In response to UN Statistical Commission recommendations, there have been efforts to engage with the national statistical offices in the preparation of the last three reports. Communications with national statistical offices have improved and national statistical offices were encouraged to share the most recent national data with the international institutions that produce data sets. However, such measures did not communicate index methodologies or engage countries to update data as and when available.

One of the outcomes of the HDI ranking data controversies is governments' enhanced focus on their data systems (e.g. in China, Egypt and Morocco), and efforts by governments to strengthen performance monitoring in order to demonstrate progress. Neither UNDP nor HDRO made specific efforts to capitalize on this momentum. In addition, it was not evident what efforts UNDP made to consolidate or improve national-level data (e.g. MDG monitoring and reporting) for the global HDRs.

Despite having published human development indices for a quarter century, UNDP did not proactively engage in addressing issues related to country-level data constraints or management. Some countries criticized UNDP's lack of willingness to engage with national statistical offices, and comparisons were made to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (which worked closely with the national statistical offices). UNDP's lack of similar engagement was seen as a significant reason for data issues.

Many national statistics offices were unclear as to why there was a time lag in developing international data sets. UNDP is seen as being indifferent to countries with data challenges or where there is need for institutional reforms and more resources to strengthen statistical capacities. These observations must be seen in a context in which UNDP Country Offices have no role in facilitating communication between HDRO and entities in the country with the responsibility for development data and statistics. UNDP Country

Offices, with the exception of those that had senior economists, lacked the technical capacity to engage with national statistical offices on data-related issues.

The HDI is seen to be harsher on countries that are better organized in terms of national data, and favoured countries where there was possible data manipulation. There was considerable variation across countries in the quality of data provided by their national statistical offices, the estimates they used when national data is not available, and more importantly, adjustments made for global comparability. While HDRO recognizes these challenges, concrete steps to support countries manage data was beyond the scope of its mandate and capacities.

An issue specific to the Pacific region (especially the small island countries) was inadequate coverage in the global HDRs. Due to lack of national statistical capacities and human resources in individual countries, some countries did not report data in prescribed formats for inclusion in the UN Statistics. Exacerbating this problem, UN agencies do not recognize data coming from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, a regional agency tasked with compiling and supporting statistics in the Pacific. The exclusion is based on the grounds that the Secretariat is not a national statistical agency, and hence not the official national counterpart agency. The Secretariat was not ratified by the UN, even though it is maintaining a large statistical database for all countries in the region, supporting national agencies in data collection and is implementing a ten-year regional statistics programme in partnership with UN agencies. As a result, the rankings of Pacific countries were either missing or based on non-Secretariat approximations and projections. At the small island developing states conference in August 2014, the Pacific Forum resolved to ratify the Secretariat as their official data provider of the UN. It is hoped that future global HDRs will have more complete data on the Pacific countries.

**Finding 12: The global IHDI and MPI did not receive much attention from development actors, although national-level computation of these indices generated interest in some countries.**

There was low interest in global IHDI and MPI. Indices such as MPI were largely perceived as less useful for public policy when compared to income, health and education data. Moreover, the indices are seen to add to the clutter of national-level poverty metrics and detract from the uniformity brought in by the MDGs, which clearly define the global poverty line at \$1.25 per day and has come to be widely accepted as the key benchmark for poverty reduction. In Nepal, for example, the national poverty estimates based on the Living Standards Survey, prepared in collaboration with the World Bank, estimated the country's poverty levels at 25 percent (based on a \$1 per day measure). This statistic has guided the national development strategies for Nepal. In contrast, the global MPI for 2011 estimated that 65 percent of Nepalese were multidimensionally poor. Because the gap between the national estimates and global MPI was so vast, the government and other agencies were not convinced to use it, and the MPI was not used in poverty debates in Nepal. However, national MPI was used when the government and national-level international development agencies were engaged in its computation.

Given the data time lag, the relevance of the global MPI as a global comparator was not accepted. Publication of two global MPIs by the global HDR and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative was confusing for many, as both used different indicators calculating the index. The case study countries had serious disagreements with the global MPI—flawed indicators when applied to some country contexts and outdated data with more than a five-year time lag in some cases. The controversy the global MPI created has generated interest in some countries to develop the MPI at the national level (in, for example, Morocco

and Rwanda). Likewise, there are instances of nationally computed MPI being used to inform national planning (among the case study countries, it was used in Brazil, China, Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico). UNDP Country Offices were supporting national-level MPI computation in a few countries.

One of the key limitations with global MPI is that it did not have advocacy- or policy value because of frequent disagreements with MPI estimates. For example, in Rwanda, according to the 2011 MPI, 69 percent of Rwandans were multidimensionally poor. This conflicted with national poverty estimates, which estimated that 45 percent of Rwandans were living in poverty per the national poverty line (\$0.6 per day). The MPI methodology had limitations when applied to the Rwandan context, especially with some of the indicators. For example, charcoal as cooking medium is widely prevalent in Rwanda, as is mud flooring. There was disagreement in using these as indicators of deprivation. The most contentious issue in Rwanda was the child mortality incidence used, which increased the level of deprivation of the country. Rwanda prepared its own MPI using updated national and mortality data for population below the age of 15 in 1994, and the resultant MPI value was 29 percent.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Finding 13: The global HDR policy recommendations informed policy processes when the report took a clear position on the subject discussed. The reports of the past five years are often seen as compromising on core messages and hence making limited contributions to transformative debates. Moreover, in a majority of cases the global HDRs did not provide practical solutions to human development challenges. While this was a deliberate strategy, most development actors perceived it as a weakness of the global HDRs.**

Global HDR policy recommendations are critical components of the report in terms of informing policy debates and processes. Reports

achieved varying levels of success in providing policy recommendations that generated public debate or that were applicable to national policy contexts. The policy content was the least influential aspect of the report, and its vagueness and lack of prioritization undermined the reports' contributions. With exceptions, the reports had limitations in providing policy options that could challenge some of the ingrained development practices that constrained human development. The reports lacked policy positioning, analytical rigour and practical policy utility.

The global HDRs were seen to lack policy positioning. The recommendations say the 'right' things at the general and abstract level. Constructing the recommendations such that no one would disagree with them eviscerates their purpose and usefulness. Policymakers considered the recommendations too broad and generic to have immediate relevance for policymaking. It was often pointed out that the reports could have been more useful if policy options were clearly articulated.

One of the problems was the lack of novelty in policy prescriptions—they were seen as standard and not innovative. For the example, the recommendations in *Sustainability and Equity* lacked discussion on the need for cooperation, value shifts or other changes in human behaviour for transformation towards sustainability. The report was seen as focused more on narrating the problems (and less on the causes), and as hesitant to speak the truth, especially when it becomes inevitable to speak against large corporate interests. The report did not address why things remain as they are (e.g. the report did not address why progress has been slow to fund environmental sustainability for poor countries or why poor countries have limited access to climate financing). It would have been good if the report had paid more attention to the negative factors that work against the solutions that the report put forward—the vested interests, pressure groups and the politics-business nexus. The global HDRs, particularly those in the past five years, were unable (or unwilling, according to some) to address fundamental national and

global power asymmetries that prevent appropriate policies to be adopted, even when there was strong intellectual support.

Recommendations were found to be too cautious, often lost in the array of information and thus failing to generate debate. Different user groups found that the policy recommendations lacked boldness and often appeared as an attempt to please all. NGOs and CSOs considered that over the years, global HDR policy recommendations have lost their advocacy value and often contained nothing new or useful.

There were tensions between wanting the reports to be forceful and clear in their judgement and yet maintain broader country ownership of messages. Interviews with those engaged in report preparation indicated that HDRO was hesitant to present controversial issues that were critical from a human development point of view. For example, while *Overcoming Barriers* took a stand that migration is positive, it did not discuss issues that concerned either origin or destination countries. The report tried to speak to everybody and for everything without a clearly defined target audience or a clear perspective to inform policy choices. Similar observations were also made in countries where there was outward migration.

The recurring question of how the report audience is defined arose in the context of the recommendations. Lack of clarity of the report's primary audience was seen as a factor in increasingly weak recommendations. While recognizing the independence of the global HDRs, there was a view that consultations with development actors will help sharpen the policy recommendations (although consultations should not be seen as negotiation of the texts). It was considered that there could be region-specific recommendations. It was also opined by most user groups that the policy recommendations by themselves could not create policy influence absent further work at the national level. National-level policy papers were considered as important to the use of the reports' policy analysis. With some exceptions, these papers were not produced.

### 4.3 GENDER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Finding 14: The global HDRs made sustained efforts to develop gender-related composite indices.**

In the past two decades, the global HDRs introduced four gender indices to capture gender gaps and disadvantages in development. The Gender-related Development Index (hereafter 1995-GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) were introduced in 1995 and used until 2009 (these indices were the first of their kind when introduced). These two indices were replaced by Gender Inequality Index (GII) in 2010. An additional Gender Development Index (hereafter 2014-GDI) was added in 2014. The 2014-GDI introduced a simpler and comparatively better measure than the GII, although it is too early to assess its frequency of use.

Other agencies have developed global gender indices over the past decade. The most prominent, internationally recognized global-level indices include the Gender Equity Index by Social Watch (2007), the Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum (2006), the Social Institutions and Gender Index by OECD (2009), and the Environment and the Gender Index by IUCN (2013). The most prominent regional-level gender index is the African Gender Development Index by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2004). The Gender Equality Index and the Gender Gap Index have gained more popularity as global indices. Internet search analysis shows that the Gender Gap Index is ahead of 1995-GDI, GEM and GII (see Figure 11).

A key criticism of the gender indices is that they do not effectively capture the complexity of gender inequality from a human development perspective. Since being introduced, academics and gender advocates criticized 1995-GDI and GEM for their conceptual and empirical limitations. Although the indices were seen as useful for identifying gender gaps, the variables used

were too broad to reflect the multiple dimensions of gender equality and the indicators and weighting methods did not capture the institutional constraints faced by women or take into account women’s time poverty or reproductive labour responsibilities.

GII tried to address some of these criticisms by combining well-being and empowerment into one measure. However, conceptual, methodological and utility limitations prevented GII from providing a better measure—primarily its combination of well-being and empowerment. Inclusion of reproductive health variables (which are women-specific) made the index more a disadvantage index rather than an inequality index as it claims to be. In order to assess achievement in general, variables should be comparable for men and women.

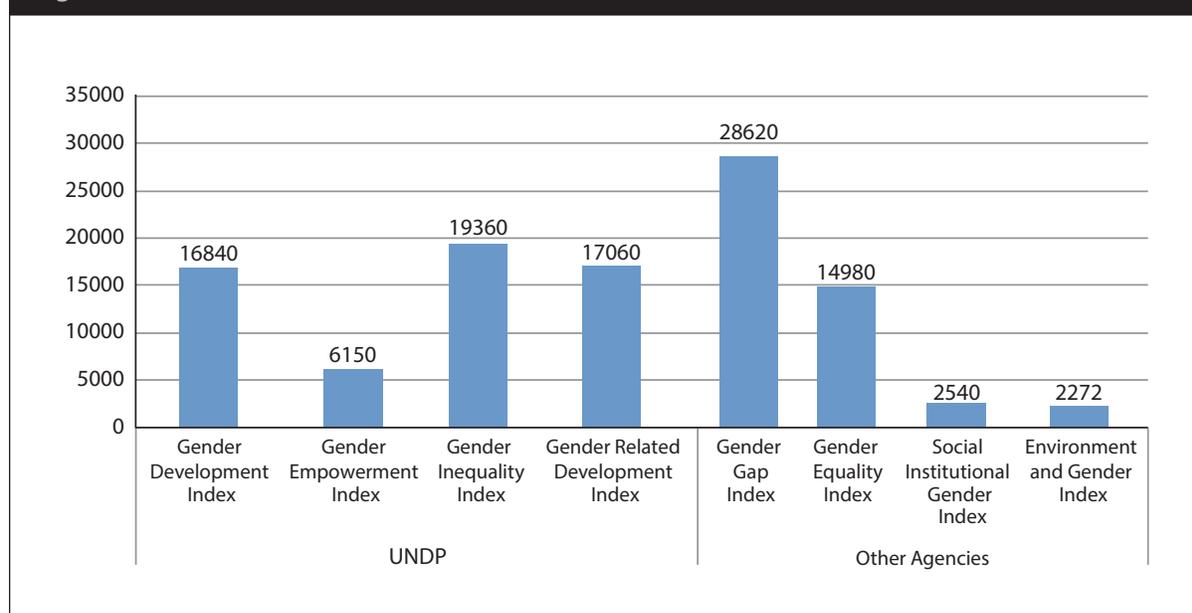
Notwithstanding their methodological limitations, 1995-GDI and GII were used to benchmark women’s progress in several countries and were used for development planning, advocacy and lobbying. A few countries perceived the indices’ contributions as important; some governments took specific measures to improve their

GDI ranking. Although perceived as imperfect, the lack of better alternatives contributed to their use. With the exception of development actors working on gender-related issues, the awareness of the gender indices was low across countries.

Some countries made extensive use of the indices. For example, Mexico, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates and China used the national indices for advocacy and lobbying for government policies. In Mexico, government agencies addressing women’s affairs used GII to lobby for resources and greater visibility; women’s organizations used GII in their gender advocacy work. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, parliamentary debates were often supported with global HDR data.

The advocacy to promote gender equality was inspired by HDR analysis and the gender indices. The recent (2014) revision of the Electoral Act in the Democratic Republic of the Congo requires political parties to assign 30 percent of seats to women candidates for local government elections, compared to 20 percent in the previous election. In the United Arab Emirates, 1995-GDI

**Figure 11. Web Search Results of Gender Indices**



Note: Many Internet sources refer to the Gender Related Development Index (1995-GDI) as the Gender Development Index. There is a likelihood that the Gender Development Index figures reflect this.

was instrumental in assessing gender imbalances in the country. While the United Arab Emirates is ahead of other Middle East and North African countries in terms of gender indicators, it is behind globally. In the United Arab Emirates, the government made concerted efforts to raise the status of its gender-adjusted human development index, including efforts to develop gender-responsive legislations and policies.<sup>81</sup> Indonesia developed subnational 1995-GDI and GEM to use for development planning and monitoring.

**Finding 15: The global HDRs varied in the attention paid to gender inequality from a capability perspective. The global HDRs were not effective in contributing to the debate to address gender inequality.**

Gender analysis was the least used part of the global HDRs' thematic analysis. Those familiar with the global HDRs did not see any new perspectives emerging from reports that could be used for advocacy or lobbying for gender-related public policies. Although most global HDRs included gender equality as a dimension of human development, the extent of analysis varied considerably and there was unevenness in attention to gender inequality from a capabilities perspective. The reports addressed gender differences in terms of opportunities to achieve key functionings, such as being well-sheltered and attaining good health and education. However, this information and analysis was available in various data sets and publications and not a distinctive feature of the global HDRs.

The global HDRs were often missing factors related to the people and individuals that are critical to achieving key functionings (particularly for women) and analysis of the critical constraints to taking advantage of and realizing opportunities. The global HDRs fell short in examining gender inequalities from a multidimensional focus (e.g. opportunities and means to achieving well-being) that would have provided

a better understanding of gender. Further, the approaches that were used to examine gender differences did not capture diversity within the category or the specific implications for women in using the opportunities. In terms of generating policy debate, the global HDRs were missing analysis of the role of government in minimizing the factors that constrain women's effective empowerment.

Although most global HDRs provided gender disaggregated analysis, less than half paid attention to gender inequality from a human development perspective. Only three reports made gender inequality-related observations in their recommendations; a similar number have an occasional paper on the theme's gender dimension. In most reports, the literature used for analysis did not include a sufficient number of gender-related sources.

Some reports provided a more thorough analysis of gender implications. For example, although *Sustainability and Equity* did not have any background papers explicitly focusing on gender, gender inequality as an issue in sustainability was raised throughout the report. The report discusses how transformations in gender roles and empowerment have enabled some countries and groups to improve environmental sustainability and equity. The concept of equitable sustainability also factors into discussions on gender and power inequities and provides ample grounds for recommendations.

Similarly, *Beyond Scarcity* analysed gender inequalities from a capabilities perspective throughout. Its discussion explored gender inequalities and gender barriers for issues related to sanitation, land rights and access, and went further to present ways forward. The report pointed to the need to put gender rights to water at the centre of national development and the need to implement policies to increase women's voice in water management decisions.

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81 UNDP, 2013, 'Assessment of Development Results – Evaluation of UNDP Contribution: United Arab Emirates', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

Although it may not be realistic to regularly produce a report with gender as the main theme, given the importance of the subject to sustainable human development it is a major gap that for 20 years the global HDRs have neither directly dedicated a report to the theme nor adequately indirectly addressed it by incorporating gender analysis into other reports. The last report on the gender theme was the 1995's *Gender and Human Development*.

#### 4.4 COMMUNICATING GLOBAL HDR MESSAGES

**Finding 16: The ineffective dissemination of key messages constrained the potential of global HDRs to influence thematic areas. UNDP did not adequately promote the reports beyond global and country report launches.**

Poor dissemination of global HDR messages was one of the factors in the level of use of the reports' thematic content. The present dissemination approach for report messages is largely oriented towards global and country launches. Although specific data was unavailable on the number of countries that launched the report each year, Country Office surveys revealed that about 55 UNDP programme countries did not officially launch the report every year it was published, about 85 launched the report one or more years and about 60 launched the report most years. In some cases, governments did not participate in the official report launch due to reservations regarding data quality, analytical accuracy or other country-specific rationale.

Country Offices have the discretion whether or not to launch and, if they choose to launch, on the allocation of resources for message dissemination. Current promotion mechanisms are insufficient for the profile of the global HDRs. UNDP Country Offices are assigned \$10,000 for report launch; most Country Offices consider this barely sufficient to fund the official launch and purchase extra copies of the reports. Programme units had no shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in promoting

the report. Further, Country Offices did not generally consider it their responsibility to promote the report unless its topic was central to policy debate within the country. Country and regional sensitivities related to the report also affected Country Office dissemination decisions.

In some cases, national HDRs on the global HDR topic were produced, which limited interest in the global report launch. For example, El Salvador published a national HDR on migration, which discussed outmigration issues and the resulting impact on the country. Development actors found that report useful for national policymaking; the global report did not generate much interest.

For some reports, the international political context factored into generating interest. For example, *Deepening Democracy* generated considerable interest, as it was published during the Afghanistan and Iraq conflict. *Beyond Scarcity*, launched to coincide with the International Water Day, was followed by discussions in several countries. These reports demonstrated internal UNDP ownership and their content was strongly defended amidst hostile reactions in some countries. Recent global HDRs have found it difficult to generate similar levels of interest; poor message dissemination factored into to this difficulty.

Since 2010, dissemination activities for global HDR messages have decreased. Reasons for the reduction include limited resources at the headquarters and country levels. HDRO staff and other team members who used to actively advocate report messages no longer do so. Given the limited number of HDRO staff, it is also beyond the Office's capacities to carry out a comprehensive dissemination. HDRO staff are often engaged in preparing new reports immediately after the current report's launch—even if they wished to, they would not have time to disseminate report messages or engage in related discussions.

Most national-level development actors, particularly those engaged in public policy, were of the view that the global HDRs' thematic analysis

did not have the same country-level visibility or traction as similar publications (e.g. the World Development Reports or regional banks' publications). International agencies often made comparisons to the World Bank, whose engagement with policymakers is considered to be high, particularly in taking forward key messages. Because not all topics will be pursued by every country, it is crucial to identify the set of countries for which the global HDRs will be most relevant.<sup>82</sup>

In the Pacific region, HDR visibility was perceived to have declined. Until about 2007, the reports received wide media coverage and were launched at the Regional Forum Leaders meetings. This, however, is no longer the case (possibly due to reduced budgets for the Suva office/Pacific Centre to support dissemination).

There were mixed views on how report periodicity affected message dissemination. Some UNDP Country Offices considered it difficult to keep promoting different topics in the relatively short span of a year; they were often selective about which reports they promoted. Likewise, government actors considered annually produced indices as too short to demonstrate changes in human development. Those in favour of annual global HDRs asserted that at any given point, all topics do not interest all development actors or all countries. Because each thematic area has a different (albeit overlapping) group of users, it was considered important to publish the report every year in order to maintain momentum in human development discourse.

The in-country launch of the global HDRs was considered critical to initiating discussions on report findings, disseminating the report to a range of development actors, generating interest

in the topic, drawing policymakers' attention and advocating for the report's policy messages. UNDP Country Offices see report launches as an opportunity to share UNDP programming principles and approaches. The launches were often well attended by a range of development actors. Country Offices often tried to ensure high profile launches in order to convey messages nationally. In some countries, the launch was subject to the government's satisfaction with the messages and its ranking. Although there is wide acknowledgement that report launch should be the starting point, not an end in itself, most Country Offices were of the view that follow-up is lacking and that the launch has become an end in itself.

In some instances, dissemination problems arose from causes beyond UNDP's control. The dissemination of *Sustainability and Equity* in particular was hampered by circumstances in several countries. In China, UNDP was unable to officially launch the Report because the government objected to what it described as the Report's incorrect portrayal of China as being engaged in land grabbing in Africa. In Rwanda, the Report launch has remained suspended since 2011 following the government's contention of the HDI indices attributed to the country. Similar issues were noted in other countries when there was a drop in the HDI ranking.

With social networks and an abundance of information on the Internet, a traditional launch alone is considered insufficient. UNDP headquarters and Country Offices were seen to be lagging behind in producing information suited for modern communications avenues (e.g. social media or Internet-based discussions). Policy recommendations' dense and formal language did not capture the interest of the potential users.

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82 World Bank country offices have the possibility to receive additional funding for national reports on that year's World Development Report theme. In contrast, UNDP Country Offices do not promote global HDRs beyond the launch. The World Development Report's level of professional resources, drawn from World Bank staff, was substantially higher than UNDP's for the global HDRs. Similarly, World Bank staff in every country office is actively involved in preparing country-specific messages and, prior to the formal release of the reports, organizing discussions with policymakers for feedback. After the report is formally released, the report authors participate in discussions with policymakers. In some cases, the World Development Report is accompanied by companion reports that cover specific themes of regional or national interest.

Simple messages for promotion via social media were seldom available, and the communication of global HDR messages is not geared to a social media world of 140 characters. Country Office communication units were not mobilized to continue message dissemination after launch, and many units are not equipped to participate in online discussions. Though uncommon, some Country Offices were more social media savvy. For example, after launching *Sustaining Human Progress*, UNDP Kuwait compiled over 20 daily country-specific messages to share on social media after the launch. HDRO, which has been seen as lagging in effective social media use, has recently improved its social media presence.

In countries that do not launch reports annually, the global launch is insufficient to promote the report. More intense efforts with country-specific communication materials are seen as essential to report promotion. Presentation and communications materials prepared by HDRO are seen to be geared towards launches and not suitable for other kinds of dissemination.

Many Country Offices needed more context-specific dissemination materials, but were short on funds and staff time to develop the materials beyond launch. Many countries expected that HDRO would provide such materials, and most Country Offices did not see it as their responsibility to prepare country papers based on the global HDR. Some Country Offices did take the initiative in report dissemination. For example, UNDP Sri Lanka held a dissemination event for *Reducing Vulnerabilities* that used a context-specific policy brief informed by the global findings and recommendations. These activities generated more interest and follow-up.

Issues related to global HDR communication and dissemination are not limited to the reports but reflect organization-wide challenges in managing knowledge product outreach. UNDP's Knowledge Management Framework 2014–2017

recognizes that the current knowledge product dissemination practices are insufficient for positioning UNDP as a thought leader in development. The UNDP Knowledge Management Strategy 2014–2017 makes a number of recommendations to strengthen knowledge management in the organization, particularly measures for effective dissemination of the knowledge products' messages.<sup>83</sup>

#### 4.5 MANAGEMENT OF THE GLOBAL HDRS

**Finding 17: The credibility of the global HDRs depended on the analytical and intellectual leadership provided by the HDRO; the choices of the HDRO Director were seen as crucial for this.**

An important feature distinguishing the global HDR is its process, especially the permanent HDRO that has continuity of staff and the mandates of General Assembly and Executive Board decisions. This is critical to ensuring the uniformity of core approaches across reports. The editorial discretion of the global HDRs has been central to General Assembly resolution 57/264 (2003), and has been critical for the HDRs to avoid political pressures pertaining to report content. The extent to which this independence firewall was ensured varied across reports; recent reports inadequately maintained the editorial discretion that the HDRO could exercise. Further, over the years the reports have been losing their originality. Some of the key issues related to the management of the global HDRs are:

**The disconnect between HDRO and the rest of the UNDP was significant.**

UNDP ownership of the global HDRs has been decreasing. This was partly because the reports no longer generate sufficient interest for the organization to promote them and partly due to a lack of UNDP engagement in global HDR preparation processes. Although UNDP programme

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83 UNDP, 2014, 'UNDP Knowledge Management Strategy 2014-2017', New York.

units were not aligned with the viewpoints of some global HDRs, HDRO retained the editorial discretion to include analysis or pursue topics it considered appropriate for a global HDR. For example, *Beyond Scarcity, Sustainability and Equity* and *Cultural Liberty* were examples where the reports' lines of argumentation were disagreed with by UNDP as a UN agency. Many in the organization saw such disagreements as positive. In the case of the past five reports, the general disconnect was less about such disagreements and more about a lack of interest in the global HDRs. UNDP programme unit ownership of the reports has declined, which has impacted message dissemination and overall use by UNDP.

**HDRO has been unable to address the factors that caused the diminishing interest in global HDRs.**

External users and UNDP staff found recent topics lacking sufficient intellectual rigour to provide thought leadership. The global HDRs have had declines in overall quality in the past, but the reports quickly recovered due to credible attempts to address the factors that made the reports less distinct from other development analysis and publications. Over the past five years, global HDR management has not fully responded to the reduction of interest in the reports or to reputational damage to the reports.

The past four reports were considered as below average compared to earlier global HDR standards. Those who are well-informed about the global HDRs and their management consider 2014 as a watershed moment for HDRs, when the global HDR was unsuccessful in generating interest. The report is increasingly losing its standing in what was previously an area where it was on par with—or ahead of—other global publications. In light of shrinking reputational assets, UNDP has not showed the urgency necessary to revive the reports. There is still enough of this reputational asset to reverse the report's decline. Identifying the reasons why the report is losing its distinctness and addressing it are crucial to accomplishing this.

**There were efficiency issues in managing report production.**

There was no systematic approach to the research carried out for the reports or the use of the background papers commissioned for each global HDR. The HDRO commissioned academics and researchers (some distinguished in their field) to author background papers for each report. From 2007 to 2011, a considerable number of papers have been commissioned. It was not evident whether all papers commissioned were used for the reports.

While putting considerable resources into report production entails staff costs, the HDRO research team did not have adequate expertise in human development analysis. Given the range of topics covered by the reports, it is understandable that the HDRO may not have staff with expertise in each area covered.

HDRO has been ineffective in attracting researchers and academics to work on a short-term basis. There has been over-reliance on a small group of scholars. During the past 25 years, HDRO was unable to nurture researchers working on human development, to identify fresh talent or to retain good talent. Over 80 percent of the contributors to global HDR background papers were from universities in the USA or UK. There has also been a concentration of paper contributors within a few select universities in these countries. There has been limited use of scholars from the global South.

**The Director of HDRO has a key role in ensuring the quality and distinctness of the reports.**

UNDP should be credited for sometimes taking risks in the interest of the global HDRs by appointing HDRO Directors who were not from mainstream UNDP management or who were new to the UN and UNDP; some have delivered good reports. A report of the nature of the global HDRs needs someone who can bring fresh thinking, is not overcautious, is well-informed about development debates, maintains close interaction with a range of development actors and who can bring on board academics and activists. HDRO

needs strong leadership in order for the global HDRs to provide the requisite thought leadership and to stay ahead of the times. The HDRO Director is required to take up the challenge of leading report writing and managing political sensitivities, while simultaneously commanding the respect of experts and contributors associated with the report. Over the period being examined, this profile was not always met.

The reports had greater coherence when there was a principal author who provided intellectual direction to the report and ensured a coherent concept, structure and narrative. The Director filled this role in some cases, and ensured that there was a framework for analysis and presentation of ideas. Consistency in analysis and message presentation was better achieved when there was clarity of what was expected of the team. Some Directors rose to this responsibility better than others did.

For recent reports, HDRO was seen as less clear about how content was to be generated and managed. The reports, therefore, had different narratives and styles and lacked consistency in the interpretation of concepts. Some reports had a lot of information but were a collection of different chapters that did not have a coherent storyline. Several contributors writing without a common framework resulted in a report that lacked a coherent argument, exhibited poor handling of the topic and, at times, missed the conceptual edge of the report.

**The quality assurance mechanism was theoretically good but not practically effective.**

The combination of the global HDR team, experts who prepared the concept paper, background paper contributors, the Advisory and Statistical Panels and reader groups was seen as a robust mechanism for producing the report. However, this combination did not always result in high-quality reports, as some of the mechanisms were implemented as mere tokenism.

**Information management and sharing had several limitations.**

Although there have been improvements in data sharing, and although HDRO has been more open in sharing the data, there continues to be issues in accessing different data sets used for the report. External users often interpret poor information management as a lack of transparency. HDRO also does not track or manage information related to report launches, dissemination of global HDR messages, information on the use of the report or information on downloads.

**The total production cost of a global HDR was considerable.**

The financial details presented in Chapter 3 reflect only part of the total expense incurred. Considering the amount of annual resources involved in global, regional and country launches and staff time at Country Offices, it is imperative that HDRO produces reports that add value to intellectual debate.

Having invested resources in report production, UNDP did not adequately prioritize message dissemination. Report production took precedence over message dissemination, significantly constraining report contributions to development policy processes. In general, UNDP does not allocate resources to disseminate knowledge products, which reduced the reports' impacts.

**Report accessibility remains a challenge.**

Even as basic improvements have made it possible to enhance the reach of the global HDRs, accessing the reports remained challenging. Report hard copies were in short supply and the Internet version was considered particularly unfriendly. Based on the country case studies, it is evident that electronic downloads have remained unpopular (even for other global publications) in countries with slow download speeds.

# CONTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL HDRS – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 1990, 23 global HDRs have been published. Some excellent reports have contributed to transformative debate. The human development paradigm used in the reports made them distinct from other publications. Over the years, the number of other development organizations' flagship publications has increased, with several organizations publishing their own annual publications that cover comparable development themes. Similar to the publications of other international organizations, it has been harder for the global HDRs to consistently retain a niche in development thought leadership and to ensure that they capture the interest of key development actors. The conclusions and recommendations presented here draw from the findings of the use, utility and contributions of global HDRs to public debate and public policy processes.

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1: For a quarter century, the global HDRs have made major contributions to shaping the global development debate. More specifically, the contribution of global HDRs in taking the concept of human development to mainstream development policy has been important. A strength of the reports is their power of repetition—continuously producing annual messages on human development using different themes.**

When first produced, the global HDRs promoted a human development framework that was distinctive at a time when the old development paradigm—structural adjustment and the free-market economy—was becoming discredited. Global HDRs provided the language to articulate limitations of the neoliberal economic model and provided a different paradigm about development and well-being. The use of a composite index of economic and social indicators

has been particularly useful to this paradigm shift. Although the imperfections of the HDI are criticized by development actors at the country level, the report itself was widely perceived as an important innovation in development measurement. Although the concepts seem self-evident today, the global HDRs initiated the discussion of measurement of human development and comparison between countries.

The global HDRs presented a simple, understandable and relatable development narrative that is based on the capabilities approach. In general, global HDRs successfully adhered to the human development framework in the themes analyzed by individual reports, although this was stronger in some reports than others. Its consistent use of the human development framework is a particular strength of the HDR. The profile and authority of the founding authors of the report has been a key factor in generating widespread acceptance of the concept and its more popular measurement indices. UNDP should be credited for the institutional backing it provided to this intellectual exercise.

The global HDRs were political when first published and continue to be so. In gaining the acceptability of a range of countries (including greater acceptability by the countries of the global South), the reports have made immense contributions in promoting human development as a legitimate issue in the overall progress of a country. Despite its role as guardian of a more inclusive, Southern-owned model of development, prior to the HDRs the United Nations typically had not measured and ranked countries. In this regard, the global HDRs made accomplishments in fostering the human development movement. The contribution of global HDRs in reinforcing an alternative perspective

to development in public policy discourse at the country level has been significant. There is a greater acceptance of the human development approach in development planning than there was two decades ago. Although this cannot be fully attributed to the global HDRs alone, their contribution has been important.

The global HDRs issued from 1990 to 1999 had a significant influence. The human security approach introduced in the 1994 HDR informed discussions in the United Nations. The approach was included in the 2005 World Summit Outcome as a concept to be discussed and formally defined. Similarly, the 1995 HDR focusing on gender was among the earliest global documents that prefaced the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the conference, which resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for promoting gender equality. The global HDRs during this period provided the intellectual groundwork for the Millennium Summit and the International Development Goals, which later were manifested in the Millennium Development Goals. Different groupings of Member States acknowledged the potential of the global HDRs to create a global consensus on development narratives.

The reports from 2000 to 2005 responded to the major global political situation at the time and managed to maintain the momentum of the global HDRs. From 2006 to 2009, there was a shift in the approach of global HDRs and the reports covered a combination of themes, some related to the Millennium Development Goals. The themes had greater sectoral relevance. In the period that followed, since 2010, the global HDRs addressed a range of issues not always significant in terms of ongoing global debates or providing a new perspective, although this period was critical for the post-2015 agenda and the debates on sustainable development goals. This period also marked the erosion of the distinctiveness of the global HDRs and their contribution. While a vast body of knowledge was generated by the past five reports, the ability of

the global HDRs to influence global debates and national public policy processes has been diluted significantly. The reports increasingly are losing their reputation as a distinctive human development publication.

**Conclusion 2: The global development environment has changed significantly since the global HDRs were first published 25 years ago. For example, today there is less polarization of ideological positions. There has been a considerable increase in the number of publications and databases that provide global analysis, and global HDRs consistently have to be distinctive to remain relevant. The global HDRs have not kept up with emerging development issues and the changing demands of the knowledge space that resulted from a significant increase in the number of research-based publications and numerous data and information channels.**

With the exception of three reports, the global HDRs in the past decade were unsuccessful in generating or contributing significantly to global public debates and national policy processes. Instead of providing thought leadership, the reports merely followed current trends and were unable to provide a different perspective on key emerging development issues. The global HDRs to a great extent are trading on the reputation of past reports and have been ineffective in using the intellectual space generated by earlier HDRs. To regain the transformative capacity of the report, the factors responsible for their declining reputation need to be addressed.

The concept of human development has increasing appeal and extraordinary resilience. Unlike many other ideas that disappear quickly from the development discourse, human development is a well-accepted paradigm of development. The human development agenda has just begun and there is considerable work to be done in transforming debates and making public policies more people-oriented. Challenges remain in applying the human development approach to development policies; the global HDRs were not successful in sustaining the debate to meet these challenges.

The global HDRs did not prioritize core messages and hence contributed in a limited way to transformative debates. The reports became a mere consciousness-raising exercise rather than a framework for informing public debates and development policymaking. By being selective in interpreting the human development approach and available evidence, over the years the reports' arguments have become unpersuasive. There has been less innovation of late in advancing the human development approach and its application, even taking into account the MPI and the work on inequality. The contents of some of the reports in the past decade do not justify the 'human development' title.

The standing of the global HDRs has been considerably reduced. The global HDRs are increasingly compromised when dealing with conflicting perspectives, weakening the reports' relevance for public debate and policy. An increasing tendency for political correctness in the presentation of analysis and policy recommendations has reduced the reports' usefulness in informing policy changes, at times defeating the very purpose of the global HDRs.

The global HDRs have moved away from their original emphasis on the human development narrative to indices. Over the years, the indices have become an end in themselves. The excessive attention to indices, although not intended, has undermined the original purpose of the report, to draw attention to the human development approach in public policies.

**Conclusion 3: Too many indices produced by the global HDRs have weakened their usefulness for human development discourse as well as their significance for public policy processes. The discussions on global HDRs increasingly have been diverted by indices rather than generating debate on the human development approach pertaining to the theme of the report. The HDI is losing its relevance and needs to be revisited.**

The HDI has been powerful in bringing attention to human development issues through a

simple index and has remarkable political and advocacy appeal. While the decision to create an HDI broke new ground in the 1990s, its continued relevance lies in addressing the various limitations to suit the changed context. The HDI has ceased to serve the purpose for which it was developed. With the changed context and significant increase in GDP across countries, there is closer correlation of the HDI with GDP, without comparable improvement in actual human development. The disproportionate influence of the three elements has reduced the ability of index to capture a country's human development measure. The index in the present form has limitations in generating public policy debate or informing public policy processes and can be potentially misleading in setting policy agendas. At a time when there is greater recognition of the human development approach internationally, the HDI in its present form in some ways has become counterproductive. There is a need for a better composite index for human development.

Less significant revisions to HDI further diminished its credibility and the leadership the HDRs could have provided in measuring human development. What is needed are not minor modifications of the index, but rather an index that reduces GDP-driven variations in the human development measurement. The revisions made to address the shortcomings of the index were not well thought out and did not address its fundamental issues.

In the past decade, global HDRs used six other indices besides HDI (six indices are currently used). The IHDI and MPI, while contributing to human development thinking, have limited relevance for national public policy debates. Given the long data time lag, they have limited utility as a global index. The IHDI and MPI are more suited for use at the national level, with appropriate adjustments to suite the particular situation of the country. Notwithstanding their conceptual and methodological limitations, the various gender indices (1995-GDI, GII, Gender Empowerment Measurement and the 2014

GDI)<sup>84</sup> provided a benchmark and global comparison on the progress of women. However, they did not provide any additional understanding of either well-being or empowerment.

Although not typical to global HDR indices, data time lag is a major issue in the relevance of most indices. Despite having published HDIs for a quarter century, UNDP did not proactively engage in addressing issues related to country-level data constraints or management. This is understandable given that UNDP does not have a role in generating or disseminating data. However, as a user of data for compiling HDIs, UNDP for a long period eluded its responsibility of ensuring that the data used are adequately current. UNDP did not work with other United Nations agencies in supporting national statistical institutions to strengthen their capacities and practices.

**Conclusion 4: There was limited interest shown by UNDP to promote the messages of the global HDRs; the disconnect between the HDRO and the UNDP programme units was a contributing factor.**

There has been a marked shift from the time when UNDP consciously signalled to the world the value it attached to human development. There is no formal institutional arrangement within UNDP to promote the practice of human development, although the organization underscores human development as its programming principle. With regard to the global HDRs, there is no mechanism to convert the ideas put forward in the reports into action, which significantly undermines their influence on UNDP programmes and strategies. The unexciting reports of recent years further contributed to the lack of interest among UNDP staff in the global HDRs; the ownership of the flagship report within UNDP has decreased considerably.

Managing various trade-offs by HDRO was critical to maximizing both the UNDP development

presence globally and its extensive country presence. For the HDRO, there are trade-offs in being an independent office and at the same time depending on UNDP programme units for dissemination of messages and for drawing on the Country Offices' knowledge base. There are also trade-offs in producing thought-provoking reports that may not have relevance for UNDP programming or may generate controversies for UNDP programmes. HDRO has not been effective in managing the trade-offs with UNDP and increasingly has been alienated within the organization. One of the consequences is the decreasing interest in the global HDRs within UNDP.

The recommendations of the global HDRs remain in the realm of ideas and minimal efforts were made to contextualize them and make them actionable. Inadequate mechanisms to discuss the messages of the HDR and engage key policy actors have reduced the possibility of converting ideas into action and resulted in the reports often fading away after the launch.

**Conclusion 5: In its resolution 57/264, the General Assembly recalled that the HDR is “the result of an independent intellectual exercise” and should be “undertaken in a neutral and transparent manner.” The resolution is significant and allows the reports to generate human development-oriented public debate. In recent years, the HDRO did not use the mandate to make the global HDRs thought-provoking reports with a clear and strong message.**

The legitimacy of the global HDRs lies in the forthrightness of its messages and transparent analysis to contribute to transformative debates. In recent years, the leadership of HDRO was not successful in fulfilling this role.

Intellectual inputs to the reports have weakened considerably over the years. A weak research base and the inability of the HDRO to bring fresh ideas to the global HDRs have reduced the

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84 The global HDR introduced two gender indices, the first in 1995 and the second in 2014. While both use the same acronym, the computation of the indices is different.

reports' intellectual rigour of analysis and policy positioning. The HDRO is not adequately equipped in terms of research capacities to be able to present human development analysis in new ways that will have a long-lasting influence on how people think about development. A related issue was the inability of the HDRO to draw on the scholarship of countries of the global South.

The influence of the global HDRs is inherently related to their use by policy intermediaries, and CSOs have always been the strongest allies of the reports. However, interest in the report and its messages among the civil society actors has declined considerably. Both the HDRO and UNDP have not cultivated this group adequately, resulting in the diminishing advocacy value of the reports.

The HDRO process for preparing the report does not reflect the General Assembly mandate to undertake full and effective consultations with Member States. The HDRO has been excessively guarded about the content of the report until the day of launch. Opportunities to share various drafts to generate debate, even if it was contentious, were lost. The reports compromised on messages and tried to please everyone, a situation that can be avoided by sharing analysis and draft reports for discussion.

The cost implications of global HDR production are substantial and the quality of the report does not reflect the resources invested in it. Also, the imbalance between the production cost and the resources allocated for dissemination has done a great disservice to the report, seriously undermining its contribution.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: Given its positive reputation, the global HDR has the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. The time is ideal to relaunch the idea of human development much more strategically and to help UNDP regain the intellectual space in the global development**

**discourse that it once commanded. It is also recommended that factors causing damage to the reputation of the report and its contribution be addressed.**

There is a gap in ideas and perspectives about human development and the policymaking process. Transformative ideas are needed to address the development challenges posed by the downside of globalization, e.g. increasing inequality and insecurity, as well as growing environmental and other threats. The global HDRs have a critical role to play in generating these ideas. UNDP should make concerted efforts to ensure that the global HDRs provide powerful messages to further human development, and should continue publishing the annual global HDR.

The legitimacy of the global HDR lies in the forthrightness of its messages and its transparent analysis. To contribute to transformative debates, the global HDR should not shy away from difficult messages. The indices cannot be a substitute for the new perspective and strong thematic analysis the report is expected to provide. Each report should aim to push the boundaries of development thinking, focusing on issues and perspectives that previously were neglected in public policy debates. The reports should take a strong policy position, even if it does not align with current development thinking.

The strength of the global HDR is the human development framework. Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the reports have a strong human development perspective and widen the conceptualization and policy application of human development.

**Recommendation 2: UNDP should revisit the purpose of human development indices and examine their added value to the messages of the reports. Given the issues related to computation and data, HDRO should not clutter the report with composite indices that have limited value.**

Composite indices such as the MPI, IHDI and GII, however sophisticated, have serious limita-

tions when calculated at the global level because of data limitations, subjectivity in the choice of the variables and the weights attached. UNDP should reconsider using these measures at a global level.

The global MPI has limited value for national public policymaking or for global comparisons. As MPI works best when adapted to suit national contexts and specificities, UNDP should promote its use at the national level.

**Recommendation 3: There have been efforts by the HDRO in recent years to address various criticisms related to methodology of the HDI, and there have been revisions to the index. While important, these efforts are not sufficient to address the fundamental limitations of the HDI. To be able to achieve greater policy and analytical influence, consider reconstructing the HDI following a thorough review.**

The value of HDI lies in its ability to provide a simple and reliable measure of a country's human development and its potential to inform public debate. It is recommended that HDRO carry out a comprehensive review of HDI, carefully thinking through its various components and implications in terms of data and other issues, and then address fundamental methodological issues.

It is recommended that HDRO have a policy to ensure that the methodology of the indices is not changed frequently and that it set a fixed period of time for undertaking any revisions. Changes to the methodology should be well thought out to avoid frequent revisions. It is also recommended that HDRO should ensure transparency in the methodologies used to develop the indices.

**Recommendation 4: UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of the global HDR on the public policy process. The role of UNDP programme units is extremely important in this regard.**

UNDP should take measures to promote key messages of the global HDR. Each global HDR

should be followed by a corporate policy brief on the messages the various programme units should pursue. Sufficient measures should be taken to systematically improve the contextualization and dissemination of its messages.

UNDP should operationalize the corporate Knowledge Management Strategy 2014–2017 to enhance the contribution of UNDP publications, including the global HDR. Because the resources allocated for the global HDR are not adequate for dissemination of the report's messages, UNDP should address the imbalance between the report's production costs and the funds for disseminating its messages. A related but equally important issue that needs to be addressed is setting aside additional funds for advancing the practice of human development.

**Recommendation 5: The management of the global HDRs needs to be adequately strengthened to provide a stable environment for preparation of the report and to enhance the reputation of the reports.**

To be influential, the global HDR must stimulate new ideas and provide thought-provoking analysis that can generate policy debates and inform public policy processes. By its very nature, the global HDR is bound to address important issues that will give rise to diverse views and interests. UNDP should guarantee strong leadership for the HDRO to guide the hugely intellectual and political exercise of preparing the global HDR.

Several management issues need to be addressed that are critical for producing global HDRs that are credible and thought provoking. The evaluation considered as key issues the tenure of the HDRO Director and the mechanisms in place to handle transition, scheduling of the report's preparation and research and data management. To address these issues, the evaluation suggests the following:

- a) UNDP should revisit the current model of HDRO Director, who is the lead author of the report. Given the intensity of the task

of leading the global HDR, this model has proven to be less than effective. UNDP should consider a model in which the HDRO Director manages the office and there are lead authors for each report. The lead author will be a senior researcher with international standing in the subject of the report, who will work closely with the HDRO in preparing the report. This will allow HDRO to plan the reports ahead of time as another lead author can work on the subsequent report. Having reputable researchers and experts as lead authors will enhance the credibility and standing of the global HDR. The Director of the HDRO can have a longer term (of five years) and the primary responsibility of managing the process and liaising with UNDP. This approach will also address leadership transition issues that face HDRO every time there is a change of Director;

- b) The report schedule needs to be addressed. There should be a clearly determined time-frame for producing the reports, allowing sufficient time for discussion of various drafts. HDRO should put in place mechanisms that will allow the preparation of a new report well ahead in time while the previous report is being concluded. This would require revamping the research team. The model suggested above will address some of these issues;
- c) There should be specific measures in place to ensure a credible research process, particularly in using illustrations. There should be adequate checks and balances to ensure robustness of research; and

- d) The HDRO should review its data sources and explore options to reduce the time lag and variances in national and international data. HDRO should engage with UNDP Country Offices to better collaborate with national statistical offices.

While retaining its editorial discretion, the HDRO should move away from the guarded approach to report production to more open consultations. Specific measures should be taken by HDRO to strengthen the consultation process. Robust mechanisms should be in place to share content as it evolves so as to generate debate. There should be extensive consultations in developing countries during the report preparation process, involving Governments, CSOs and scholars.

The HDRO should make specific efforts to broaden the academic research and intellectual base of global HDRs. The HDRO should develop more structured research partnerships to enable new ideas as well as to draw on a wider research. It is critical that HDRO use scholars from a wide range of countries, particularly from the South.

The permanent HDRO research team should include new additions for each report not only to bring fresh research perspectives, but also to build on networks of academics and researchers to strengthen the reports. Efforts should be made to develop a programme that would allow scholars to work for HDRO for a short period. This is essential to revitalize the team for every report and to strengthen the capacities of the HDRO.



**PART III:**  
**THE CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL  
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO  
PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES**



## Chapter 6

# THE REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

This chapter describes the regional HDRs since they were first published in 1994 and then analyses information related to managing the regional HDRs since 2004. The chapter discusses the mandate for regional HDRs, coverage and key components of the report, and management and finances of the reports.

### 6.1 MANDATE AND PURPOSE OF THE REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

UNDP considers regional HDRs, commissioned by UNDP regional bureaux, to be instruments for assessing human progress in a set of neighbouring countries with common human development challenges. Regional HDRs are policy advocacy tools to promote human development-oriented policies and to inform policy discussions. They also promote regional partnerships and influence change. UNDP has granted regional HDRs considerable editorial independence, which enables them to analyse sensitive regional issues.

It is envisaged that regional HDRs play a catalytic role in policy discussions by providing research and data compiled on topics that have policy relevance; creating a space for countries to deliberate common ground on issues of larger interest; and enhancing regional consensus on cross-national issues. Regional HDRs are intended to stimulate discussion on critical development issues in their respective regions, spur regional- and national-level action on policy areas that are relevant to human development

and engage a broader audience in public policy debates and agenda setting.

Prepared by the regional bureaux, there is no expectation that regional HDRs will be discussed by the Executive Board of UNDP. Within corporate programme frameworks, regional HDRs are often one of the outputs contributing to regional programme outcomes. For example, the 2008–2013 Regional Programme for Africa cites the annual regional HDRs as an output contributing to the pro-poor growth outcome.<sup>85</sup> The regional HDR is seen to complement UNDP's ongoing regional programme in Africa on climate change and the environment. Broadly, the outcomes to which the regional HDRs contribute aim to support regional, subregional and national strategies for higher levels of pro-poor growth, sustainability and democratic participation, and reduced levels of gender inequality.

The purposes of the Arab regional HDRs are stated more clearly than those of other regional programmes. By providing regional platforms for discussion and by piloting initiatives in several countries, the Arab regional HDRs are considered knowledge tools to build capacity for policy debate and to impact policy change.<sup>86</sup> Arab regional HDRs are considered to have championed the creation and flow of people-centred development knowledge and ideas throughout the region.<sup>87</sup> The Arab regional programme was specific in its continued support of the flagship publication and its intent to enable the Regional Bureau for Arab States to build knowledge on

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85 UNDP, 2007, 'Regional Programme Document for Africa (2008-2011)', Results Framework, p. 5.

86 UNDP, 2009, 'Regional Programme Document for the Arab States (2010-2013)', para 11.

87 Ibid.

development dynamics, policy processes and best practices in the programme areas.

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the regional HDRs are part of the output of the regional programme. The regional HDRs are considered tools for human development advocacy to reduce poverty and inequality.<sup>88</sup> Regional HDRs that focus on areas such as trade corruption, gender, hunger and migration are intended as advocacy instruments that help address issues of inequality, discrimination and human development. The Human Development Reports Unit in the Regional Service Centre ensures high quality analysis that is followed by advocacy for better integration of human development concerns into national policies.<sup>89</sup>

The regional programme for Europe and the CIS refers to regional HDRs as one of the publications that consolidated UNDP's credibility as a regional development institution and provided advocacy platforms on key issues.<sup>90</sup> The regional HDRs are part of the outcome that aims to enhance the capacities of public, private and civil

society actors to address human development challenges through evidence-based, inclusive and sustainable policies and through private-sector based pro-poor development.<sup>91</sup>

The regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean region placed HDRs within the results framework as an output of the focus area on crisis prevention and recovery and as an outcome indicator of enhanced government capacity to develop poverty and inequality reduction policies and strategies.<sup>92</sup>

## 6.2 REGIONAL HDRS – 1994 TO 2014

The first regional HDRs were published in Europe and the CIS in 1996, Africa in 1998, Latin America and the Caribbean in 1999, Arab States in 2002 and in the Asia and the Pacific region in 2003. Of the 33 regional HDRs published, 16 had a subregional coverage (i.e. covered only a part of the region or a group of countries within the region). See Table 7 for a list of regional and subregional HDRs.

**Table 7. List of Regional and Subregional HDRs 1994–2014**

Region	Year	Scope	Title
Africa	1998	Subregional	Governance and Human Development in Southern Africa
	2000	Subregional	Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Human Development Report
	2012	Regional	Towards a Food Secure Future
Arab States	2002	Regional	Creating Opportunities for Future Generations
	2003	Regional	Building a Knowledge Society
	2004	Regional	Towards Freedom in the Arab World
	2005	Regional	Empowerment of Arab Women
	2009	Regional	Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries

(Continued)

88 UNDP, undated, 'Regional Programme Document for Asia and the Pacific (2008-2011)', Results Framework, p. 7.

89 Ibid., para 18.

90 UNDP, 2010, 'Regional Programme Document for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (2011-2013)', Slovakia, para 7.

91 Ibid., Results Framework, p. 11.

92 UNDP, 2007, 'Regional Programme Document for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2011)', Results Framework, DP/RPD/RLA/1, New York.

(Continued)

<b>Table 7. List of Regional and Subregional HDRs 1994–2014</b>			
<b>Region</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Title</b>
Asia and the Pacific	2003	Subregional	HIV/AIDS and Human Development in South Asia
	2005	Regional	Promoting ICT for Human Development in Asia: Realizing the Millennium Development Goals
	2006	Regional	Trade on Human Terms: Transforming Trade for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific
	2008	Regional	Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and the Pacific
	2010	Regional	Power, Voices and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific
	2012	Regional	One Planet to Share: Sustaining Human Progress in a Changing Climate
Europe and the CIS	1996	Subregional	Human Settlements under Transition: The Case of Eastern Europe and the CIS
	1997	Regional	The Shrinking State: Governance and Sustainable Human Development
	1998	Regional	Poverty in Transition
	1999	Subregional	The Human Cost of Transition: Human Security in South East Europe
	2003	Subregional	Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma HDR
	2004	Regional	Reversing the Epidemic: Facts and Policy Options
	2005	Subregional	Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security
	2006	Subregional	At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe
	2008	Subregional	Living with HIV in Eastern Europe and the CIS: The human cost of social exclusion
2011	Regional	Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies	
Latin America and the Caribbean	1999	Regional	State of the Region in Human Development
	2002	Subregional	Central America and Panama: The State of the Region
	2002	Subregional	Human Development Report for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
	2003	Subregional	Second Report on Human Development in Central America and Panama
	2009	Subregional	Human Development Report of Mercosur: Innovate to Include - Youth and Human Development
	2009/10	Subregional	Opening Human Development Report for Central America : Opening Spaces to Citizen Security
	2010	Regional	Acting on the future: Breaking the inter-generational transmission of inequality
	2012	Subregional	Caribbean Human Development Report: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security
	2013/14	Regional	Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America

While earlier regional knowledge products tended to include analysis and broader discussion of human development, the regional HDRs (similar to the global HDRs) were focused on specific themes. The themes varied across regions, largely reflecting region-specific priorities. For example, although food safety had been present in public policy discussions in Africa in the last decade, the topic gained public relevance as a result of the surge in food prices between 2006 and 2008, which together with the global economic and financial downturn of 2008 preceded an increase in the proportion of undernourished people in the Sahel and other regions. Although a vast array of publications already addressed the issue, the Africa regional HDR, *Towards a Food Secure Future*, sought to complement and expand upon this literature by providing a conceptual framework linking human development and food security with a view to generating novel practical insights and enriching policy choices. The report thus conceived food security as inextricably intertwined with human development and aimed to provide strategic policy advice on how to improve food security in Africa.

The Arab Regional HDRs addressed issues and themes that were related to human rights, political freedoms, gender equality and education, all of which underpin human development. The Asia and the Pacific region's production of regional HDRs illustrates the diversity of issues that were relevant to the region. Reports were published biannually on topics such as *HIV/AIDS and Human Development in South Asia* in 2003; *Promoting ICT for Human Development in Asia* in 2005; *Trade on Human Terms* in 2006; *Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives* in 2008; *Power, Voices and Rights* in 2010; and *One Planet to Share* in 2012. The topics covered demonstrated a focus on issues that were seen as urgent or especially interesting at that time rather than a broad focus on human development approaches or principles per se.

Similarly, the Europe and the CIS regional HDRs covered themes related to social inclusion. Roma issues were the topic of two reports

(*Avoiding the Dependency Trap* in 2003 and *Bringing Down Barriers* in 2005). The 2003 regional HDR represented the first comprehensive survey of Roma minorities in five Central and Eastern European countries. The report identified major policy deficits that affected not only Roma minorities, but also vulnerable groups in general. The 2011 Europe and the CIS Regional HDR, *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies*, analysed the challenges posed by social exclusion in the post-socialist countries of Europe and Central Asia.

In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, after the first regionally focused report in 1999, with exception of two reports in 2010 and 2013 the regional HDRs had a subregional focus. There was a gap in regional HDR production after the 2003 report; production resumed with *Innovate to Include* in 2009. This was followed by a series of reports on citizen security with *Opening Human Development Report for Central America and Caribbean Human Development Report* with a subregional focus and *Citizen Security with a Human Face* with a regional focus. In addition, there was a 2010 regional report on breaking the inter-generational transmission of inequality.

### 6.3 MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL HDRS

The Regional Bureaux managed the report production processes. These processes showed commonalities and variations across regions and across reports within the same region. The key steps in preparing the regional HDRs—from conceptualization, research and analysis to report drafting and dissemination—were largely similar across regions.

The composition of teams who worked on regional HDRs is presented in Table 8. The HDR Unit in the Regional Service Centre in Bangkok managed the regional HDRs in the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. The HDR Unit has dedicated human resources to prepare regional HDRs, to support the Country Offices in preparing national HDRs and to advocate for

**Table 8. Regional Bureau Staff who Work on Regional HDRs**

	Management of Regional HDRs
Regional Bureau for Africa	Strategy and Analysis team headed by a Chief Economist (until 2014) supported by a network of economic advisers. The unit is located in the Regional Bureau in New York.*
Regional Bureau for Arab States	Chief of the Regional Programme Division in New York and four staff members located in Beirut manage the Regional HDR process.
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific	The Regional HDR unit was a separate entity headed by D-1 level staff with 8 to 10 people and reported directly to the Regional Centre manager from 2005 to 2010. The unit also provides support to national HDRs. In 2013, RBAP moved the responsibility of preparing regional HDRs to the RBAP Policy Unit in New York.
Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS	HDR Unit comprising an economist and two policy specialists located in the Bratislava Regional Service Centre manage the Regional HDR and provide support to national HDRs.**
Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean	A Chief Economist, policy specialist and network coordinator located in the Regional Bureau in New York, manage the HDR process. The team is also responsible for MDG-related work. The network coordinator is based in the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative.

Note: Following the structural reorganization of the UNDP:

\* The Chief Economist post has been moved to the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

\*\* The HDR units in the Bangkok and Bratislava centres closed in 2013. The Asia and the Pacific bureau now has one dedicated staff to manage the regional HDRs under the Chief Economist.

HDR messages. The Bangkok unit was closed following UNDP's 2013 structural reorganization, and there have been changes in the business model for producing regional HDRs. Given the importance attached to regional HDRs, the reports are prepared by Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) staff. The current thinking at RBAP is to produce future editions of the regional HDR through a Development Solution Team, drawing on expertise from inside and outside the Bureau under the leadership of the RBAP Senior Strategic Adviser. The process will be coordinated by a staff member at the UNDP Regional Service Centre, Bangkok.

In the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, with a few exceptions when the report was managed in New York (e.g. *Bringing Down Barriers*), the Regional Service Centre in Bratislava managed the regional HDRs. The Bratislava Service Centre had a human development unit under the poverty practice area with a scope of activities similar to those of the Bangkok unit. The unit has

since been closed; at the time of the evaluation the future course of action had yet to be determined. In the Arab States, Africa and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, the regional HDRs are managed by the Chief Economist in their respective regional bureaux in New York (see Table 8 for details of staff arrangements).

Table 9 presents the three predominant management approaches for the regional HDRs. According to the HDRO, Model I allows the involvement of prominent regional intellectuals and academics and promotes the quality and independence of the regional HDR. However, it provides limited regional ownership, limited opportunities for participation by regional stakeholders and low buy-in by regional Country Offices and governments. Model II was considered to be a more consolidated approach, allowing for better quality control, regional ownership and a degree of sensitivity to political circumstances (without submitting the report to government screening). Model III has been experimented

**Table 9. Regional HDR Management Approaches**

Model	Regional HDR production roles
I	<p><b>External Regional HDR Team</b> Typically academics from the region or those with a good knowledge of the region are in charge of the entire process (e.g. Arab HDRs; the unpublished Africa HDR on the developmental state)</p> <p><b>Role of the Regional Bureau</b> Theme selection, funds allocation, identification of target audiences, selection of regional HDR team members, review of outline and drafts, consultation with Country Offices and regional stakeholders, additional reviews for politically sensitive issues, approval of final draft, editing and printing, launch and outreach campaign</p> <p><b>Role of Country Offices</b> Reviews and consultations with a focus on politically sensitive issues (optional, usually only senior management in selected Country Offices)</p> <p><b>HDRO role</b> Review draft(s) to ensure a consistent application of the human development approach (inconsistently done)</p>
II	<p><b>Regional Human Development Adviser/Units</b> With the support of external consultants, typically academics from the region or those with a good knowledge of the region or theme, the report preparation process is managed in-house (e.g. Latin America regional HDR on inequality; Asia Pacific regional HDRs; Africa food security regional HDR). The Regional Human Development Adviser/Units manage research and commission background papers by external experts</p> <p><b>Role of the Regional Bureau</b> The report preparation is directly managed by the Human Development Adviser/Unit. The roles of the Bureau mostly consists of theme selection, agreement on target audiences, allocation of funds, coordinating various inputs, review and support in outreach activities</p> <p><b>Role of Country Offices</b> Reviews and consultations with a focus on politically sensitive issues (optional, usually only Senior Management in selected Country Offices); Consultations to identify regional experts (optional)</p> <p><b>HDRO role</b> Participation in consultative events/brainstorming (upon request of the Human Development Adviser); Review draft(s) to ensure a consistent application of the human development approach (inconsistently done)</p>
III	<p><b>Regional Human Development Adviser in cooperation with the Regional Bureau and Country Offices</b> The Regional Human Development Adviser leads the report preparation (e.g. East Europe and Central Asia HDR on Social Inclusion; Central America HDR on Security; CIS HDR on regional cooperation).</p> <p><b>Role of the Regional Bureau</b> Most of the process-oriented activities described above are directly managed by the Human Development Adviser in cooperation with the Bureau and Country Offices. The roles of the Bureau mostly consists of theme approval; agreement on target audiences, allocation of funds, reviews (with a focus on politically sensitive issues), and support in outreach activities (same as Model II)</p> <p><b>Role of Country Offices</b> Selected Country Offices are requested to participate in consultative events; provide substantive analysis and country studies; and contract national experts</p> <p>Country inputs are subsequently integrated into the report by the Human Development Adviser/Unit and Support other parts of the regional HDR advocacy strategy (e.g. through outreach to national governments and other key partners)</p> <p><b>HDRO role</b> Participation in consultative events/brainstorming (upon request of the Human Development Adviser); review draft(s) to ensure a consistent application of the human development approach (inconsistently done) (same as Model II)</p>

with recently. It allows for greater national ownership and better suited to allow for programmatic follow-up to the report's recommendations.<sup>93</sup>

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

The overall responsibility for the publication of regional HDRs rests with the Regional Director (though each report must be submitted to the UNDP Administrator for approval). The Regional Director is also responsible for ensuring that the reports meet the key quality criteria set by the regional bureaux, which are largely similar to the criteria prepared by the HDRO (see Box 5). All of the regional bureaux used an

advisory committee comprised of regional experts and other international specialists with relevant expertise to improve the quality and credibility of the regional HDRs. HDRO reviewed concept notes and draft regional HDRs.

Recognizing the increase in the number of regional HDRs, in 2013 HDRO developed guidelines to reaffirm core principles that should be respected to promote quality regional HDRs (see Box 5). HDRO also established a quality assurance procedure that assigns roles and responsibilities to ensure that each published report meets those criteria.<sup>94</sup>

### Box 5. Key Quality Criteria of Regional HDRs

#### Regional ownership

Regional HDRs should reflect regional perspectives on human development in addressing priority themes, emerging trends, opportunities and challenges. They should aim to promote regional policy dialogue on issues that are recognized as relevant for a number of countries in the region. This dialogue should include cross-border dimensions and sensitive aspects that could be more difficult to address at the national level.

Regional HDR teams should rely primarily on regional expertise (from academia, civil society, think tanks and other national institutions). Their familiarity with regional perspectives on human development is important to a systematic application of the approach and the contribution of the report in promoting human development.

#### Integrity and quality of analysis

Regional HDRs should be based on sound evidence and take into consideration a multiplicity of perspectives in addition to those of the authors, regional policymakers and UNDP. The HDRs are about human development; they should therefore be distinct from other technical/sectorial reports. The credibility of data and analysis presented in the regional HDRs is crucial to their influence in policy debate and for their overall reputation. Regional HDRs should leverage credibility and methodologically robust practices to secure a position to challenge existing policies and regional agreements.

Regional HDR findings should be robust enough to serve as a sound basis for formulating recommendations addressed to multiple stakeholders (e.g. governments, regional and international organizations).

All technical notes, statistical definitions and methodologies, references, sources and other analytical materials should be made publicly available (particularly to peer reviewers) either in the report or elsewhere. The report should also contain a description of the preparation process and its methodology.

#### Stakeholder engagement and inclusive preparation

The Regional HDR process should be inclusive and capture the viewpoints of a variety of regional constituencies, including intergovernmental bodies, civil society, academia, think tanks and private-sector organizations. When the analysis properly documents and reflects well-targeted consultative processes (similar to those undertaken for the global HDR), the legitimacy and credibility of the report increases.

Source: UNDP, 2013, 'Regional HDRs Policy'.

93 UNDP, 2013, 'Regional HDRs Policy'.

94 Ibid.

## 6.4 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

The regional launch, managed by the Regional Bureau and the Regional Service Centre, is the primary communication activity of the regional HDRs. Subsequent to the regional launch, the regional HDR is presented to and discussed at regional and national events. Country Offices are encouraged to hold events to share regional HDRs. In Asia and the Pacific, funds are allocated to interested Country Offices to design pilot initiatives to take forward the messages in the regional HDRs. Complete information on the launches and events around the regional HDRs is not available for all reports.

The bureaux adopted different communications strategies. The communities of practice were used to disseminate report messages. Likewise, in Latin America and the Caribbean, human development platforms were used for sharing the regional HDR messages.

## 6.5 FINANCING REGIONAL HDRS

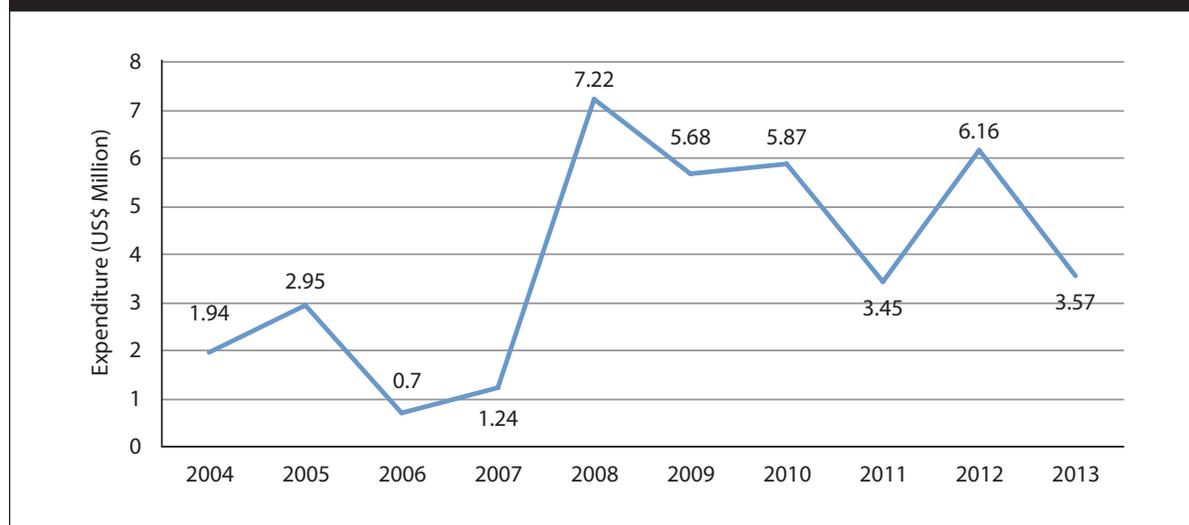
Unlike the global HDRs, regional HDRs are not produced annually. Therefore, there are considerable differences in expenditures throughout the period, reflective of the reports' schedules. Expenditures on regional HDRs increased since

2008 (see Figure 12). In terms of expenditure across regions, available finance data shows that the Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Asia and the Pacific bureaux allocated more resources to the regional HDRs than did the Africa or the Europe and the CIS bureaux (see Figure 13). The regional HDRs could mobilize resources other than funds from UNDP, particularly in Africa, Arab States and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions.

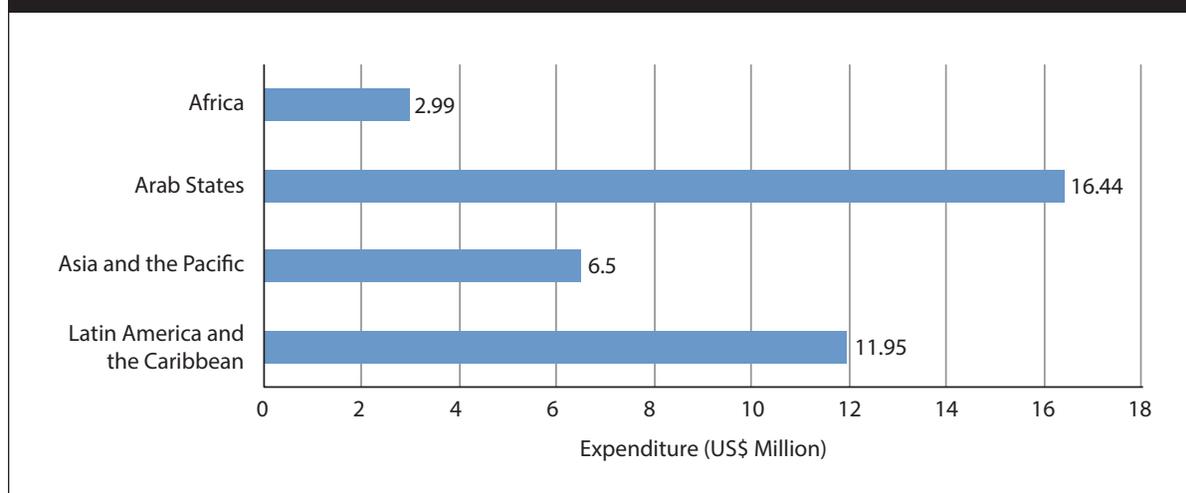
Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean published six reports each since 2003; Africa published one report; the Arab States region published four reports. Two reports (one in the Africa and one in the Arab States regions) did not meet the standards of UNDP publications and were therefore not published.

There was significant variation in the cost of production among Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean (See Table 10). The average cost of a regional HDR in the Arab States region was \$3.2 million (including the unpublished report and expenses incurred on an Arab HDR research paper series). In Latin America and the Caribbean, the cost was \$1.9 million; in Asia and the Pacific the cost was \$1.1 million.

Figure 12. Total Annual Expenditure on Regional HDRs



**Figure 13. Regional HDRs Expenditure 2004–2013 (US\$ Million)**



Note: Europe and the CIS is not included in this analysis because financial data was not available for most of the regional reports

**Table 10. Expenditures by Region and Year on Regional HDRs (US\$ Million)**

Region	Number of regional HDRs published	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total	Average cost of a report
Regional Bureau for Africa	1	0	0	0	0.56	1.17	-0.11	0	0.72	0.6	0.05	2.99	3.0
Regional Bureau for Arab States	4	1.37	1.81	0.61	0.68	1.59	1.54	3.84	1.82	1.83	1.35	16.44	4.1**
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific*	6	0.45	1.1	0.09	0	0.66	1.19	1.19	1.22	1.13	0.69	6.5	1.1
Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS*	6	0.12	0.04	0	0	0	0.27	0.32	0.15	0	0	0.9	0.2
Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean*	6	0	0	0	0	3.80	2.79	0.52	0.76	2.60	1.48	11.95	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>5.68</b>	<b>5.87</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>6.16</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>38.78</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Note: Complete expenditure figures were available for Africa and Arab States

\*The expenditure figures were incomplete

\*\*Includes the cost of the Arab HDR research paper series

Overall, the Africa regional HDR *Towards a Food Secure Future* cost \$1.8 million. This report received a third of its funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which provided full

funding for background papers, research and analysis; UNDP resources financed activities related to production as well as consultation, dissemination and outreach (including the report launch).

**Table 11. Africa Regional HDRs – Sources of Funding (US\$ millions)**

Donor	2011	2012	2013	Total
UNDP	0.33	0.86	0.06	1.24
Bill And Melinda Gates Foundation	0.27	0.35	0	0.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>1.86</b>

**Table 12. Arab Regional HDR – Sources of Funding and Expenditure (US\$ millions)**

Source of funding	Expenditures
UNDP	15.24
Arab Fund	0.79
Arab Gulf Programme	0.32
Swedish International Development Cooperation	1.29
Government of Denmark	0.041
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.68</b>

Services of international consultants comprised a major component of total expenditure, followed by the lead author's salary, printing production costs, audio-visual material and travel.

Since 2003, resources dedicated to producing the Arab States regional HDRs have tended to increase. Overall, \$17.7 million has been spent (including for the 2012 Arab regional HDR that was not published). A large component of funds for the Arab regional HDRs came from UNDP (86 percent), while the remaining 14 percent came from other agencies. The Swedish International Development Agency financed several preparation and outreach activities for the Arab regional HDRs of 2009 on human security and for the forthcoming on report on youth. The Arab Gulf Fund for United Nations Development Organizations and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development contributed to the preparations of the 2003 Arab Regional HDRs on knowledge and the 2004 Report on Freedom (see Table 12).

The Asia Pacific regional HDRs were largely funded from UNDP resources (99 percent of the total expenditure of \$6.5 million); France provided the remaining funding. Personnel-related expenditures, which include regular staff costs

and international and local consultant services, comprised over 70 percent of the expenditure.

The Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS has produced five reports since 2004. There were dedicated projects for two of the reports (the 2005 regional HDR *Roma and Displaced in Southeast Europe* and the 2011 regional HDR *Social Exclusion*). The remaining regional HDRs were produced as part of the regional programmes, for which no detailed expenditure figures are available. From the financial data available, 55 percent of expenditures were related to hiring consultants for producing the report. The funding for the Europe and the CIS regional HDRs comes entirely from core resources.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, although expenditure was higher in some years (2008 and 2012), overall spending on regional HDRs decreased. The regional HDRs were predominantly funded by non-core resources. Of the total expenditure of \$11.9 million, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation funded 99 percent of the total expenditure; UNDP funded the remaining. A large component of the expenditure pertained to staff salaries and international and national consultant services (59 percent), followed by travel costs (11 percent).

## Chapter 7

# CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL HDRS TO PUBLIC POLICY

According to the regional programme framework, the regional HDRs seek to catalyse public discourse and policy processes through research and data compiled on topics that have policy relevance and to spur action on policy areas that are relevant for human development at the regional and national levels. The reports seek to create a space for countries to deliberate common ground on issues of larger interest and cross-country in nature. These goals imply that a range of regional- and national-level actors engaged in public policy process will use the regional HDRs. This chapter analyses the extent to which the regional HDRs accomplished these goals.

This chapter is structured as follows: the first section analyses the primary users of the regional HDRs and which reports are used the most. The section also examines UNDP as a user of the reports and the extent to which the reports informed UNDP programmes and strategies. Section 2 examines the regional HDRs regional- and national-level contributions to public policy processes and analyses the regional HDRs' contributions to gender equality and human development. Section 3 analyses factors influencing the contributions of the regional HDRs. Section 4 analyses the various strategies used in and constraints on communicating regional HDR messages. The final section analyses the management of producing the regional HDRs.

### 7.1 REACH AND UTILITY OF REGIONAL HDRS

**Finding 1: National-level actors used the regional HDRs comparatively more than**

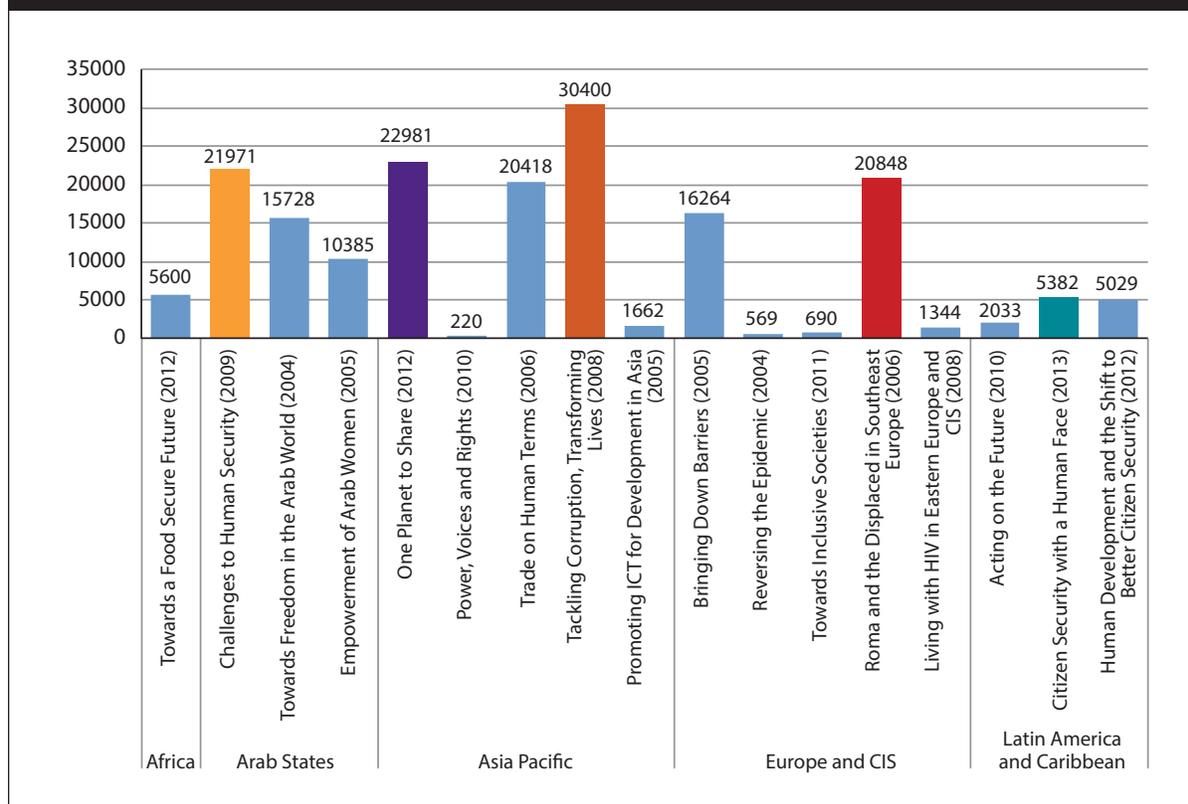
**regional-level actors. Overall, about a quarter of the regional HDRs were used. Across all regions there were some reports that were used more than others.**

An argument in support of the regional HDRs was their greater relevance to the policy context of countries in the region, particularly in taking up issues that are of regional importance. However, country case studies and surveys showed that contrary to such assumptions, the regional HDRs did not always generate interest among regional- and national-level policy actors. The use of regional HDRs was low across the regions. The regional HDRs were used largely at the national level by development actors from government, academia, think tanks, civil society, international development agencies and UN agencies, although the number of users was small. Inter-government commissions of regional institutions used some reports, although there were few such examples. The number of users was comparatively less in Africa and the Arab States. Poor awareness of regional HDRs significantly affected the level of their use.

An Internet search analysis of 759 valid web searches for the regional HDRs showed that 44 percent of the searches were related to use by development actors, 53 percent to coverage by mainstream media and postings on social media, and the remaining 13 percent related to digital library postings and electronic sales portals (see Figure 14).<sup>95</sup> The largest groups of users were CSOs and NGOs, followed by government officials and academics and researchers.

<sup>95</sup> The evaluation carried out cybermetric and bibliometric analysis for 17 regional HDRs (see Annex 6 for methodology). Internet searches for 17 regional HDRs produced approximately 110,000 search results, of which 1,700 were analysed for user pattern. Of the 1,700 search results analysed, 759 were valid searches (i.e. searches that were not machine feed, digital library or duplicate searches).

**Figure 14. Internet Searches for the Regional HDRs**



In each region, some reports were used more than others. Compared to other reports in the same region, the reports that were used to a greater extent were *Challenges to Human Security* in the Arab States region; *Tackling Corruption, HIV/AIDS and Human Development, Transforming Lives* and the *One Planet to Share* regional HDRs in the Asia and the Pacific Region; the Central Asia *Bringing Down Barriers* report; the *At Risk: Roma* reports in Europe and the CIS; and *Caribbean Human Development Report* and *Citizen Security with a Human Face* in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Similar to case study analysis, Internet search results showed a variation in the use the regional HDRs. Overall, reports in the Arab States and the Asia and the Pacific regions produced higher search results. The *Bringing Down Barriers* and the *At Risk: Roma* reports generated more Internet

interest compared to other reports in the region. The Latin America and the Caribbean regional HDRs generated limited search results.<sup>96</sup>

While awareness of the regional HDRs was high in the Arab region, report use decreased when compared to the interest exhibited in the region's first regional HDR, *Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*. Academics in the Arab States were of the view that the use of Arab HDRs by academics and CSOs, the primary users of Arab HDRs, has decreased since the first two reports in 2002 and 2003.

In the Asia and the Pacific and Latin America regions, academics familiar with the regional HDRs were critical of the depth of analysis. The reports did not generate adequate debate in academia (either supporting or critiquing report arguments), and most academics saw the reports

<sup>96</sup> This was despite using the titles in different ways to capture regional particularities in referring to the reports.

as one of many publications. Similar to recent global HDRs, the reports did not have the distinctiveness of a human development report. The awareness of the regional HDRs among academics in North American and UK universities was low, even among those working in the same thematic areas as the regional HDRs.

Regional HDRs have a modest number of citations in journal indices and other databases, indicating that the reports achieved low academic impact (see Table 13 for reports that had more than five citations). The average number of citations for the regional HDRs was 5.6 and 10.9 for sub-citations (see Table 14). In terms of aggregate indicators, the h-index (0.9) and m-index (0.2) showed a low citation pattern, similar to that of the citation and sub-citation counts. The highest performing regional HDRs were cited less often than the least-cited global HDRs; the highest citation count for a regional HDR in any given year is only five. It is too early to compare the Latin America and the Caribbean regional *Citizen Security with a Human Face* report to earlier publications, although in this short time

period the report had more citations than other regional HDRs. In most case study countries, the regional HDRs did not meet the expectations of academics (notwithstanding that academics were always either the lead report author or closely engaged in report preparation).

Across case study countries, research-based publications and development data were regularly used in policy processes and in informing policymaking, although the use was not always systematic across different groups of actors. There was a marked preference for reports that were in an easy-to-use format—ready to use summaries were a preferred choice. Though senior government officials knew about most popular publications (particularly the global and national HDRs), there was limited awareness of regional HDRs; in most cases, regional HDRs were not one of the primary sources of information in public policy processes. Notwithstanding their general awareness of reports, senior government officials typically used policy briefs to inform policymaking. Policy briefs use different sources of information, and it is not possible to determine

**Table 13. Regional HDRs with More than Five Citations**

Regional HDR	Year of publication	Number of citations	Number of sub-citations	H-index	M-index
Arab States – <i>Empowerment of Arab Women</i>	2005	7	28	2	
Europe and the CIS – <i>At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe</i>	2006	16	25	2	0.25
Latin America and the Caribbean – <i>Acting on the Future: Breaking the Intergenerational Transmission of Inequality</i>	2010	9	3	1	0.25
Latin America and the Caribbean – <i>Caribbean Human Development Report: Human Development and the Shift to Better Citizen Security</i>	2012	27	6	2	1
Latin America and the Caribbean – <i>Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America</i>	2013	7	0	0	0

**Table 14. Average Citations and Sub-citations for the Regional HDRs**

	Indexed	Average citations per paper	Average Sub-citations per paper	Average H-index per paper	Average M-index per paper
Regional HDRs	21	5.6	10.8	0.9	0.2

the extent of regional HDR contributions (particularly as policy briefs did not always include citations).

In countries where there was greater media discussion about the regional HDRs (e.g. Brazil, Egypt, Tunisia), there was better awareness about the reports among the government and development actors. Even when governments disagreed with aspects of a report, it nonetheless generated a public debate. In most cases, however, media coverage was limited (especially when compared to national or global HDRs). Likewise, there was little coverage in social media outlets or thematically relevant blogs.

There were instances of indirect use of the reports, particularly the recommendations (e.g. *Citizen Security*, *Food Security* and the *Roma* reports). There were examples of the HDRs' analysis and recommendations being used, although the reports were not cited. One of the reasons for this was policy documents and statements often use many (often undocumented) resources, it remains possible that the regional HDRs were one of many primary or secondary sources used.

Key country-level policy actors include policy specialists (government technocrats from think tanks and research wings), academics and researchers advising the government and research institutions providing analysis to the government. The evaluation found that use of regional HDRs among these policy actors was limited. As with global HDRs, policy intermediaries' use of regional HDRs strongly determined the degree to which the reports were used in public policy processes. The use of reports by policy intermediaries was limited.

The evaluation mapped the units (ministries, departments or commissions) within governments that dealt with the regional HDR theme and were therefore more likely to have used a particular report. Specialized units varied in their use of information in general, and HDRs more specifically. With the exception of environment-related units in Asia and those dealing with food

security in Africa, governmental units made limited use of the regional HDRs.

## USE BY UNDP PROGRAMMES

**Finding 2: Regional HDR use was contingent upon the reports' policy relevance to the country. Country Offices used regional HDRs to identify further avenues of engagement with the government.**

In addition to raising the profile of sensitive regional and national issues, regional HDRs are expected to inform programming approaches to be followed in regional and country programmes, including resource mobilization for themes identified as relevant for the countries. A large number of Country Offices considered the reports useful for the country programme and as an important reference material on the report theme.

In instances where the report topic matched a country's policy interest, the regional HDR was used for further engagement with the government and other development actors. For example, the *Towards a Food Secure Future* in Africa, *Citizen Security with a Human Face* in Latin America, *One Planet to Share* report in Asia and the *At Risk* report in Europe and the CIS were used to engage with the government, as there was policy interest on these topics. This was, however, limited to a small number of countries in each region. In Europe and the CIS, Country Offices used the regional HDRs to mobilize resources, as was seen in the case of *At Risk*. The Country Office survey found similar perceptions of usefulness; there was also a significant difference in the perceived use for UNDP and for other development actors (see Figures 15 and 16). Across regions, the regional HDRs were perceived as used more by Country Offices than by other development actors.

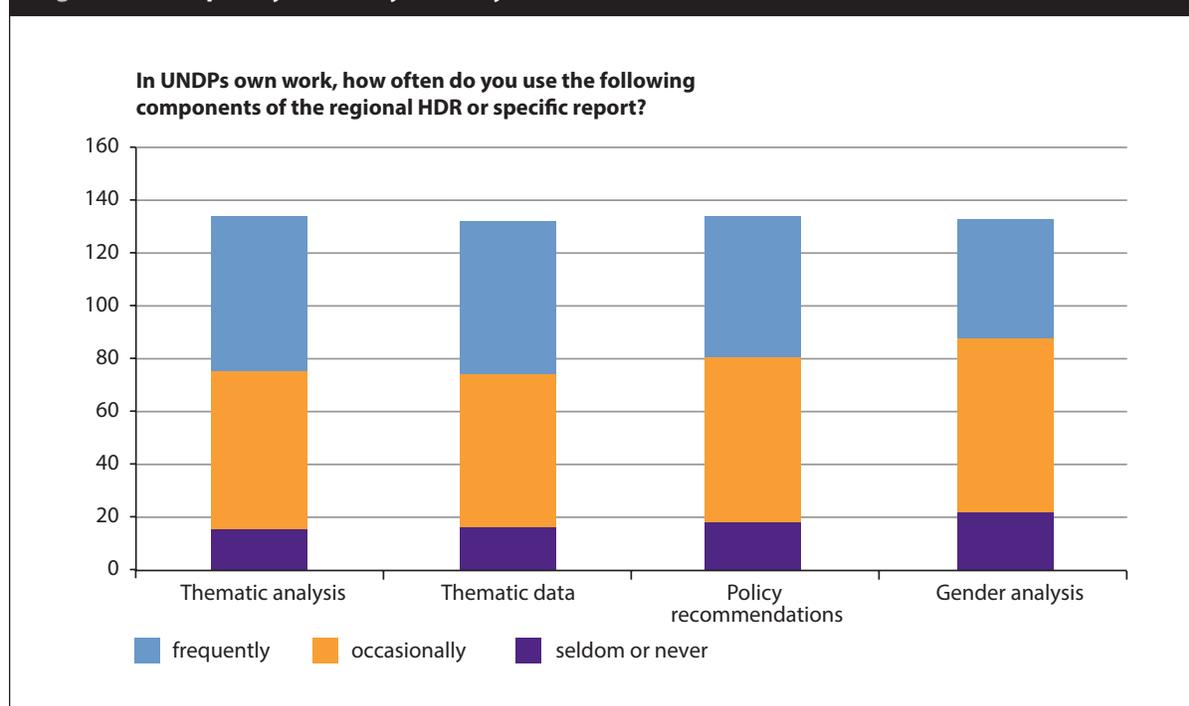
*Towards a Food Secure Future* was the only regional HDR produced in Africa since 2000. Therefore, Country Offices in the region did not consider regional HDRs as a regular input to their programmes or as supporting of governments. Of the four case study countries, only Kenya and Tanzania

used the report. In Tanzania, the report informed the design of the national response towards accelerating progress towards the MDGs in relation to the hunger MDG Acceleration Framework. The report's recommendations and analysis informed the African Union flagship agriculture and food security programme (*Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, CAADP*).

The Country Office survey carried out for this evaluation shows that only a few Country Offices used *Towards a Food Secure Future* for programme-related work (although the report is considered to have provided a framework for Country Offices working in related areas). Aligning broadly with the countries' national food security policies, the report did not generate any new debate. An evaluation of the Africa regional programme found that in countries where food security is a policy priority, the regional HDR was a useful resource in establishing mutual accountability frameworks.<sup>97</sup>

In the Arab States region, none of the Country Offices used specific reports for UNDP programming or for engaging with the government, although the reports did help to enhance UNDP's intellectual standing in the region. The discursive space created by the regional HDRs did not translate into a greater ability of UNDP to follow up at the country level on issues addressed in the reports. Although the regional HDRs have raised UNDP's profile in the region as a major interlocutor, UNDP Country Offices did not systematically pursue a country-level policy support and institutional change agenda. This may be partly due to the pragmatic reality that Country Offices need to preserve partnerships with the government and not jeopardize government funding for UNDP programmes.<sup>98</sup> In some countries, the report topics were sensitive, for example, in Egypt and Tunisia there were sensitivities in pursuing the recommendations of the report.

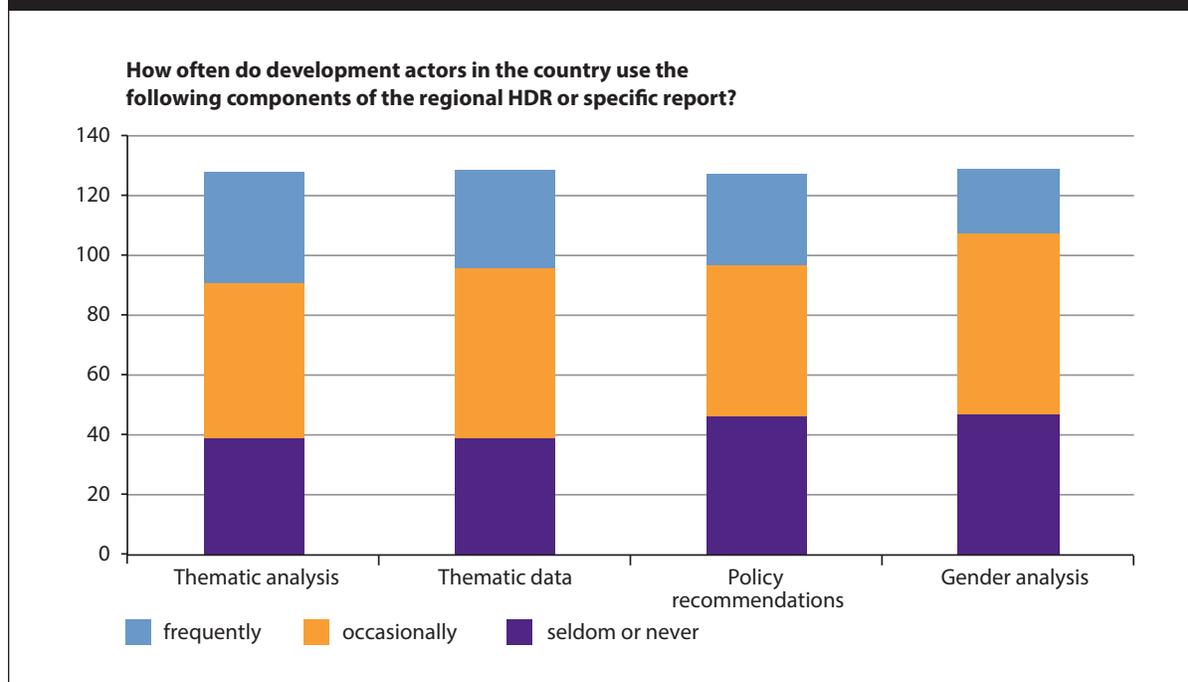
**Figure 15. Frequency of Use by Country Offices**



97 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Africa (2008-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

98 UNDP, 2005, 'Evaluation of UNDP's Regional Cooperation Framework for the Arab States (2002-2005)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 22.

**Figure 16. Frequency of Use by Development Actors**



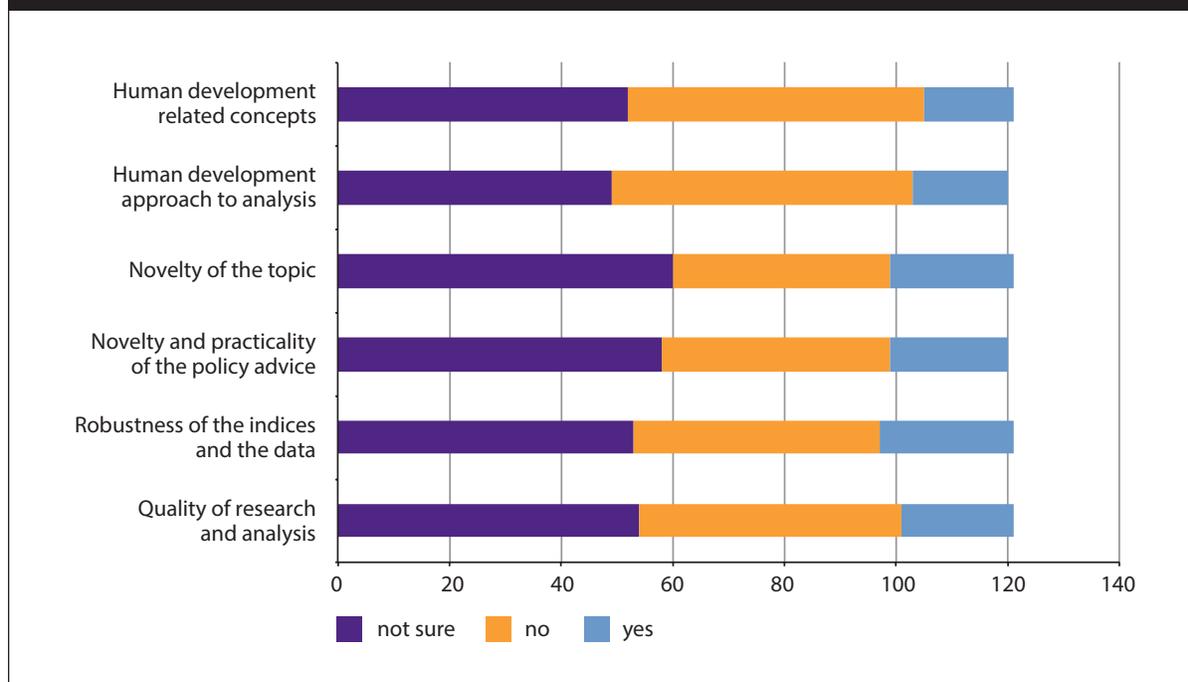
The case studies revealed that Country Offices in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the Maghreb region did not consider the regional HDRs particularly relevant to their context. It is notable that UNDP did not pursue recommendations of the *Empowerment of Arab Women* or *Building a Knowledge Society* reports, which applied to countries across different groupings.

In the Asia and the Pacific region there were examples of regional HDRs facilitating UNDP mobilizing resources to expand programming. In Indonesia, for example, discussions related to the regional HDR on climate change raised the profile of UNDP in the country and provided space to pursue discussions with potential donors to expand its programme and environment unit. As a result, in 2010 Indonesia and Norway signed a \$1 billion agreement as part of the REDD+ partnership (which completed its first phase in 2012). UNDP's strategic position leading up to the regional HDR launch was a contributing factor to the outcome of a long-term process of developing trust with government counterparts and establishing credibility in its environment portfolio.

Unclear dissemination strategies, absence of report follow-up and a lack of adequate Country Office involvement in report preparation were seen as factors that reduced the use of the regional HDRs. UNDP staff were of the view that increasing internal discussion of the global and regional HDRs is important to increasing use of the reports. Currently, there is limited discussion on how the reports could be used in UNDP engagement with the government or how they could be linked to national issues. Although the reports were used when there was an opportunity to engage with the government on the subject, overall it was perceived that the reports' potential contributions could not be fully realized.

In Europe and the CIS region, Country Offices did not consider the regional HDRs useful for the country programme. As in other regions, although the regional HDRs were perceived of as a useful knowledge product, their uniqueness as a human development report was not immediately evident to most Country Offices. For example, although reports on the Roma issue and on regional cooperation were considered useful, they were comparable to other reports on the subject

**Figure 17. Factors that Facilitated or Constrained Regional HDR Use by UNDP Country Offices**



and had no perceived distinctness as a human development report. The Country Office survey results showed that about 60 percent of Country Offices in the region were either unsure of the usefulness of the regional HDRs or did not find them useful.

In Latin America and the Caribbean region, a few Country Offices developed action plans on taking forward the policy recommendations of *Citizen Security with a Human Face* as part of UNDP's crisis prevention and recovery portfolio.<sup>99</sup> Platforms such as the Virtual School and *Humanum* were used for knowledge dissemination and to promote regional HDR information and human development approaches. However, their impact on public policy or UNDP programmes was not evident.<sup>100</sup>

The key factors in the use of the regional HDRs are presented in Figure 17. Novelty of theme was

not seen as a primary factor in the use of the reports or their contribution, as most Country Offices wanted regional HDRs to cover themes that were relevant to the current context.

**Finding 3: Regional HDRs informed UNDP regional programmes where possible. Some regional HDRs enhanced UNDP's intellectual standing in the region.**

Regional HDRs varied in how they were located within regional programme structures, which largely determined the extent of the regional HDRs' contributions. In some instances, the regional HDRs either informed UNDP programme priorities or further reinforced them. The regional HDRs were often part of a regional programme outcome. In the Latin America and the Caribbean and the Europe and the CIS regions, the influence was mutual—the regional programme informed the choice of the regional

99 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 59.

100 Ibid.

HDRs and vice versa. *Citizens' Security* in the Latin America and the Caribbean and Roma issues in Europe and the CIS region were priority areas in the regional programmes; the regional HDRs reinforced their importance.

*Towards a Food Secure Future* increased the salience of food security as a key development issue that was not originally addressed in the Africa regional programme. Based on the HDR recommendations for promoting inclusive agricultural transformation in Africa, the Africa regional programme supported the development of regional value chains through the Africa Facility for Inclusive Markets. The Asia and the Pacific regional HDRs enabled UNDP to engage with a wide range of regional development actors on issues of critical policy relevance to the region. The reports allowed UNDP to initiate debate on issues that were long-term in nature and often could not be addressed in country programmes. However, not all regional HDRs lent themselves to informing UNDP programme priorities or brought new perspectives to inform UNDP programmes.

The socio-political context of some regions was more amenable to certain types of regional HDRs, which could not be replicated in other regions. For example, the 2002–2005 Arab States regional programme prioritized knowledge and advocacy to create space for debate on development issues that were not discussed at the national level; the Arab regional HDRs were tools to help enable this. During the programme period, the regional HDRs successfully identified critical development challenges in the Arab States and subsequently influenced the regional programmes. The regional HDRs also successfully informed ongoing programmes prioritization of issues to be supported by the regional programme.

The Arab States regional HDRs specifically mentioned their role to facilitate regional programme efforts to build knowledge for development and to develop the stakeholder capacities to generate, acquire and apply knowledge in policy processes.<sup>101</sup> The regional HDRs were largely successful in achieving this objective. The Arab States regional HDRs significantly enhanced the profile of the UNDP programme and were instrumental in mobilizing resources for knowledge development programmes. One of the issues highlighted by *Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* was that the region lacked research and publications. Subsequently, there has been investment in the region on knowledge development. UNDP's Arab Knowledge reports are one such example.<sup>102</sup> The regional HDRs served as key entry points for some of the UNDP regional programme governance initiatives.<sup>103</sup>

In the Arab States region, the regional HDRs boosted the global reports. For a brief period, the Arab human development reports were much more prominent than the global reports, a period when development discussions on regional challenges were not openly debated. Development actors in the region attribute the reports' continued relevance to the slow pace of development change in many Arab countries

## 7.2 INFORMING PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES

**Finding 4: In each region there were instances of contribution of regional HDRs to public policy processes. The regional HDRs responded to the research and analysis needs of countries that lacked adequate research capacities. Overall, given the HDRs' limited use, it was extremely challenging for regional HDRs to**

101 UNDP, 2009, 'Regional Programme Document for Arab States (2010-2013)'.

102 The Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation funded the Arab Knowledge reports, which are managed by UNDP. See also UNDP, 2009, 'Evaluation of the Third Regional Cooperation Framework for the Arab States (2006-2009)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. xi.

103 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Arab States (2010-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 44.

**contribute to regional- and national-level public policy processes.**

The regional HDRs covered issues that were seen as critical to public policy. With the exception of the first three Arab HDRs (which provided a framework for public debate), the other regional HDRs were used as inputs in ongoing policy debates. There was considerable variation in how regional HDRs responded to policy issues. In general, reports made comparatively better contributions when there was sustained coverage to address issues related to a theme (or a series of publications on the same topic).

Regional policy context specificities facilitated the contribution of some reports. For example, from 2002 to 2005, the Arab States regional HDRs discussed issues that had been ignored in public policy debates and pointed to the challenges to regional progress. The ability of the regional HDRs to provide space for discussion on critical development issues in a region where such space did not exist is an important achievement in itself. The reports were ahead of their time in raising the need to reform systems and institutions in a politically sensitive context when the more authoritarian regimes of the day considered such discussions problematic. As was seen in the resurgence in the Arab region, the movement for change spread through the socio-political landscape of the Arab region with demands for new development approaches that give greater prominence to the interrelated issues of democratic governance, social justice and better employment opportunities.<sup>104</sup> The Arab HDRs published from 2002 to 2005 continue to be relevant even for present-day challenges.

In Asia and the Pacific, there were examples of outreach to policy forums. The regional HDR

*Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives* informed the process leading to Lao PDR's accession to the UN Convention against Corruption. The *Power, Voice and Rights* report was used in Myanmar as a tool in a sensitive dialogue on the national plan for women's advancement. In the Philippines, the report informed a strategic forum on implementing rules for the Magna Carta of Women. UNDP Bhutan used *One Planet to Share* to make recommendations on climate change; the recommendations were ultimately reflected in the government's five-year plan.<sup>105</sup>

The regional HDR processes in the Asia and the Pacific region contributed to national partners' human development capacities through specific capacity-building events and exchanges of experiences. This was further reinforced in some cases through technical support services, consultative processes to identify development actors' priorities, the preparation and discussion of technical background papers and online discussions on the Asia-Pacific Human Development Network. These efforts have promoted dialogues, enhanced understanding of the issues and strengthened national partner ownership (inside and outside UNDP).<sup>106</sup>

Regional HDR contributions were evident when the reports were seen to have provided a different perspective. For example, the analysis in *Towards a Food Secure Future* was relevant to east Africa, as the report included discussions related to trade regimes located in a human development framework. Think tanks in Africa and elsewhere used the report for its analysis of the challenges related to food security and agriculture in Africa. In Kenya, government officials considered the report important to broadening the debate on regional food security and helpful for advocating for a human development approach to food security (i.e. going beyond agricultural productivity).

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104 UNDP, 2011, 'Arab Development Challenges Report 2011: Towards the developmental states in the Arab region', Regional Centre for Arab States; available at [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/UNDP-ADCR\\_En-2012.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/UNDP-ADCR_En-2012.pdf).

105 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific (2008-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

106 Ibid.

The *Towards a Food Secure Future* report was one of the resources used to advocate for re-prioritizing Kenya's agriculture budget. The report's comparative analysis of countries in the region was used to draw lessons from Ethiopia and Malawi, where better investment in the agriculture sector resulted in greater economic growth and improved livelihoods. The report's insights were also used to develop a sustainable intervention for pastoralist communities in north-eastern Kenya. In addition, report data was used in the *Economic Review of Agriculture* report and the Food and Agriculture Organization's *Review of Food and Agricultural Policies in Kenya for 2005–2011*.<sup>107</sup>

In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, which has a discursive policy space, the regional HDRs not only contributed to ongoing public policy debates on topics such as social inequality and citizen security, but also expanded the contours of debate (on social inequality, for example). Government officials, academics and researchers in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico were of the view that the regional HDRs helped contextualize their countries in ways that allowed for regional comparisons. The value of this seemed to be greater in smaller countries where the HDRs enabled the discussion to move beyond local development perspectives.

Some regional HDRs generated considerable debate and effectively drew attention to critical development issues, although the reports did not necessarily have direct policy impacts. The regional HDRs were seen as valuable for facilitating discussion on sensitive development issues, for example social inequality in Latin America, social exclusion in Europe and the CIS, human security and gender in the Arab States and corruption in Asia and the Pacific. The 2009/2010

regional HDR *Citizen Security* generated considerable debate on inequality in Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago, El Salvador and Colombia, as did the 2010 regional HDR *Acting on the Future* in Brazil.

Corruption is a sensitive programming subject for development agencies in the Asia and the Pacific region (similar to other regions). The *Tackling Corruption* regional HDR served as a useful entry point for advocacy work. The report was used to build support for United Nations Convention against Corruption assessments and implementation. CSOs used the report to advocate for greater transparency and oversight mechanisms. In India, the report was cited at events by the India against Corruption campaign, which mounted an effective nationwide campaign for an Ombudsman bill.

The case studies showed that regional HDR impacts can be subtle and indirect and that they do not always lend themselves to establishing causal linkages to public policy support. The Arab States regional HDRs were less successful in influencing national development policies, but did make significant contributions to public policy debate.<sup>108</sup> The reports generated debate on critical regional development challenges and provided space for discussion on national-level public policy priorities. There was some evidence that the regional HDRs influenced development organization policies (including bilateral donors active in the region). The reports were included in the university curricula in Morocco.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the *Acting on the Future* and *Citizen Security with a Human Face* reports generated public debate in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Mexico.

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107 Government of Kenya, 2013, *Economic Review of Agriculture 2012*, Central Planning and Project Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Nairobi, Kenya; FAO, 2013, *Food and Agriculture Organization's Review of Food and Agricultural Policies in Kenya for 2005–2011*, Rome.

108 See also UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Arab States (2010–2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 44.

109 UNDP, 2009, 'Evaluation of the Third Regional Cooperation Framework for the Arab States (2006–2009)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 17.

The regional HDRs were much more politicized in the Arab region than elsewhere. In 2002, for example, the United States seized upon messages of the regional HDR that emphasized the need for endogenous reform in order to justify a more exogenous process of change.<sup>110</sup> The report was seen to have focused international attention on regional issues, thereby reducing the use of the report in the region. The subsequent regional HDR, *Towards Freedom in the Arab World*, was critical of issues such as the invasion of Iraq, and despite pressure not to publish it, the report was well received in the region.<sup>111</sup> With the events of the Arab Spring, there was a marked rise in media coverage and Internet searches for the Arab regional HDRs.<sup>112</sup>

The role of the regional HDRs changed after the Arab Spring. Present governments in the region are more open to policy debates, but there has been no corresponding effort by UNDP to engage policy actors in the regional HDRs, particularly civil society and governments. In addition, the number of development publications on the region has significantly increased since 2002; the regional HDRs have to increasingly compete for attention. The 2009 *Challenges to Human Security* report did not generate interest levels similar to its predecessors. It remains to be seen how the forthcoming 2015 Arab regional HDR on youth will address the policy priorities needed to respond to strong personal and national aspirations for a greater voice for youth, a more accountable government and better economic opportunities. Case studies in the region note that more regional- and national-level engagement of development actors will be critical to ensuring that the report is effectively used.

The regional HDRs covered topics that have significant long-term value. In Europe and the CIS,

the *Bringing Down Barriers* report gave comprehensive treatment to regional challenges and targeted its recommendations to national governments, regional organizations and international organizations. The report is still considered to be useful and relevant, in part because many of the issues and challenges it identified and analysed have not progressed much in the intervening years—a stark example of how difficult it can be to bring disparate countries in a single region together for common purposes.

**Finding 5: Report quality, while important, was not always a factor in determining whether a regional HDR contributed to public policy debates or processes. Development actors considered the regional HDRs to be good sources for reference, but analysis and policy recommendations were not always adequate to generate policy debate. What distinguishes a regional HDR from other reports is its human development framework; there were mixed views on whether the regional HDRs actually provided a human development perspective.**

Development actors in Africa and some parts of the Arab States regions who used the *Towards a Food Secure Future* report found it useful for its specific recommendations and simple narrative. The reports' simple and actionable messages were used for policy and advocacy. Reports with a more conceptual focus were seen as less practical or useful for policy use. The *Beyond Transition* report was of high quality and well thought out, but was perceived as too complex to use.

Many regional HDRs had design problems, as their scope was too broad and their analysis lacked detail. The reports covered complex topics for an entire region, used an all-encompassing approach to address issues, but were often not

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110 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Arab States (2010-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 40.

111 UNDP, 2008, 'Outcome Evaluation of Regional Projects – Regional Programme Document 2006-2009', by Ragaa Makharita, RBAS, New York, August.

112 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Arab States (2010-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 44.

thorough in their analysis. In many cases, the wide scope of the topic covered, as in the case of social inequality, imposed limitations in ensuring a thorough analysis.

Introducing human development tools increased perceptions of report quality, but did not necessarily increase the reports' contributions to public policy processes. In Europe and the CIS, the *Beyond Transition* report included a social exclusion measurement methodology. A massive dissemination campaign across the region with national partners increased the visibility of the new methodology and the report, but did not necessarily result in its use. There was initial interest by governments to incorporate the methodology at the national level, but this interest was not sustained.<sup>113</sup> Those familiar with the report were of the view that the social exclusion methodology did not distinguish itself from the many tools available. In the absence of UNDP Regional Service Centre support, social inclusion debates did not discuss the tool any more than other tools.

Thought leadership and human development analysis of themes was considered as critical across regions. The first Arab HDR had powerful messages; subsequent reports further emphasized the first report's critical regional messages. The Arab HDRs have shaped governance and development debates in the region. Seen as having given a highly credible assessment of the region's development, the Arab HDRs attracted regional and international audiences. In other regions, the context was different and there was an expectation for human development analysis of development themes.

Though not seen as a strong point of the regional HDRs, the human development perspective was seen as an important dimension of report quality. Further, the perspective distinguished the report from ostensibly similar reports and complemented other technical reports on the topic.

There were mixed views in the Latin America region on the human development analysis in the regional HDRs. In Colombia, a section of users considered *Citizen Security with a Human Face* as unique for its less technical discussion and for bringing people to the centre of the debate. Other users considered that *Acting on the Future* and *Citizen Security with a Human Face* were not imbued with a human development paradigm. In the Asia and the Pacific region, reports were seen to lack a human development perspective. Regional HDRs were viewed as similar to other reports on the subject and that the analysis lacked a human development lens.

Governments in the Europe and the CIS region found the regional HDRs largely useful for their comparative analysis. Some countries in the region (e.g. Albania, Uzbekistan) considered the global HDRs to have provided data and trends that were useful, but did not see much value in the current regional reports. The reports were seen more as reference material rather than as instruments for generating public policy debate. The Romania and Moldova governments used the Roma report as a resource primarily for the data it presented.

**Finding 6: UNDP's reputation as a neutral agency makes it particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions.**

Regional HDR themes generally responded to issues that were relevant to multiple countries, (e.g. gender, corruption, citizen security), too sensitive to address within a country (e.g. freedom, human security, gender, Corruption, inclusion, HIV/AIDS), those with inherent cross-border dimensions (as in *Trade on Human Terms* and the three *Citizen Security* reports) or where solutions to one country's problems depend on the cooperation of others (e.g. climate change). Topic relevance often changed from the time of a report's commencement to its

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113 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and CIS (2011-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 39.

publication. The regional HDRs had the challenging task of meeting multiple expectations to respond to topics pertaining to both persistent and emerging development issues.

Across regions, the regional HDRs addressed sensitive issues. The Arab States regional HDRs are etched in the public memory as very influential publications, particularly because of the topics the early reports covered. Development actors who recalled *Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, the first Arab HDR, noted that the report's analysis of the challenges to freedom and good governance in the region made important contributions to development debate. Government officials in regimes that did not accept the report (e.g. Tunisia prior to the popular uprising) nonetheless read it and valued its bold theme.<sup>114</sup> In Egypt, the report was publicly discussed in the print media, even though the report was critical of the incumbent regime.<sup>115</sup> The report was also perceived to have successfully advanced human rights and good governance discourse in the Arab States region. The report was cited in and beyond the Arab States region as having pushed the boundaries of development debate at a time when the issues it covered were rarely publicly discussed.

**Finding 7: The regional HDRs responded to the needs of countries that had limited resources assigned to research and analysis.**

The regional HDRs were of greater use to smaller countries and those with limited resources devoted to researching and analysing development trends. The regional HDRs were also more useful to countries that had recently emerged from civil war where there was a need for 'neutral spaces' to lessen the legacies of polarization and to mediate among contending forces. There was also a need for data and analysis to build

successful development models. For example, in El Salvador, which had emerged from a civil war in 1992 and transitioned to a democratic regime, regional HDRs and global and national reports were important resources that influenced policy processes. The HDRs provided an intellectual space that was neutral *vis-à-vis* the nation's dominant left and right-wing political parties.

In contrast, Mexico and Brazil were very different contexts. Mexico's population is 17 times larger than El Salvador's, and Brazil is about four times the geographic area of Mexico. In addition, Mexico and Brazil have a more robust civil society, with a dense network of universities and think tanks. As a result, UNDP reports launched in Mexico and Brazil have to compete for attention with many other institutions and news priorities. The regional HDRs are also subject to greater scrutiny by universities, think tanks, advocacy groups, state agencies and government ministries. Adding to this, Mexico and Brazil are federal states, with significant levels of decentralization and regional variation. Thus, the challenges of trying to convey messages in a large, dense and decentralized country were much greater than in a smaller, homogenous nation.

### 7.3 GENDER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Finding 8: The two regional HDRs on women's empowerment were important in emphasizing gender equality in public policy. The contributions of the Arab States regional HDR were critical in raising debate on the implications of gender equality on regional development.**

The Arab States' *Empowerment of Arab Women* regional HDR was part of a series that discussed fundamental issues that were constraining regional development. In a complex and

114 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Arab States (2010-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 38.

115 Ibid., p. 42.

sensitive public policy environment, the report provided a discursive space to debate issues that are fundamental to women's empowerment in the region. At the time of its publication, the subject was sensitive for political regimes and was not openly discussed in the public policy realm. The report broke many boundaries, raising issues of discrimination and rights and putting gender at the centre of development discourse. Regional civil society organizations that are working on women's issues were of the view that although there have been changes in gender relations across the region in the almost ten years since the report was published, fundamental issues such as development disparities, discriminatory laws and social practices continue to undermine women's aspirations for an equitable social and political space. The report continues to have relevance for public policy in large parts of the region.

*Empowerment of Arab Women* informed measures taken by the Arab League, specifically the steps taken to enhance women's empowerment and political participation. The General Secretariat of the Arab League is making ongoing efforts to develop regional strategies and action plans for reducing women's illiteracy in the region, addressing domestic violence and protecting Arab women. There were specific national efforts to increase women's political participation, for example, by reserving electoral seats for women in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and Tunisia. While this cannot be attributed to the report alone, development actors consider the public debate the report generated as having contributed to the impetus for such measures.

The Asia and the Pacific regional HDR, *Power, Voices and Rights*, looked at gender disparities and development from a human development framework and reiterated challenges to enhancing gender equality in the region. While similar analysis was available in the region, the comparative analysis of countries was seen as useful by development actors working on gender issues. The report's recommendations were seen to provide a broad framework for addressing issues related to the economic costs of gender discrimination and

for articulating the legal frameworks needed to promote gender equality.

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the regional analysis was considered important for neutralizing sensitivities related to the subject. By profiling gender equality as a regional issue, the regional HDR encouraged countries to pursue public policies to address the issue. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) discussed women's participation in development and other themes at the ministerial level. It was not evident whether *Power, Voices and Rights* informed inter-ministerial committee decisions. However, the report was used to inform the deliberations of the SAARC technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children. SAARC representatives noted that the forum does not take up issues that may be perceived as national issues and not for deliberation in SAARC forums; discussions on gender were often at a broader level. The regional HDR provided analysis on violence against women in the Pacific islands, which generated discussion when the report was released.

Neither the Arab States nor the Asia-Pacific regional HDR directly informed national public policy processes. Nevertheless, the contributions of both reports have been significant in raising the profile of the issues.

**Finding 9: Across regions there was a preference to use publications that analysed development themes from a gender perspective. The regional HDRs were seen to fall short in gender analysis, particularly from a human development perspective.**

The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the report theme, and there was limited evidence of the reports contributing to gender-related policy processes. The regional HDRs included gender disaggregated analysis, but systematic analysis of gender from a human development framework was either limited or lacking. Among those working on women's empowerment and other

gender-related issues, there was an expectation that the regional HDR analysis would be from a human development perspective.

Some of the regional HDRs had limited gender analysis. For example, the Asia and the Pacific report, *Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives*, was considered as descriptive in nature. The report lacked gender analysis on how women are affected by corruption or whether an increased number of women in political roles and official positions had an impact on corruption. In *Citizen Security with a Human Face* in Latin America and the Caribbean, the discussion was largely seen as on gender-based violence and not on the lack of lack security as a functional barrier for women.

Half of the regional HDRs provided gender analysis or gender disaggregated data. The reports often discussed gender-related inequality, vulnerability and exclusion as affecting women's opportunities. The Africa regional HDR *Towards a Food Secure Future* provided analysis on gender and food security, the transformative power of women, the implications of the gender disparities for women, on advancing women's capabilities through food security and on empowering women to advance the food security agenda. One of the criticisms of the report was that its gender analysis was confined to one section and not integrated throughout the report. In other reports, gender perspectives seem to have been included as afterthoughts and not as part of the overall conceptualization of the subject and approach to analysis. For example, the social exclusion index in *Beyond Transition* does not explicitly include gender as a key factor.

Advocacy actors working on gender-related issues needed powerful messages supported by data in an easy to use form. The regional HDRs did not lend themselves to such a use. In addition, policymakers needed actionable recommendations, but less than a quarter of the reports included recommendations pertaining to gender. Considering the overall poor report dissemination and key message communication, even the limited gender-related analysis did not reach the intended audience.

## 7.4 FACTORS THAT AFFECTED REGIONAL HDR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Finding 10: It was hard for the regional HDRs to find a niche among various publications at the regional and national levels, and it was much harder than it was for global and national HDRs. Intergovernmental actors, policymakers and advocacy organizations had limited awareness of the regional HDRs.**

Overall, development actors, even those working in the area of the themes covered by the regional HDRs, were not aware of the regional HDRs. Those who were aware of the reports unfavourably compared them to the global HDRs. The regional HDRs have been unable to establish a niche audience, unlike the global HDRs (which have the advantage of the HDI to secure development actors' attention), or the national HDRs (which have direct policy relevance to the country). The lack of a regular production schedule also worked against the regional HDRs in some regions. The reports, when published, had to be outstanding to garner attention, a challenging task for most regional HDRs. Even within UNDP, the regional HDRs did not receive the as much attention as the global or national HDRs. Depending on the timing of their release, regional HDRs were received less favourably by the Country Offices.

Though released simultaneously with the global HDRs, the regional HDR themes were entirely different, which created confusion among users. Lack of a systematic approach to producing regional HDRs and limited harmonization with global and national HDRs were factors in the regional HDRs' lack of identity as unique publications. The first reports in the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions focused on human development trends in the region, which synchronized with the global HDRs. Those familiar with publications of different organizations (including UNDP staff), were of the view that flexibility in choosing region-specific themes for the publications was important. However, it was perceived that

for regional HDRs, greater alignment with the global reports would have enhanced both reports' contributions.

**Finding 11: The regional HDRs had the challenging task of remaining relevant in a policy context where other, regularly published publications with regional analysis on key development issues have increasingly become available. In many cases, development actors preferred reports from agencies with subject specialization. Regional HDRs were not seen as having a distinctive value when compared to other publications on similar subjects.**

Regional HDRs are often launched in policy areas in which there are a numerous comparable and competing publications (both annual and periodically published) on the subjects covered by the regional HDRs. Specialists and development actors often had their own preferred sources of information (this did not necessarily precluded using the regional HDRs). For example, development actors working in the area considered *Towards a Food Secure Future* as an out-of-domain publication for UNDP, given that a number of specialist agencies publish annual and biannual reports on the state of the region on food security. When the regional HDR was published, the subject was a current topic in Africa and there were ongoing policy debates on related issues. Concomitant with these debates were several regional and subregional publications on food security issues.<sup>116</sup> Publications by agencies specializing in food security had an additional advantage over the regional HDR—the publishing agencies' close collaborations with development actors working in the area made it much easier for them to use the publications to inform public policies.

Similar issues came up in other regions. In Colombia, for example, development actors favoured Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) publications and data. Although Latin America and the Caribbean regional HDRs were considered as good quality, the CEPAL reports were seen to provide a thorough analysis and offer pertinent and striking policy recommendations. For example, *The Report on the State of the Region* (Informe del Estado de la Region) has been published regularly (every three or four years) since 1997. In many ways it was considered as more powerful than the regional HDRs in informing the policy discourse in the Central American region. On social inequality, CEPAL published *Time for Equality: Closing Gaps, Opening Trails* and also raised the issue in its annual report, 'Social Panorama of Latin America'. Both were published in the same year as UNDP's regional HDR *Acting on the Future*. Although *Acting on the Future* presented well-researched analysis, the reports' arguments were seen as not structured sufficiently well enough to influence policy debates. It was widely opined in the region that CEPAL's report on inequality had more impact on policy debates than the regional HDRs and that it addressed more issues (e.g. those related to role of fiscal policies in reducing social disparities).<sup>117</sup>

In the Asia and the Pacific region, *Tackling Corruption* was published alongside multiple publications by Transparency International, which produces the 'Global Corruption Report, Annual Profiles on over 35 Countries in Asia-Pacific' and a number of reports on sector assessments.<sup>118</sup> The ideas that were emphasized in *Tackling Corruption* (that petty corruption affects human

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116 The food security policy and research space is competitive, and some reports have developed indices on food security (e.g. the Global Food Security Index, Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index and the Africa Food Security Vulnerability Indices). Numerous reports were produced, including by Africa Conservation Foundation, African Development Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Department for International Development, Famine Early Warning Systems Network, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Food Policy Research Institute, Overseas Development Institute, UNEP, USAID and the World Food Programme.

117 An additional factor mentioned in Brazil was that CEPAL published the report in Portuguese, significantly increasing the size of the potential user base.

118 E.g. Private Sector (2009), Water (2008), Judiciary (2007), Education (2014).

development more than grand larceny and that corruption in law enforcement, social and natural resource sectors warrant greater policy and institutional attention) were widely discussed.

Regional HDRs could not always find a subject or issue that had been underemphasized or overlooked, nor were they able to always provide a fresh perspective on the topic discussed. In the absence of a strong human development perspective and with too general analysis, the reports failed to stand out in the overloaded publication space.

**Finding 12: When possible, partnership with regional institutions was used to promote regional HDR messages. However, regional institutions were not adequately engaged in regional HDR preparation processes, leading to poor ownership of the reports. The reports' timing topics are important to successfully informing regional intergovernmental policy processes.**

The level of UNDP's engagement with regional institutions and intergovernmental forums varied across regions. Partnerships with regional institutions were either weak or not operationalized. Partnerships were only formalized in the Africa and the Asia and the Pacific regions. Although there were consultations with regional institutions during regional HDR preparation processes, the consultations were insufficient to increase report ownership or use. Discussions with representatives from regional institutions revealed that they only used reports in which they were actively engaged.

The Regional Programme in Africa works in close collaboration with regional institutions and was well-positioned to work with the African Union. Consultations were held with the African Union in preparation of *Towards a Food Secure*

*Future*, but this did not generate significant interest in the report. Some other organization's regional publications (e.g. the food security report by the African Development Bank), were more successful due to collaborations with the African Union that prompted their use. The International Food Policy Research Institute works in close partnership with the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency and leading regional economic communities. At the regional level, the International Food Policy Research Institute is better networked with stakeholders working on agriculture and food security; its publications, seen as more credible, often receive more attention than the regional HDRs.<sup>119</sup>

At the time of the evaluation, consultations have not been initiated with the African Union for the upcoming Africa regional HDR on gender. The African Union chairperson is spearheading gender equality in intergovernmental discussions, particularly by promoting policies related to women's employment. Extractive industries were keenly interested in gender employment issues, and the topic was seen as timely for informing regional intergovernmental discussions.

In Europe and the CIS, *Risk: Roma's* contributions to policy processes were enhanced by partnership with the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the European Union. Regional HDR contributions should also be seen in relation to the context of the target countries. For example, in European Union accession countries, the government welcomed the regional HDRs and even launched them in some cases. The use of the reports largely depended on issues related to accession, EU priorities and the publications endorsed by the EU. In contrast, in some parts of Europe and the CIS the regional HDRs (as well as the global HDRs) were not always found relevant.

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119 The Policy Research Institute's Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System is supported by three Africa-based Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research centres: the International Livestock Research Institute (Kenya), the International Water Management Institute (South Africa) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (Nigeria).

In Asia and the Pacific, UNDP engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and SAARC was activity-based. Partnerships with several other regional institutions and intergovernmental forums were not strategic enough to contribute to regional policy processes.<sup>120</sup> UNDP has an ongoing collaboration with the SAARC Centres in Health, Education and Poverty Alleviation, supported the sub-regional SAARC Development Reports series and the SAARC Development Goals. UNDP has a partnership agreement with SAARC to produce the SAARC regional poverty profile and has plans to produce a SAARC HDR in 2015. This partnership was not effectively used to inform SAARC debates or to promote regional HDR messages. An additional factor was that SAARC pursued issues where there was consensus involving all countries—not all topics covered by regional HDRs were amenable to being pursued at the SAARC. For example, climate change was considered a political issue and some themes, such as human rights, democracy and corruption, were too controversial for discussions at SAARC.

There were a few successful examples that reinforced the importance of partnerships. For example, the 2003 regional HDR on HIV and AIDS contributed to the SAARC Regional Strategy against HIV and Aids and informed regional intergovernmental strategies. The Strategy was adopted at the regional, subregional and national levels. Subsequently, regional approaches could be seen in the ASEAN Declaration of Commitment on HIV as well as in the Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV and other STIs 2009–2013.

UNDP had limited engagement with the League of Arab States, which has considerable influence in setting the regional agenda. Because incumbent regimes considered the topics covered by the Arab States regional HDRs to be controversial, there was limited acceptability by the League.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) did not perceive the Arab HDRs as relevant to its member countries. Further, although some of the issues covered in the Arab HDRs were ostensibly relevant, the lack of policy briefs drawing on issues and lessons factored into their lack of use. Although GCC countries fund development programmes in several countries in the region, there was limited evidence that the regional HDRs informed their funding priorities. GCC countries were keen to have a GCC HDR that would analyse issues specific to this group of countries.

**Finding 13: The regional HDR audience was not always clear. UNDP did not find the right balance in engaging different groups of development actors to promote regional HDR messages.**

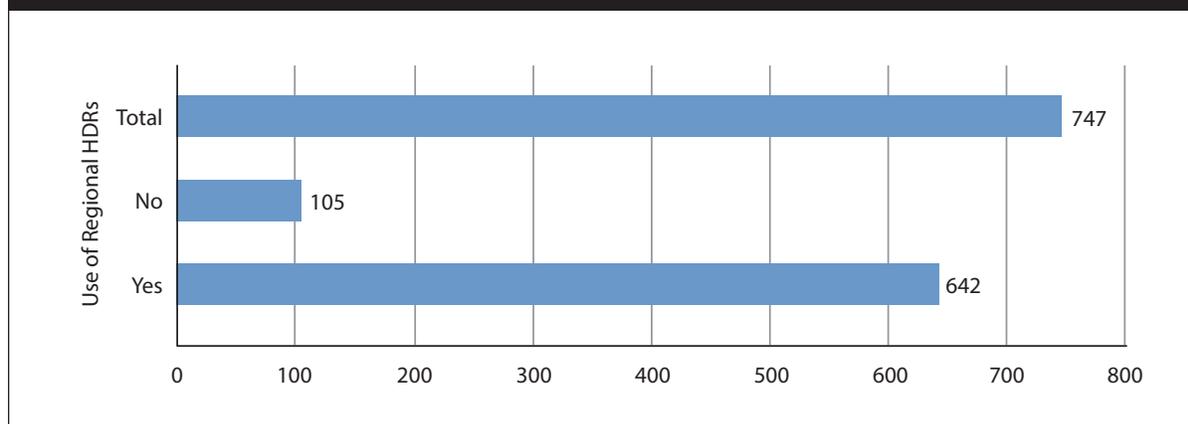
UNDP did not proactively reach out to CSOs or think tanks during regional HDR preparation or message dissemination—a group of development actors who comprise one of the key pathways to influencing public policy processes. Most CSOs and think tanks consulted during the case studies were unaware of the regional HDRs—irrespective of whether the organizations were working on themes the HDRs addressed.

The country case studies and survey results show that CSOs made limited use of the regional HDRs. Out of the 890 CSOs who responded to the survey, over 86 percent did not use the regional HDRs and were also unaware of the reports (see Figure 18). CSO use was higher in Latin America and the Caribbean compared to other regions. The use of regional HDRs was generally low among national-level CSOs, with the exception of a few reports (e.g. *Tackling Corruption, Acting on the Future, Citizen Security and At Risk: Roma*). Most regional HDRs did not achieve the objective of informing public policy advocacy.

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120 The Bangkok centre had partnerships with: the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and ASEAN Secretariat; Forum Regional Security Council; Pacific Community Secretariat; Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat; Pacific Regional Environment Programme Secretariat; SAARC Disaster Management Centre and SAARC Secretariat; South Pacific Geosciences Commission; and University of South Pacific.

**Figure 18. Use of Regional HDRs by Civil Society Organizations**



Note: Of the 890 CSOs who responded to the survey, 143 did not respond to the question

**Finding 14: Policymakers and advocacy actors expressed a marked preference for regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Reports that had a subregional focus or included only a few countries were found to be more useful in informing public policy processes.**

UNDP published HDRs that focused on a region, a subregion or on a group of countries. The proportion of each category varied across regions. With the exception of the Latin America and the Caribbean region that predominantly published subregional HDRs, reports largely had a regional focus (see Table 7). Subregional reports adopted a geographical and transboundary approach, covering critical development challenges that are relevant to a group of countries.

The subregional coverage had greater appeal in the countries covered by the reports. For example, the Central American citizen security report was launched in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala and presented to the legislature in Nicaragua. Government officials, representatives of civil society and academic representatives actively engaged in debate on how to address challenges related to citizen security. The report launch was followed up by national policy briefs (which focused analysis on each country and

made detailed recommendations) and thematic papers (on gender violence, crime, the media and drug trafficking).<sup>121</sup>

In most cases, regionally focused HDRs were perceived of as too general and as not adequately reflective of the specificities of different country groups in the region. For example, the Arab States HDRs were considered as less relevant by the GCC and Maghreb countries. GCC countries considered that their development issues are different from other country groupings in the region. The Maghreb countries were of the view that they share commonalities with issues of the European Union and some of the African Union countries; broad regional HDRs were seen to be of limited policy relevance. There are many country groupings in the Asia and the Pacific region, each of which considers its context as distinct. Governments and other policy actors were of the view that regions are not homogeneous and that the Asia and the Pacific region was too broad and complex to be covered by a single regional report. There are huge differences among countries even within SAARC.

The regional HDRs were seen as indistinguishable from global reports—unless they included analysis of a group of comparable countries

121 UNDP, 2011, 'Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008-2011', p. 89.

that share common development issues. The regional HDRs were seen to take an all-inclusive approach in order to ensure that there was something for all countries, diminishing the usefulness of the report's analysis. For example, climate change issues in the Himalayan region are different from Pacific Island countries, and combining both contexts was found to be less useful. In China, researchers who were aware of the regional HDRs were of the view that the regional report approach is flawed; the regional element must be based on issues, not on geography. Countries must be linked by issues and thematic analysis, not merely by aggregated, disconnected issues of heterogeneous contexts. In the Asia and the Pacific region, regional actors preferred publications with a greater subregional focus and country analysis, such as those produced by the Asian Development Bank or the World Bank.

There have been attempts to produce subregionally focused reports in the Asia and the Pacific region, but these have not borne satisfactory results (with the exception of the south Asia HIV/AIDS and Human Development HDR). Subregional reports were initiated in the Pacific, in East Asia and in South Asia. For the Pacific regional HDR, after more than three years of work by the University of South Pacific it was decided to discontinue the report due to quality and suitability concerns. After much work with the Yujenko Center, the East Asia subregional report concluded as a technical paper rather than an HDR. UNDP collaborated with the Mahbub-ul-Haq Centre, which led the production of the South Asia reports.

The Pacific Islands countries considered that the regional HDRs reflected development issues that were related to continental Asia and of little use to countries in the Pacific. This perspective held

despite extensive subregional consultations with a range of development actors in preparation for the regional HDRs.

The regional focus of the reports in the Arab States region was seen to result in bias against some countries in the analysis. Many perceived that this bias can be avoided by focusing on subregional reports. The Arab States HDRs were seen to fall into the trap of comparing Arab countries with each although they have very little in common in terms of size, population or economy. It would have been more useful to compare countries to those in regions that have more commonalities. The geographical regional boundaries of UNDP programmes were not always relevant.

For some topics, however, regional HDRs were considered more appropriate. For example, persistent inequality has been among the most salient features of the socio-economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean and of interest to most countries in the region. The first regional HDRs examined the factors that influence intergenerational inequality as a structural problem. More importantly, the report introduced the Inequality Adjusted Development Index. The Index, based on the methodology developed by Foster et al in a background paper for the first national HDR of Mexico,<sup>122</sup> adjusts the HDI ranking of countries according to their levels of inequality in health, education and income. UNDP organized more than 20 meetings in the region in preparation for the 2010 report, which in itself provided space for an intra-regional discussion on the report's main theme.<sup>123</sup> The report also proposed a set of measures that could be integrated into each country's policy planning processes.<sup>124</sup> The report generated debate in some countries and generated interest across development actors.

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122 Foster, J.E., L.F. López-Calva and M. Székely, 2005, 'Measuring the Distribution of Human Development: methodology and an application to Mexico', *Journal of Human Development* 6, 5-29.

123 UNDP, 2011, 'Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2008-2011', p. 122.

124 UNDP, 2010, 'Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean: Acting on the Future – Breaking the Intergenerational Transmission of Inequality', p. 7.

## 7.5 COMMUNICATING REGIONAL HDR MESSAGES

**Finding 15: The regional HDRs lacked the profile of the global and national HDRs. The strategies used to disseminate regional HDRs and their messages were not sufficient to provide the visibility necessary to ensure use.**

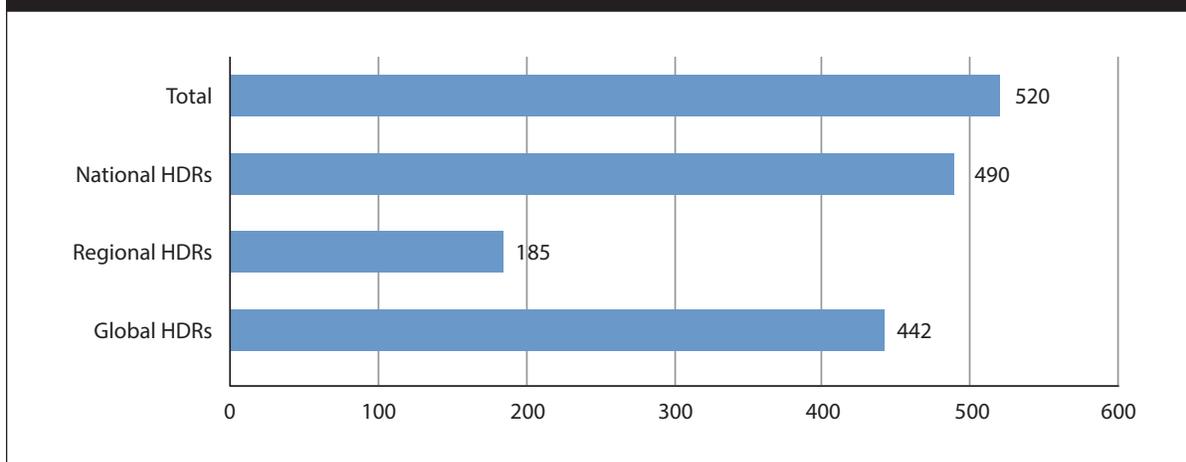
Across regions, national and global HDRs were more discussed and considered comparatively more useful. The awareness of regional HDRs was about 50 percent less than global HDRs, and about 60 percent less than national HDRs (see Figure 19). The global HDRs' greater visibility is largely due to the immediate interest in the latest HDI rankings and the long-term trend analyses of the HDI across countries. The regional HDRs could not generate a similar appeal at the regional level (with the exception of Arab HDRs). The awareness of the regional HDRs was largely confined to thematic specialists; it was very low among policymakers and key policy actors.

Regional HDRs, unlike the global HDRs, have a more defined group of regional governmental actors. Regional intergovernmental forums, organizations and associations can be directly engaged to further enhance the use and contribution of the regional HDRs. However, the evaluation did not find specific dissemination efforts to inform the discussions of the regional organizations.

A determined dissemination strategy, with communications and policy briefs targeting specific groups of users (currently lacking or inadequate), was perceived as important to enhancing the use of regional HDRs. In some regions, the Regional Service Centre facilitated the preparation of communication materials. For example, the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre prepared materials specific to Bangkok, which the Country Office found useful. In most regions, launch briefs prepared for the communication staff of the Country Offices were insufficient for post-launch dissemination or for engaging development actors on the report's content and recommendations. Three quarters of the Country Offices considered that five-page briefs prepared separately for policymakers and advocacy actors were important in enhancing report use. There was also a concern that CSOs and advocacy actors (important groups in informing policy processes) were not adequately included in dissemination activities.

Across regions, the lack of adequate consultations was mentioned as a factor in not using the report. Consultations at different stages of report preparation were seen as essential for strengthening the content of the report and increasing its use. In El Salvador, for example, consultations made it possible for *Citizen Security* to use 2012 data that showed a significant drop in the country's

Figure 19. Awareness of HDRs



Source: Case studies

homicide rate. In some regions, it was perceived that report use could be increased by adopting stronger validation processes in the country.

Consultations were considered as much better for HDRs that had a subregional rather than a regional focus. For the subregional *Opening Spaces to Citizen Security*, countries were more engaged compared to the preparation for the similarly themed 2013 regional report. There was dissatisfaction with the consultation process in Africa for the preparation of the regional HDR; UNDP Country Offices found the process New York-driven and that opportunities to contribute to the reports were lost.

UNDP Country Office communications teams noted that media and stakeholder interest tends to be far less for regional reports, even when specific launch events were held. For example, the only regional report to have had a proper launch in Nepal was the 2012 *Climate Change* report, and getting media coverage and participation was a challenge. Some Country Offices made efforts to include country information in the dissemination material to generate interest in the regional HDR. However, communication materials for the launches were insufficiently succinct or attention-grabbing to be noticed. The launch briefs, while useful, were not seen as creative. Similar to the global HDRs, several countries did not launch regional HDRs. The communication and dissemination messages for countries that did not launch the reports should have a different communication strategy and aim to share report messages in print media and television discussions.

Academic engagement was seen as an important means to generate debate so that the insights the debates generated can inform policy processes and get policymaker attention. However, the reports received limited attention from academia. In Latin America, it was viewed that academia could help simplify the messages of the regional HDRs. The regional HDRs are heavy to read documents; short synopses prepared for different stakeholders would allow them to engage in a conversation about the broader

global or regional topic. Academic engagement was seen as an effective means to generate debate. Policymakers could benefit from the insights generated by such debates.

Dissemination of regional HDR messages was left to the discretion of Country Offices. For example, UNDP China has not disseminated a regional HDR since 2006. As a result, there was very little awareness about the reports. China has not engaged with regional HDRs since the 2006 *Trade with a Human Face*, which claimed that China's manufacturing sectors damaged economies in other Southeast Asian countries. The media coverage highlighted these negative observations, leading to the Chinese government to distance itself from subsequent regional HDRs. Six years later, the 2012 regional HDR had a small launch event arranged by UNDP and China's national agency tasked with climate change policy and action plans.

UN agencies' awareness of the regional reports was low. In most countries in the Asia and the Pacific region, UN agencies were aware of only one or two specific reports linked to their lines of work. For example, UNFPA was aware of the *HIV/AIDS and Human Development and Power, Voices and Rights* reports. In Europe and the CIS, most agencies knew of the *Roma and Social Inclusion* reports. In the Arab States region, UN agencies recalled the earlier reports but not the *Challenges to Human Security* report.

**Finding 16: UNDP's main communication strategy appears to be overwhelmingly focused on the mainstream media whose attention span is limited. UNDP did not effectively use social media to disseminate key report messages.**

As many organizations publish regional-level reports, it was often difficult for the regional HDRs to attract the mainstream media attention, even when the report was launched in the country. Further, it was challenging to convey important messages through the mainstream media, as the messages were not always considered newsworthy. UNDP explored using blogs, social media and

development networks for more sustained communication and for greater reach. At the country level, a lot depended on Country Office initiative, particularly the interest shown by management. Local language summaries and policy briefs enabled greater use, but commissioning these resources was left to the Country Offices.

An issue in all regions that contributed to poor awareness of the reports was that there were not enough copies available to ensure effective dissemination—Country Offices often received a quantity of reports to disseminate that was insufficient to reach the full range of relevant users. The Country Offices were typically given 100 free copies and were expected to purchase additional copies for distribution. Often, Country Offices did not (or could not) invest resources to secure more copies. An exception was Arab States regional HDRs, where additional resources were secured for wider distribution of the Arabic version of the reports.

The regional HDR dissemination scope has been largely policy actors in the national capital; there were limited efforts to communicate report messages to subnational policy actors. In Africa, it was considered that some of the messages of the global, regional and national HDRs may have been of interest to subnational-level policy

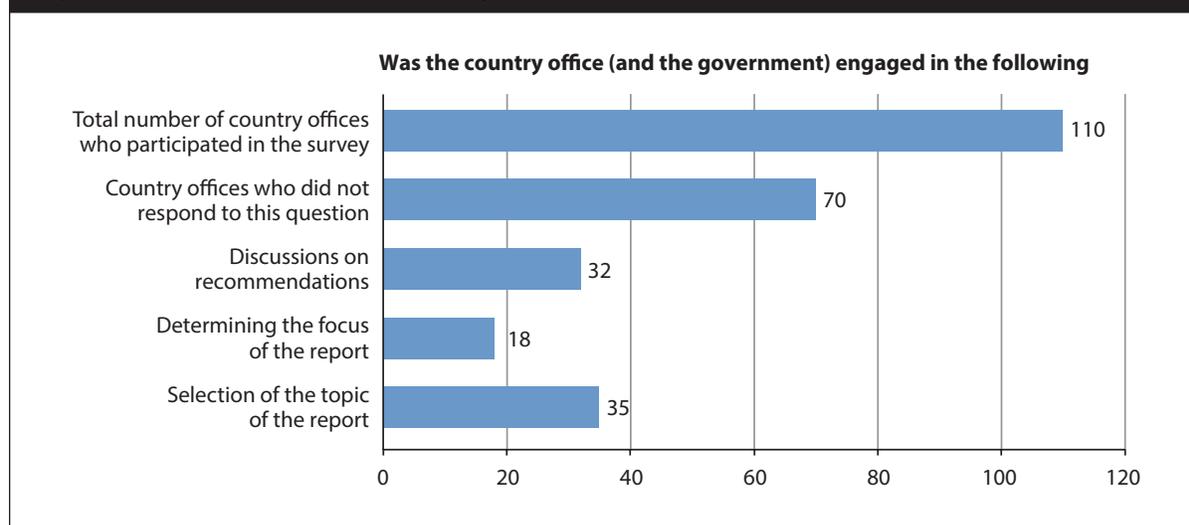
actors. The potential for more grass-roots use of regional HDRs was not maximized. In Tanzania and Kenya, the HDRs were generally considered as more academic. Simplified messages in local languages were considered important for generating debate.

In Latin America and Africa, there was a perceived disconnect between policy perspectives in the regions and at headquarters in New York. The Country Offices were of the view that if this gap can be bridged, then the regional HDRs will become more relevant. Partnerships that are developed in New York need to be more engaged with the region.

**Finding 17: Regional Bureaux have made specific efforts to engage Country Offices in preparing reports and in facilitating their use for UNDP programme support. While Country Offices acknowledged this, the consultations were seen as insufficient to maximize the reports' use and influence.**

Similar to the global HDRs, there is lack of clarity on Country Offices' roles in report dissemination. It was perceived there was some arbitrariness in the choice of countries for holding consultations and for seeking inputs for the reports. Information on the preparation process

**Figure 20. Consultations with Country Offices and Governments**



Source: Country Office survey carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

was lacking, creating information gaps and in some cases poor Country Office ownership. In some regions, there was a lack of support to the Country Offices to build on the momentum the regional HDRs generated.

The regional bureaux have been trying to address Country Office roles and responsibilities to promote and effectively use the regional HDRs. Resource constraints prevented the regional bureaux from funding country-level dissemination, and therefore expected that Country Offices would take responsibility for this. Country Offices also cited lack of funds and staff time as the principal constraints to effective national dissemination of global and regional HDRs beyond their launch. The size and composition of Country Office teams have changed in response to changing country profiles making it difficult for Country Offices to play a greater role in disseminating corporate knowledge products. There has been a significant shift in UNDP country programmes, which earlier involved sizeable resources for programme implementation and fund management. Shrinking programme funds placed greater constraints on Country Office staff profiles, leading to the elimination of certain posts such as Senior Economist (with the exception of Africa), who were key resources for policy research, analysis and country-level dissemination.

With the changing country profiles, particularly high-middle- and high-income countries, countries expect high quality, cutting-edge technical and policy advice from UNDP. Evaluation interviews and previous UNDP country and thematic evaluations highlighted that the governments of most programme countries expected UNDP to play a much stronger role in technical and policy support. A lack of resources has constrained UNDP Country Offices from strengthening their technical capacities. The inadequate attention that HDRs received should be seen in this context.

The Asia and the Pacific regional bureau provides seed funds and a short operational note for implementing the regional HDR recommendations and incorporating them into country

programmes. For example, the bureau funded follow up projects for *Gender and Climate Change*. In the Latin America and the Caribbean and the Europe and the CIS regions, recommendations and tools of the regional HDR are pursued as part of the regional programme (e.g. citizen security report under the crisis prevention and recovery portfolio or the social exclusion measurement under the poverty reduction portfolio).

There is no UNDP policy necessitating that Country Offices set aside funds to disseminate corporate knowledge products, to commission policy briefs or to organize symposia or conferences. More importantly, as some Country Offices pointed out, dissemination of knowledge products was not part of the country programme performance assessment. Unless programme counterparts showed some interest, UNDP Country Offices were not motivated to actively participate in report dissemination.

About 30 percent of the Country Offices had pursued launch dissemination activities pertaining to regional HDRs. Country Offices faced challenges in dealing with multiple human development reports being released within a short period of time. Confusion prevailed in years when regional or national HDRs were released, as was the case in 2011–2012 when the Asia and the Pacific regional HDR was released within a few months of the 2011 global HDR, or in 2014, when Nepal's national HDR was followed by the global HDR less than three months later. Similar instances were cited in Latin America and the Caribbean. Confusion arises because some reports shared the same titles and the dissemination was targeted at the same set of national stakeholders. At times, global and regional launch events overlapped with other major events or were spaced too close together for programme staff to effectively manage all of them. To reduce over-exposure, some Country Offices are considering spreading events to different cities and engaging academia more actively.

The UNDP Country Offices in Latin America and the Caribbean were of the view that they

should be asked to participate more extensively in discussing and reviewing the content of regional HDRs. They were often called upon only to help correct data errors specific to their country. The consultation process was seen as helping to engage Country Offices in a constructive dialogue with their government counterparts well before the report launch. Otherwise, both governments and Country Offices were seen to run the risk of having to contend with unpleasant surprises when the reports came out.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the regional programme developed online human development platforms to improve the accessibility, usability, coverage and reach of human development knowledge.<sup>125</sup> These were developed in tandem with the production of HDRs in the region. The online platforms were used for knowledge product dissemination. The platforms in the past served as a channel between HDR-related information and the human development approach for UNDP programmes and activities of development actors.<sup>126</sup> These platforms were not used effectively to communicate regional HDR messages of the more recent reports.<sup>127</sup>

## 7.6 MANAGING REPORT PREPARATION

**Finding 18: Different approaches were used to manage regional HDR production. Although there are guidelines of the quality criteria for regional HDRs, there was considerable variation across the bureaux in terms of their opera-**

**tionalization. The reports were better managed when there were dedicated senior-level staff engaged fully in report preparation processes.**

The models used to manage regional HDR production were presented in Chapter 5. With the exception of the Asia and the Pacific and the Europe and the CIS bureaux, the reports were managed in New York in units within the respective bureaux. There were advantages in managing the reports in the Regional Service Centre, as it enabled greater country consultations.

The Asia and the Pacific regional bureau made considerable investment in the HDRs. When RBAP had a Regional Service Centre in Colombo (2005 to 2010) and later in Bangkok (2011 to 2013), the regional HDR unit was a separate entity headed by a D-1 level staff with eight to nine staff members. This unit actively supported regional HDR dissemination and provided technical support to national HDRs. With the 2013 establishment of the International Centre for Human Development (IC4HD) in India jointly with Government of India, the regional HDR unit was closed—some staff left the organization, one staff member moved to IC4HD and another moved to the Regional Bureau in New York. The responsibility of preparing regional HDRs has since been moved to the RBAP Policy Unit in New York. Currently, a three-member team (consisting of staff from Bangkok and New York and headed by the RBAP Senior Strategic Advisor/Chief Economist) is working on preparing the forthcoming regional HDR

125 UNDP, 2013, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (2008-2013)', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York, p. 29.

126 Ibid., p. 31.

127 The Virtual School, based in Colombia, compiled human development knowledge generated by UNDP to facilitate learning. The school moved from offering open standard supply-driven courses to courses tailored for country programmes and was among the most visited portals in the region. Launched by the school in 2011, the associated virtual Human Development Documentation Centre ([centrodesarrollohumano.org](http://centrodesarrollohumano.org)) compiles systematized HDR information for public access. The centre has contributed to enhanced accessibility and use of the information contained in the HDRs. The other virtual platform in the Latin America and the Caribbean was The Humanum Journal (the Latin American Human Development Online Journal). Humanum has evolved into "an institutional web page targeted mainly at human development teams, and ultimately transformed into an external communications tool" targeted at both UNDP staff and external users (e.g. academia, civil society and civil servants). Users are concentrated in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela.

on leveraging demographic changes for human development. The RBAP will produce upcoming regional HDRs through a Development Solution Team, drawing on expertise from the Bureau and outside under the leadership of the RBAP Senior Strategic Adviser. The process will be coordinated by a staff at the UNDP regional hub, Bangkok.

In Europe and the CIS, it was unclear how the report management team would be structured—the HDR unit has yet to be reconstituted. In the Africa bureau, the regional HDR is managed by the Strategy and Analysis team supported by a network of economic advisers. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a full-time senior staff member (supported by a full-time assistant) has the task for preparing the report. In the case of the Arab States bureau, five staff members commit a substantial portion of their time to the regional HDR; the team members are located in New York and Beirut.

A few organizational aspects are important to note with respect to the regional HDRs. First, the regional HDR unit has remained an isolated, intellectual section in the regional centre without actively engaging with Country Offices beyond report production (the Bratislava and Bangkok Regional Service Centres were an exception). It is very much within the purview of the regional programme document to provide budgets for the regional HDRs, including appropriate allocations for active dissemination. However, regional HDR budgets have barely covered staff costs, leaving no funds for advocacy or dissemination.

Second, the principal responsibility of creating visibility and deriving mileage from regional knowledge products rests with the Director of the Regional Bureau. Some Directors were more engaged than others were. This was a crucial factor in resource allocation and dissemination by Country Offices. The Arab States (in the case of early reports) and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions had the active engagement of the bureaux Directors. Corporate leadership's interest in specific themes made a difference, as in

case of the Asia-Pacific *Power, Voices and Rights* HDR, which was launched in New Delhi by the UNDP Administrator herself. A stronger buy-in and support from bureau leadership is the key to the effective use of regional HDRs. Directing or rewarding Country Offices to draw at least one deliverable/programming application extracted from the current or past regional HDRs there will dramatically increase its use.

Third, regional HDR potential can be maximized through active engagement by the programming sections of UNDP. Active engagement with regional HDRs by Country Offices—especially communications teams and practice leaders—needs to be driven from the top, and the priorities accorded to the regional HDR at the regional bureaux. The low recall value of regional HDRs among national stakeholders is a reflection of their priority compared to other programme areas. This prioritization is corroborated by several respondents who noted that UNDP staff have become almost entirely programme managers with less of an intellectual role in promoting knowledge products within their spheres of influence.

There was also concern about the scaling down of regional HDR resources. Across regions, UNDP staff who have been there for a longer period were of the view that UNDP (at the country and regional levels) needs to invest many more resources in HDRs if the reports are to be considered a UNDP flagship product. Further, there should be a systematic promotion of the reports rather than leaving it to under-resourced staff. Staff-time and budgets need to be devoted to customizing the messages, adapting them to specific stakeholder groups, engaging in analysis-based policy dialogue, facilitating web discussions by cross-practice teams, engaging media and exploring other means of dissemination. Country Office communications teams, programme staff and the regional office need to have HDR advocacy in their terms of reference (which is not the case now).

Lastly, the lack of a systemic approach to regional HDRs has resulted in the reports becoming an

output rather than a tool. Limited resources have meant that the focus was on producing the report on time. Unlike global HDRs, there is no system in place to quality assure or publish background papers prepared for the regional HDRs. The background papers can be valuable resources in informing public policy processes. HDR team members in the Arab States region were of the view that other than the final report, the most demanding part of the work is writing the background papers. If published, these papers can be used as occasional papers.

The regional HDRs inconsistently applied a human development framework. While every region had good reports that applied a human development framework, there were also reports that, irrespective of their success, did not have a human development perspective in their analysis. Some regions made more effort or drew on the right experts in the area of human development, but regional HDRs largely remain reports on economic and social development—they are ‘human development reports’ in name only. The regional bureaux did not always have adequate expertise in producing regional HDRs.



# CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL HDRS— CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The regional HDRs covered diverse topics, addressing issues specific to the region they covered. While generalizations cannot be made given regional specificities, the evaluation shows that the reports were successful when the human development framework was used and the policy recommendations were practical, ahead of their time and had advocacy value. This chapter draws from the analysis and findings of the evaluation to present key conclusions and recommendations.

### 8.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1: The regional HDRs have yet to distinguish themselves from other UNDP regional publications. The standard for what constitutes an HDR has yet to be fully internalized, although this is necessary to find a distinctive space among the array of regional-level publications.**

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications is the human development dimension which the reports bring to the analysis of development themes. The regional HDRs could not position themselves as distinctive publications at the regional or national levels. A key weakness of the regional HDRs was the lack of a strong human development framework. Besides bringing new perspectives and evidence-based policy options, it is critical that the regional HDRs are guided by the human development framework. The regional HDRs were not effective in achieving this and were thus less successful in bringing a new dimension to development policy.

Thought leadership and human development analysis of themes are key to the success of regional HDRs. Those reports that contributed to transformative debates (as in the case of HDRs

covering the Arab States) had powerful messages challenging existing development practices. With notable exceptions, the regional HDRs have made limited contributions to regional and national public policy process and to UNDP programmes. A lack of bold policy propositions, weak human development analysis and poor dissemination of the reports' messages undermined the use and contribution of the regional HDRs.

There is no corporate policy on the purposes of HDRs published at different levels, on the intended audience and how the HDRs are distinct from other UNDP publications. There is also no organization-wide perspective on how regional actors should be engaged or if regional HDRs are an appropriate tool for doing so. As a result, the purposes of regional HDRs are interpreted differently, and the objective of informing public policy process could not be achieved.

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* global and national HDRs is not adequately taken into account in the development of regional HDRs. While it is important to respond to region-specific issues, the reports were poorly aligned either with the themes of the global HDR or national HDR, and as standalone analysis were not able to create a niche in the development discourse. The regional HDRs, while located in the regional programmes, were not able to establish their value and have largely become merely another UNDP regional publication.

**Conclusion 2: Clarity on who are the primary users of the report is critical to ensure that the reports focus on their intended audience. It was not clear who is the audience of the reports. In the attempt to reach different groups of development actors at the regional and national levels, the regional HDRs have diluted their messages.**

The lack of a clear target audience undermined the influence of the regional HDRs. There is an ambiguity about how to relate to regional policy actors, particularly regional intergovernmental bodies or civil society actors. The regional HDRs did not establish a niche audience, and were not successful in informing regional institutions' policy processes or policy advocacy at the regional and national levels.

**Conclusion 3: Lack of gender analysis from a human development perspective and related policy propositions diluted the contribution of the report. The regional HDRs missed the opportunity to expand the conceptual boundaries of gender-related constraints in pursuing individual goals and interests. The reports did not provide new policy perspectives that would challenge output-oriented development practices.**

The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the subject covered, and there has been limited evidence of their contribution to gender-related policy processes. The regional HDRs included gender-disaggregated analysis, but systematic analysis of gender from a human development framework was either limited or lacking altogether. With sparse policy recommendations and weak gender analysis, the advocacy value of the reports remained limited.

## 8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: UNDP should revisit the purpose of the regional HDRs and explore options to strengthen the contribution made by the reports. UNDP should not publish thematic regional HDRs unless there is something significant to talk about. It is imperative that the reports have a strong human development perspective. UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of regional HDRs on regional and national policy processes.**

To strengthen the contribution of the regional HDRs to public policy processes at the regional

and national levels, UNDP should revisit the purposes of the regional HDRs in relation to the global and national HDRs. UNDP should ensure that regional HDRs capitalize on the global and national reports and pay specific attention to strengthening the policy and advocacy dimension of the regional reports in terms of sustained follow-up activities. Specific efforts should be made to strengthen human development analysis and gender analysis in the regional HDRs.

Every region has issues that merit a regional publication. The regional HDRs should add value beyond what is offered by publications of other organizations. UNDP should not publish regional HDRs on themes that are widely researched and published, unless it brings an additional dimension to the debate. UNDP should explore the option of regional HDRs providing human development analysis and only periodically produce thematic reports that can contribute to development discourse and public policy and provide a new perspective.

**Recommendation 2: The subregional scope of the regional HDRs proved to be a useful approach to cover and provide in-depth analysis of issues that are specific to a few countries or a subregion. This approach should be thought through and adequately strategized for a greater impact of regional HDRs.**

Important lessons can be drawn from the regional HDRs with a subregional focus in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean. Given the specificities of different groups of countries in the region, UNDP should consider publishing regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Regional HDRs should be used specifically to provide human development-oriented data and analysis for regions that are not adequately covered by global research and analysis.

**Recommendation 3: Specific attention should be paid to developing systems and processes to communicate and disseminate the messages of regional HDRs. Effective communication and dissemination of the messages is closely**

**related to the knowledge management systems and capacities of UNDP; this needs to be strengthened.**

UNDP should effectively implement its Knowledge Management Strategy 2014-2017 to address the larger issues related to dissemination of messages of its knowledge products. To improve the contribution of the regional HDRs it will be necessary to:

- Address issues related to poor dissemination of the messages of the regional HDRs. UNDP should develop a dissemination strategy for

its flagship publications, addressing how the HDRs will be promoted through UNDP programmes and activities and clearly spelling out the roles and responsibilities of different programme units; and

- Provide resources to Country Offices for dissemination of the messages of reports. In the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, additional funds were provided to Country Offices for communicating the messages of the regional HDRs. Such approaches should be strengthened and institutionalized.



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

UNDP launched the first global Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990. Since then, reports have been produced almost every year. The global HDRs have a statistical annex that includes the Human Development Index (HDI) and other indices relevant to human development progress for many countries. The reports explore and expand the understanding and approach to human development on diverse development themes. A 2003 General Assembly resolution,<sup>128</sup> reaffirming and furthering a 1995 resolution, recognized the HDR as “an independent intellectual exercise” and “an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.” UNDP started to produce regional and national HDRs in 1994 and 1992 respectively.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) included an *Evaluation of the contribution of UNDP Human Development Reports (HDRs)* in its medium-term plan, approved by the Executive Board in January 2014.<sup>129</sup> The evaluation will be carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy with the following purposes:

1. To provide substantive support to the Administrator’s accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;

2. To support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners;
3. To serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions globally; and
4. To contribute to learning at the corporate and regional levels.

In approving the evaluation, the Executive Board recognized the important contributions of HDRs to public debate and public policy. The evaluation would guide UNDP in refining its intellectual contribution to development.<sup>130</sup> The evaluation will be presented to the UNDP Executive Board at its Annual Session in June 2015.

The evaluation will assess the contributions of global and regional HDRs for the ten years from 2004 to 2013, covering the period since the 2003 General Assembly Resolution. This is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs, so the evaluation will also consider the way that HDRs progressed between 1990 and 2003. The evaluation makes two sets of assumptions on the distinct nature of the global and regional reports’ objectives: a) global HDRs, human development indices and thematic analysis all contribute to global public debates, dialogues and discourses; provide a fresh perspective on the issues they cover; and provide perspectives for policymaking at national and regional levels, and b) regional HDRs contribute

128 United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, ‘Human Development Report’ (A/RES/57/264); United Nations, 1995, General Assembly resolution 49/123, ‘United Nations Development Programme and the Human Development Report’ (A/RES/49/123).

129 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2012, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS agenda item document, ‘Evaluation Office of UNDP: medium-term evaluation plan (2014-2017)’ (DP/2014/5), New York, January.

130 UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 2013, Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS decision DP/2014/1, ‘Report of the Second Regular Session 2013 (9 to 13 September 2013)’ (DP/2014/1), New York, September.

to understanding human development progress in regional contexts; promote policy debates and dialogues from regional perspectives; and promote regional-level human development oriented policymaking. Such assumptions entail that the cross-country analysis of the HDRs contributes to processes that promote policies oriented towards human development.

## 2. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

For more than two decades, UNDP has promoted the concept of human development as a people-centred approach to development of the people, for the people and by the people. Using Sen's capability approach, human development is conceived as a process as well as outcome of widening people's choices.<sup>131</sup> The people-centered approach of human development has been influential in providing an alternative discourse on development. Guided by this approach, HDRs have measured and monitored progress in human development. The global HDR developed composite human development indices, whose methodologies were refined over time. In articulating the human development perspective, each HDR focused on one theme in order to advocate for its improvement. The scope of the HDRs' analysis also included themes of wider relevance to United Nations programmes. These reports seek to raise awareness and generate debate on public issues and concerns. Since 1990, 22 global, 33 regional and 686 national HDRs have been produced.

Since 2004, the preparation of the global HDR has been guided by General Assembly resolution 57/264, in which the General Assembly

reaffirmed the report's editorial independence as well as the importance of consultations with Member States.<sup>132</sup> The resolution also invited the UNDP Executive Board to include a separate agenda item on the HDR in its annual work plan. In accordance with that, global HDRs are produced by the Human Development Report Office (HDRO). The HDRO's main tasks are to prepare the global HDRs and to support UNDP in presenting innovative approaches and practical policy options in furthering human development.<sup>133</sup> The Office is autonomous from other programme units and reports directly to the UNDP Administrator. The regional bureaux take the lead in preparing regional HDRs, and there is no expectation for them to be discussed by the Executive Board.

According to UNDP, global, regional and national HDRs seek to accomplish different objectives. The regional and national HDRs seek to play a catalytic role through research and data compiled on topics that have policy relevance; to create a space for countries to deliberate common ground on issues of larger interest; and to enhance regional consensus on cross-national issues. The regional and national HDRs are also considered policy advocacy tools for promoting human development-oriented policies and informing policy discussions. The global HDRs seek to help generate substantive and analytical debate through human development indices and analysis of different perspectives of a development topic.<sup>134</sup> The global HDRs also provide an opportunity for UNDP to take intellectual leadership in promoting the human development approach.

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131 UNDP, 1990, *Human Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New York (<http://hdr.undp.org/en>); Sen, A.K., 2003, 'Foreword', in Fukuda-Parr, S., and S. Kumar, *Readings in Human Development*; UNDP, 2005, 'From development to human development: Tool for examining themes from a human development perspective', UNDP Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, Colombo ([www2.undprcc.lk/resource\\_centre/pub\\_pdfs/P1030.pdf](http://www2.undprcc.lk/resource_centre/pub_pdfs/P1030.pdf)).

132 United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, 'Human Development Report' (A/RES/57/264). Affirming the editorial autonomy, the General Assembly considered global HDR an 'independent intellectual exercise.'

133 See Human Development Report Office Website, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/contacts/about>.

134 UNDP, 2007, *Measuring Human Development: A Primer. Guidelines and Tools for Statistical Research, Analysis and Advocacy*.

### 3. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The evaluation will entail an assessment of the use of global and regional HDRs by a range of development actors and stakeholders. It will assess how global and regional HDRs inform the activities of a wide range of development actors, including governments, NGOs, academics and researchers and think tanks, bilateral and multilateral organizations, donor agencies and private entities. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which global and regional HDRs inform UNDP programmes, policy support and positioning. Rather than to the development of policies themselves, emphasis should be given to the global HDRs' intellectual, substantive and analytical contributions to policy debates and the regional HDRs' contributions to regional public discourse, advocacy and national public policy processes. The objectives of the evaluation are therefore:

1. To assess the contribution of global HDRs to intellectual and substantive analytical and policy public debate;
2. To assess the contribution of regional HDRs to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy process at the national level;
3. To assess the contribution of global and regional HDRs to UNDP's engagement in global and regional public discourse and advocacy and national public policy processes;
4. To identify factors that explain the contribution of global and regional HDRs; and
5. To present key findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions.

The evaluation will include an assessment of the contribution of global and regional HDRs between 2004 and 2013, covering the period since

the 2003 General Assembly Resolution. The evaluation will cover all five geographic regions where UNDP works. National HDRs are not included in the scope of the evaluation because they were the subject of an independent evaluation completed by the Independent Evaluation Office in 2007.<sup>135</sup> The evaluation will cover the use of human development data (e.g. data on indices, data on different themes), background papers for the global and regional HDRs and the reports themselves. Because this is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs, the evaluation will also consider the way that HDRs have progressed from 1990 to 2003.

### 4. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

#### APPROACH

Global HDRs do not have stated goals to ascertain their contributions against a predetermined set of objectives. General Assembly Resolution 57/264 and UNDP Executive Board decisions do, however, specify broad objectives of the report, resource allocations to the HDRO and consultative processes to be followed.<sup>136</sup> In the case of regional HDRs, they are part of the outcomes of the regional programme managed by the UNDP regional bureaux and their contribution to the outcomes, with exceptions, is often broad or non-existent.

The evaluation makes two sets of assumptions about the distinct nature of the objectives of the global and regional reports. However, both global and regional HDRs should be considered by the evaluation to contribute to global public goods by seeking to generate development debate that is of wider relevance across countries. The contributions of the global and regional HDRs to global public goods, in some ways, inform public policy, although such linkages may not always

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135 UNDP, 2005, 'Evaluation of National Human Development Report System', Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, New York.

136 Until 2008, the global HDR and the work of the HDRO were part of UNDP's Global Programme and contributed to a broad set of outcomes to support institutional and development goals of the organization, providing conceptual underpinning to UNDP and as a contribution to knowledge sharing.

lend themselves to evaluation. The fundamental premises of the evaluation, therefore, are:

**Global HDRs**, human development indices and thematic analysis all contribute to global public debates, dialogues and discourses; provide a fresh perspective on the issues they cover; and provide perspectives for national- and regional-level policymaking. Global HDRs often contribute to public debates from a human development perspective on hitherto ignored dimensions of a development theme. The issues covered by the global HDRs are global in nature, but of national policy relevance.

**Regional HDRs** contribute to understanding human development progress in regional contexts; promote policy debates and dialogues from regional perspectives; and promote human development-oriented policymaking at the regional level. Thus the Regional HDRs contribute to human development-oriented policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level. The contributions of the regional HDRs at the national level are to policy processes, rather than to changes in policies themselves. Areas of national policy processes considered in the analysis of HDR contributions include policy discourse, policy advice, advocacy and agenda setting.

#### **CONTRIBUTION OF GLOBAL AND REGIONAL HDRS—A THEORY OF CHANGE**

The HDRs are intended to contribute to global and regional policy debates, an array of national-level policy and programme processes, the activities of a range of development actors, and to the political dimensions of policymaking. The nature of these contributions poses significant limitations in using traditional evaluation approaches.

This evaluation should therefore exercise caution in using causal analysis as often used in policy change evaluations. Instead, the theory of change is used as a framework to guide the evaluation in outlining the interface of HDRs with public debates and policy processes; to explore policy process areas where the potential of HDRs use and influence is greater; and to understand the complexity of causal linkages between HDRs and their contribution to policy processes. Furthermore, given the nature of the HDRs' contributions to global, regional and national public goods, the evaluation should emphasize looking at the contributions in broad terms and not linked to specific policy outcomes.

The evaluation uses a separate theory of change for the global HDRs, regional HDRs and the role of HDRs in UNDP's contribution to public policy processes. The theories of change are located within a broader understanding of public debates and policy processes. The theories of change draw on UNDP's perspective on the goals of HDRs and on studies on the use of research and scientific evidence in policy processes.

Discussions pertaining to the use of knowledge and information are heavily policy-driven with the goal of better and more defensible policy decisions grounded in evidence. It has been widely acknowledged that the knowledge and information that research and publications generate have the potential to inform policy processes.<sup>137</sup> While knowledge and information cannot always resolve development problems, they have the potential to provide options for effective public policy.<sup>138</sup> Based on the review of studies and research on knowledge and information use in public policy, it is theorized that the HDRs, when used by a range of development stakeholders who are engaged in policy processes, contribute to public debates

137 Majone, G., 1989, *Evidence, Argument, and Persuasion in the Policy Process*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Prewitt, K., T.A. Schwandt and M.L. Straf (eds), 2012, *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*, National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC.

138 Davies, H.T.O., S.M. Nutley and P.C. Smith, 2000, *What Works: Evidence-based Policy and Practice in Public Services*, Bristol, UK: The Policy Press; Dunworth, T., J. Hannaway, J. Holanhan and M.A. Turner, 2008, *The Case for Evidence-Based Policy: Beyond Ideology, Politics, and Guesswork* (revised edition), Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

and policy processes. Drawing from the review, the key suppositions of the theory of change are:

- Policymaking is an outcome of the policy process and use of knowledge negotiated between different actors in multiple policy spaces;
- HDRs, while having the potential to contribute to policy decisions, are more relevant for influencing public debate or agenda-setting and framing issues than for influencing policy decisions;
- Knowledge and information that informs public debates and policy processes comes from multiple sources, and HDRs are one possible source;
- In public policy processes, knowledge and information take various forms depending on the user base and the purpose used; and
- Applicability of knowledge and information proposed by an HDR to a particular policy choice has a tendency to either be overstated, or, in some instances understated.

Given the above suppositions, the theory of change does not aim to provide an unequivocal answer about HDR contributions. Rather, it aims to highlight policy process areas where the potential of HDRs use and influence occurs. While the complexity and contextual underpinnings vary significantly, in terms of HDR interface with global- and regional-level public debates or national-level policy processes, the above suppositions are largely applicable. The theory of change outlines the causal pathways of the use of HDRs (is it used and what is used), process of use (how HDRs are used), and purpose of use (for what it is used). Assessing outcomes of the pathways of HDR use can be complicated, because use of information in policy debate and other dimensions of public policy processes are often integrated with other data and knowledge and influenced by several other factors.

The HDRs are public goods, informing global policy debates and public policy processes

through multiple development actors pursuing a range of public policy pathways. The theory of change is presented separately for the global HDRs, the regional HDRs and the role of HDRs in UNDP's contributions to public policy processes, as there are certain differences in their expected contribution. The theory of change on the role of HDRs in UNDP's contribution to policy debates and public policy processes looks at change processes in relation to the programmes of UNDP. For global HDRs, the contribution is to global- and regional-level public debate, which may or may not have an immediate bearing on national-level policy processes or policy choices. For regional HDRs, however, there is a clear expectation that the reports have policy relevance for regional policy debates and contribute to national-level policy processes.

The theory of change recognizes a distinction between use of HDR resources (e.g. integration of HDR information), outputs of use processes (the initial consequences of HDR use in various public debates and policy processes), and outcomes of use (the subsequent consequences of changes in public debate and policy processes) in evaluating the contributions of the HDRs.

The causal pathways comprise publication of the reports (outputs), contributions to human development-oriented policies (outcomes), and improvements to people's conditions (results). To better discern the contributions of HDRs, the outcome-level linkages are further broken into immediate outcomes (accessing the HDRs), intermediary outcomes (use and adoption of HDRs by a wide range of stakeholders in their work to inform /influence public debates or public policy processes) and outcomes (policy change in terms of furthering human development-oriented policies). The emphasis of the evaluation will be on lower-end immediate and intermediate outcomes, where the contributions of HDRs are more likely to be evident.

The causal linkages of contribution of global and regional HDRs at the outcome level, linking macro-level processes and changes relating to

human development-oriented policies to HDRs has limitations. Considering that a number of factors determine policy options, validation of causal linkages between policy processes and policy choices are beyond the scope of this evaluation. The assessment at this level, therefore, will be peripheral and will rely more on logical reasoning on possible causal linkages to contributions.

### KEY EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria are used to make a judgement about the contributions of global and regional HDRs. Each criterion has an associate question that attempts to explain the meaning of the criterion. The following three standard evaluation criteria as set out in the UNDP Evaluation Policy were used.

#### Effectiveness:

- Did the global HDRs contribute to public debates from a human development perspective?
- Did the regional HDRs contribute to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy processes at the national level?

#### Efficiency:

- Did UNDP make the best use of its resources in the production and dissemination of the global HDRs?
- Did UNDP make the best use of its resources in the production and dissemination of the regional HDRs?

#### Sustainability:

- Were the messages of the global HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?
- Were the messages of the regional HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?

The above criteria raise a number of issues that need to be clarified. First, relevance, sometimes

used as an evaluation criterion, will be redundant for this evaluation. However, 'relevance', in terms of usefulness of approach and themes of HDRs in contributing to public debates and policy processes, does have a place in the present evaluation. The relevance of HDRs is used as a factor in determining the effectiveness of the contribution of the global and regional HDRs, rather than as a separate criterion in itself. Second, the usual definition of efficiency, which relates to the efficiency of moving from inputs to outputs and outcomes, will not be applicable for this evaluation. Rather, the present evaluation will look at the efficiency with which UNDP used its resources, by leveraging these resources for a greater contribution of global and regional HDRs. And lastly, the sustainability criterion does not relate to the sustainability of an HDR per se or to the publication of HDRs, but to the sustainability of the key messages of an HDR beyond the launch period.

In examining HDR contributions by criterion, the evaluation should try to explain why the HDRs were successful or not. In so doing, factors will be identified that could be used to explain the contributions of HDRs. If the evaluation criteria indicate achievement of the goals of the global and regional HDRs (e.g. effective HDRs that are efficient and whose messages are sustained beyond the time of publication contribute to public debates and policy processes, the explanatory factors represent the means to achieve these ends). A set of factors has been identified following a basic review of issues, and these factors have been posed as evaluation questions.

## 5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

Earlier sections have addressed some of the challenges of the evaluation related to the lack of a results framework for the HDRs. This section discusses other issues that the evaluation could face, data collection methods and an approach that is expected to mitigate some of the limitations.

## METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

It is a challenge to determine precisely the contribution of the HDRs from a range of activities and the progress made in promoting human development-oriented policies. The varied nature of policy space, which demands multiple strategies to contribute to the policy process, would mean applying evaluation criteria and related indicators to an open-ended and highly varied set of processes. It may not be feasible for the evaluation to fully capture the dynamics of policy processes at the country level or intergovernmental policy decisions at the global and regional levels and the possible contributions of HDRs to them. The evaluation will, however, use methods such as HDR citation and content analysis, survey of key development actors and interviews of policymakers to capture the contribution of HDRs, primarily through the extent of their use. The evaluation will use HDR case studies and themes to elucidate causation and its applicability. The evaluation will use data analysis methods such as qualitative comparative analysis to understand causal and outcome conditions in the use of HDRs for policymaking.

The HDRs consider a wide range of issues; that variety is in itself one of the reports' most important contributions. The evaluation will consider specificity factors in relation to thematic issues, respective stakeholders and relevance for different contexts (any specific typology of countries in terms of greater relevance of a set of messages) to gain a better understanding of the contribution of HDRs. Case studies of select HDRs and HDR themes will be used to provide insights into factors that determine contribution to policy processes. The evaluation acknowledges the possibility that some HDRs have a greater level of contribution to policy processes than others, mainly because of the nature of the topic itself. This is not intended to preclude the contribution of any HDR.

Determining the range of stakeholders who may use the HDRs or to whom the HDRs can be an important source of information is critical for the evaluation. This entails mapping the range of stakeholders, some of whom are distinct groups for

each assessed HDR. The stakeholders for global and regional reports are also much wider, the common category being national-level stakeholders. The evaluation will build on the networks established by UNDP (such as HDR and thematic networks) in describing the perspectives of stakeholder groups, intermediary users (think tanks, donors, academics), and end users (government policymakers, agents of development cooperation).

## DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation will draw on both quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources, including document reviews, analysis of relevant independent evaluations, case study analyses and success stories, surveys and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data analysis software will be used to ensure that recording and analysis of interview transcripts is systematic, comprehensive and as transparent as possible, and to better triangulate interview data with other sources. Similarly, quantitative data software will be used to facilitate analysis. The following methods will be used:

### Document review

The evaluation will review UNDP programme documents at the global, regional and country levels, along with the monitoring information to understand how HDRs are located in programme planning and implementation. For comparison and triangulation, the evaluation will examine relevant national development strategies, publications and documents of national and international agencies (including multilateral and bilateral organizations) and regional and global policy discourse. Complementary literature relevant to the HDR topics will be reviewed.

### Meta-analysis

Meta-analysis of regional programme evaluations, regional programme outcome evaluations, evaluation of regional HDRs, country-level evaluations, Assessment of Development Results and global thematic evaluations related to HDR themes will be carried out. The meta-analysis will use a set of parameters in drawing information related to the

use and influence of HDRs in informing public policy process and UNDP country programmes.

### **Semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with sections of stakeholders, including UNDP management and programme staff in the policy and regional bureaux in New York; the five regional service centres in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Cairo, Istanbul and Panama; the staff in the global policy centres; and Country Offices. Semi-structured interviews will also be carried out with the representatives of missions to the United Nations, donor agencies, regional organizations, think tanks, researchers and academics. Interviews will also be carried out with about 150 development experts, including authors of global and regional HDRs and experts in the themes covered by the HDRs.

### **Web analysis**

Web analysis of HDRs and background papers (citation and content use analysis) will be used as one of the parameters to quantify the importance of the publications and their influence. The background HDR papers are indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index. The web analysis will, therefore, be the primary source for citation and content use analysis. Content analysis of a set of policy documents (national development strategies) will be carried out to determine the use of HDRs or the ideas advocated by them. The evaluation will also assess social media for additional data on use of HDRs as an advocacy and lobbying tool.

### **Analysis of media reports**

Analysis of media reports will be carried out at the country, regional and global levels. The analysis will include both web analysis and desk research.

### **Electronic surveys**

Electronic surveys of potential HDR users will be carried out to collect additional information and broader perspectives. This will include surveys of research institutions and think tanks, participants of the HDR and other thematic networks,

government representatives and UNDP Country Offices. The IEO will carry out these surveys.

### **Case studies of HDRs and themes**

Case studies of HDRs and themes will be carried out to provide in-depth insights on the contributions of the HDRs. The case studies will look at causality—how and what factors cause knowledge and information to inform public policy debates and policy processes in different contexts and thematic areas. The case studies are not intended to draw general conclusions of the contributions of HDRs, but to provide further insights into processes and outcomes, the relationships between the two and other factors in the use of HDRs.

The case studies, including reports and thematic areas, are purposively selected and will be based on multiple sources of evidence using multiple data collection methods. The broad themes the reports cover include poverty, environment and climate change, gender equality, anti-corruption, the Roma issue, food security, public citizen security and inclusiveness. Topics such as the Roma issue and public citizen security have regional specificity and so may be confined to Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and Latin America respectively. A set of parameters are used in selecting the contexts that will be included for data collection. A case study protocol will be used to ensure rigour in data collection and analysis.

Global and regional HDRs selected for case studies include six global HDRs (of 22) and 15 regional HDRs (of 33) (see Tables A1 and A2). The case studies were selected from the last decade's HDRs. Parameters such as HDRs that were preceded or succeeded by major intergovernmental meetings or conferences, themes that have policy relevance for United Nations agencies and wider relevance to countries of different typologies was used in the selection of HDRs for the case studies. The selection was also guided by evaluability of HDRs in term of time of publication. With the exception of one regional report, all the other reports that were included for case studies were published after 2005.

<b>Table A1. Global HDRs Selected for Case Studies</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Global HDR</b>
2005	International Cooperation at a Crossroads
2006	Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis
2007, 2008	Fighting Climate Change
2009	Overcoming Barriers
2011	Sustainability and Equity
2013	The Rise of the South

<b>Table A2. Regional HDRs Selected for Case Studies</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Regional HDR</b>
Africa	2012	Towards a Food Secure Future
Arab States	2005	Empowerment of Arab Women
	2009	Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries
Asia and the Pacific	2003	HIV/AIDS and Human Development in South Asia
	2008	Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives
	2010	Power, Voices and Rights: A turning point for gender equality in Asia and the Pacific
	2012	Sustaining Human Progress in a Changing Climate
Europe and the CIS	2003	Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma HDR
	2005	Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security
		At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe
	2011	Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies
Latin America and the Caribbean	2009	Innovate to Include
	2009, 2010	Open spaces for Citizen Security and human Development
	2010	Acting on the future: Breaking the intergenerational transmission of inequality
	2012	Caribbean HDR: Human development and the shift to better citizen security
	2013	Citizen Security with a Human Face: Evidence and Proposals for Latin America

### **STAKEHOLDERS AND DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Because the use of HDRs and their policy influence touches a range of stakeholders at the global, regional and country levels, the evaluation will include a cross-section of stakeholders. Table A3

summarizes the main stakeholder groups and the instruments that will be used to solicit perceptions and feedback. Efforts will be made to triangulate the information to help ensure that the conclusions that flow from the analysis are reasonably robust.

**Table A3. Stakeholders and Data Collection Instruments**

Type of Stakeholder	Electronic Survey	Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews during visits to the region/country	Discussions on the Thematic Networks
Policymakers and government representatives			✓	
Development agencies – national, bilateral and multilateral		✓	✓	
Representatives of intergovernmental forums/ regional organizations	✓		✓	
Think tanks and academic institutions	✓			
Academics and development experts	✓	✓	✓	
Donor agencies			✓	
UNDP donors, Executive Board members and United Nations missions		✓		
UNDP management and programme staff in headquarters	✓	✓		✓
Programme staff, regional services centres and thematic centres	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resident representatives and country directors	✓		✓	
Selected staff in Country Offices	✓		✓	✓
Thematic centres		✓		

### COUNTRIES SELECTED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The countries selected for visits and video conferencing are based on the following criteria: regional representation; countries representing different income categories, HDI, and Gender Inequality Index; countries affected by and global and regional crises; relevance of the regional HDR topic for the country; and number of national HDRs published.

In addition, a purposive selection of countries where HDRs informed public policy process or public debates will be included. Identification of successful cases of HDR influence will be based on a preliminary analysis of 50 countries across regions.

During the country visits, data will be collected from planning ministries and ministries and departments related to the themes covered by the HDRs, in addition to other stakeholders.

**Table A4. Countries Selected for Visits and In-depth Analysis**

Region	Countries
Africa	Kenya, Senegal, Rwanda, Tanzania (for visits); Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia (for in-depth desk analysis)
Arab region	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Kuwait (for visits); United Arab Emirates, Jordan (for in-depth desk analysis)
Asia and the Pacific	Bangladesh (Sustainability and equity report), China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Fiji (for visits); Timor Leste (for in-depth desk analysis)
Europe and the CIS	Romania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan (for visits); Bulgaria, Croatia (for in-depth desk analysis)
Latin America and the Caribbean	Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico for visits); Costa Rica, Haiti (for in-depth desk analysis)

## 6. EVALUATION PROCESS

### TIMEFRAME

The preparatory work, data collection, analysis and report writing will be completed by November 2014 to allow time for review by UNDP programme units and management. The evaluation will be presented to the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2015. Tentative milestones are presented in Table A5.

### MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

The IEO will conduct the evaluation and has overall responsibility for evaluation conceptualization and design, final evaluation report, quality of the content and its presentation to the Executive Board.

The IEO will manage the evaluation process, constitute a quality assurance system and provide administrative and substantive backstopping support. It will also ensure the coordination and liaison with concerned agencies at headquarters, regional offices, and other UNDP units as

well as Country Offices. It will also ensure that evaluations are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System as approved by the members of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

The **Evaluation Manager** will manage the overall evaluation and ensure its smooth conduct. The Evaluation Manager will take a lead role during all phases of the evaluation, will coordinate the work of all other team members and will ensure coordination and liaison with the headquarters bureaux, the regional centres and Country Offices. The Evaluation Manager will have the specific responsibility of designing the evaluation and preparing the synthesis report.

The **Associate Evaluation Manager** will contribute to the conceptualization of the evaluation and in data analysis.

A **researcher** based in the IEO will support the evaluation team in conducting background research and documentation as necessary. IEO

**Table A5. Timelines for the Key Outputs**

Key deliverables	Indicative Timeframe
Cybermetric analysis	30 July -preliminary findings
Surveys (NGOs, think tanks, academics, UNDP Country Offices, HQ and Regional Support Centre staff, and Regional Bureau of Africa economists)	10 August
Interviews (UN missions in New York, donors in Headquarters, academics, Think tanks)	30 July
Interviews of UNDP and UN staff	30 July
Country visits	July, mid-August
Case study reports	30 August
Analysis and synthesis, and report drafting	30 September 2014
Share draft with Advisory Panel	15 October 2014
Share first draft with UNDP programme units for review and comments (New York and Regional offices)	30 October 2014
Final draft shared with programme units	21 November 2014
Board paper to Executive Board Secretariat	30 January 2015
Executive Board informal briefing on draft findings, conclusions and recommendations	TBD
Final report uploaded on Executive Board website	30 March 2015
Executive Board formal presentation of conclusions and recommendations	June 2015

**programme associates** will be assigned to provide logistical support throughout the evaluation.

**Regional bureaux**, the **Policy Bureau** and the **HDRO** in New York and **regional centres** in five regions will support the evaluation by providing the necessary information and documents requested by the IEO and the evaluation team. In each bureau, in the HDRO and in regional centres, a substantive focal point will be identified. The focal point, in close collaboration with the Evaluation Manager, will facilitate discussion for the evaluation and provide the necessary information.

#### **External Advisory Panel for quality assurance**

An External Advisory Panel was constituted in January 2014, consisting of two experts in evaluation and development. The Advisory Panel members are Elliot Stern and Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdella. The panel will play an important role in providing strategic, methodological and substantive advice to the evaluation process as well as reviewing key outputs, including the terms of reference and main report.

The panel will provide comments on the terms of reference and on the appropriateness of the methodology to address the key evaluation questions. It will also advise on the methodology and evaluation design. The draft findings and conclusions will be discussed with the panel, which will feed back on the draft evaluation report. In particular, it will comment on whether the evaluation's findings, conclusions and recommendations are based on evaluative evidence and are grounded on solid analysis; that the key messages are communicated effectively; and that the report has a clear strategic focus with evidence and analysis to inform programme decisions.

The panel will meet virtually and, when possible, will meet in person and participate in select meetings where the evaluation outputs are discussed.

#### **Technical Reference Group**

The Technical Reference Group will be constituted in April 2014, comprising representatives of regional bureaux, the Policy Bureau, regional service centres and the HDRO, who will participate in discussions on evaluation findings and conclusions.

#### **Review by UNDP management and programme units**

The drafts of the terms of reference and evaluation report will be shared with the UNDP Organizational Performance Group and programme units for review and comment.

#### **Evaluation team**

The IEO will lead the evaluation and play a key role in conceptualization, design, analysis and report writing. The Evaluation Manager will lead this process. The IEO will be supported by a team of external consultants in various tasks of the evaluation.

The IEO will recruit all team members, who must possess educational qualifications in social sciences or related disciplines. They are also expected to have knowledge of issues relating to human development and related debates at the global and regional levels, knowledge management issues and an understanding of the country-level policy process.

#### **EVALUATION OUTPUTS**

The key evaluation outputs include:

1. Background papers;
2. Case studies of HDRs and HDR themes;
3. Cybermetric analysis report; and
4. A comprehensive (synthesis) evaluation report covering the issues outlined in the terms of reference. The synthesis report will include an executive summary that highlights findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## Annex 2

# PEOPLE CONSULTED

### BANGLADESH

- Bhattacharya, Debapriya, Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue
- Haq, Saleemul, Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Independent University
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## Annex 4

# EVALUATION CRITERIA, QUESTIONS AND MEANS OF VERIFICATION

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
<b>EFFECTIVENESS:</b> Did the global HDR contribute to public debates from human development perspective? Did the global HDR contribute to generating public debates on hitherto ignored dimension of a development theme? Did the global HDRs contribute to greater understandings of human development at the global, regional, national level?		
<b>Global HDRs:</b> What is the contribution of global HDRs to public debate and national policy processes? What is the contribution of global HDRs to strengthening the development actors' capacities to pursue human development oriented policies? What is the purpose of use of global HDRs?	a) What is the contribution of global HDRs to informing the programmes and activities of the development actors at the global, regional and national level? b) What is the contribution of global HDRs to bridging the gap between the human development concepts and its application? c) What is the contribution of global HDRs to minimizing data gaps in human development assessment? d) What is the contribution of HDRs to public debate at the global, regional and national level? e) What is the contribution of global HDRs to policy process at the national level? f) Which is most used in the global HDRs by the development actors? Is it the human development data, thematic analysis or policy recommendations?	Policies and strategies, state as well as non-state, informed by HDRs Number of context/subject specific policy briefs informed by global HDRs Conferences and seminars that draw on global HDRs Media discussion on global HDRs University courses that draws on global HDRs Academic standing of global HDRs—quantity and quality of citation in publications by scholars in major academic books, journals, conferences and in other professional publications Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level (surveys and interviews of development actors)
	g) What is the contribution of global HDRs to UNDP programmes and publications?	Review of relevant literature Meta-analysis of UNDP evaluations Perceptions of UNDP staff Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level
	h) What is the contribution of global HDRs to informing UNDP's programmes and activities?	Inform policy support Inform UNDP publications Role and responsibility of UNDP programme units in promoting HDR messages

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
<b>Global HDRs:</b> What are the factors that enhanced the contribution of global HDRs?	i) Are HDRs distinct, in terms of issues covered, presenting concepts, thematic analysis, and human development indices?	Review of relevant literature Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level
	j) How is the quality and credibility of human development data and thematic analysis perceived by development actors?	Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level on the quality of HDRs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures taken to ensure quality of HDRs HDR research evidence analysis is perceived as independent</li> <li>• Data perceived as accuracy and reliable</li> <li>• Conceptual and measurement issues are addressed</li> <li>• Consistency in the production of regional HDRs</li> <li>• Topical relevance of HDR themes at the time of the HDR publication</li> <li>• Responsive to the policy needs of (at least) a selection of countries</li> <li>• Timeliness of publication in terms of thematic use</li> </ul>
	k) Did the global HDR dissemination strategy—of the report and its resources—enhance the contribution of the HDRs? l) Was the consultation process adequate to enhance global HDR use?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination strategy and practices</li> <li>• Measures taken to enhance ownership of the key policy actors</li> <li>• Consultation process at different stages of HDR publication process</li> <li>• Roles and responsibilities of the programme units in the promotion of HDRs specified</li> </ul>
<b>Global HDRs:</b> Did the approaches followed ensure global HDRs lead public debates?	m) What is the process followed for selecting the HDR themes? n) Are themes chosen ahead of time and do they deal with hitherto ignored dimensions of a development theme? o) What was the logic behind the changes in the methodology of indices?	Publication process of global HDRs
	p) Where sufficient resources spent by UNDP on global HDRs?	Capacities of UNDP to undertake HDR exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional systems</li> <li>• Financial resources</li> <li>• Human resources</li> </ul>

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS:</b> Were global HDRs useful for policy debates in global priority areas? Were global HDRs successful in bringing fresh perspectives to the development debates?</p>		
<p><b>Global HDRs:</b> Are global HDRs used by development actors at the global, regional and national level?</p>	<p>a) What is the extent of use of global HDRs compared to similar reports and data sets for the activities of the global and regional development actors? b) Are global HDRs used to inform public debates of global nature? c) Are global HDRs used in UNDP's programme and policy support?</p>	<p>Comparative use of publications and datasets similar to HDRs HDR citations and content use Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level (surveys and interviews of development actors)</p>
<p><b>Global HDRs:</b> Were the global HDRs useful in bringing a new dimension to public debates at the global, regional and national level?</p>	<p>d) Do global HDRs generate new concepts and information to inform public debate? e) Do global HDRs:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge policy ideas that are not conducive for development?</li> <li>• Generate innovative policy ideas?</li> <li>• Provide evidence based analysis on alternative development perspectives?</li> </ul> </p>	<p>Review of relevant literature Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level</p>
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS:</b> Did regional HDRs contribute to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy process at the national level? Did regional HDRs bring human development perspective to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy process at the national level? Did the regional HDRs contribute to greater understandings of human development at the global, regional, national level?</p>		
<p><b>Regional HDRs:</b> What is the contribution of regional HDRs to public discourse and advocacy at regional level and policy process national level? What is the contribution of regional HDRs in strengthening the development actors' capacities to pursue human development-oriented policies? What is the purpose of use of global HDRs?</p>	<p>a) What is the contribution of regional HDRs to informing the programmes and activities of the development actors at the regional and national level? b) What is the contribution of regional HDRs to bridging the gap between the human development concepts and its application? c) What is the contribution of regional HDRs in responding to knowledge and information needs in regional policy discourse and advocacy? d) What is the contribution of regional HDRs to policy processes at the national level?</p>	<p>Policies and strategies, state as well as non-state, informed by regional HDRs Number of context / subject specific policy briefs informed by regional HDRs Conferences and seminars that draw on regional HDRs Media discussion on regional HDRs University courses that draws on regional HDRs Academic standing of regional HDRs—quantity and quality of citation in publications by scholars in major academic books, journals, conferences and in other professional publications Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level (surveys and interviews of development actors)</p>

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
	e) What is the contribution of regional HDRs to UNDP programmes and publications?	Review of relevant literature Meta-analysis of UNDP evaluations Perceptions of UNDP staff Perception of development actors at the global, regional and national level
	f) What is the contribution of regional HDRs to informing UNDP's programmes and activities?	Inform policy support Inform UNDP publications Role and responsibility of UNDP programme units in promoting HDR messages
<b>Regional HDRs:</b> What are the factors that enhanced the contribution of regional HDRs?	g) Are HDRs distinct, in terms of issues covered, presenting concepts, thematic analysis and relevant data?	Dissemination strategy and practices Measures taken to enhance ownership of the key policy actors Consultation process at different stages of HDR publication process
	h) How is the quality and credibility of thematic analysis perceived by development actors? i) Was the consultation process adequate to enhance regional HDR use?	UNDP adequate capacities to undertake HDR exercise: • Institutional systems in place • Financial resources • Human resources
<b>Regional HDRs:</b> Did the approaches followed ensure regional HDRs made significant contributions in regional public discourse and advocacy? Did the approaches followed ensure regional HDRs addressed issues relevant for countries in the region?	j) What is the process followed for selecting the HDR themes? k) Are themes chosen ahead of time and do they deal with hitherto ignored dimensions of a development theme?	Publication process of regional HDR

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
<p><b>EFFECTIVENESS:</b></p> <p>Were regional HDRs useful for regional policy discourse and advocacy in priority areas?</p> <p>Were regional HDRs useful for national policy processes?</p> <p>Were regional HDRs successful in bringing fresh perspectives to the policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy process at the national level?</p> <p>Were regional HDRs successful in bringing fresh dimensions to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy process at the national level?</p>		
<p><b>Regional HDRs:</b></p> <p>Are regional HDRs used by development actors at the regional and national level?</p>	<p>a) What is the extent of use of global HDRs compared to similar reports and data for the activities of the regional development actors?</p> <p>b) Are regional HDRs used to inform regional policy discourse and advocacy of trans-boundary nature?</p> <p>c) How relevant are regional HDRs for national public policy processes?</p> <p>d) Are regional HDRs used in UNDP's programme and policy support?</p>	<p>Comparative use of publications and datasets similar to HDRs</p> <p>HDR citations and content use</p> <p>Perception of development actors at the regional and national level (surveys and interviews of development actors)</p> <p>Review of relevant literature</p>
<p><b>Regional HDRs:</b></p> <p>Were regional HDRs useful bringing a new dimension to public discourse and advocacy at regional level and policy process national level?</p>	<p>e) Do regional HDRs generate new concepts and information to inform public discourse and advocacy at the regional level and policy processes at the national level?</p> <p>f) Do regional HDRs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge policy ideas that are not conducive for development?</li> <li>• Generate innovative policy ideas?</li> <li>• Provide evidence-based analysis on alternative development perspectives?</li> </ul>	<p>Perception of development actors at the regional and national level (surveys and interviews of development actors)</p> <p>Review of relevant literature</p>
<p><b>EFFICIENCY:</b></p> <p>Did UNDP make best use of its resources in production and dissemination of the global HDRs?</p>		
<p><b>Global HDRs:</b></p> <p>Did the management processes enhance the contribution of global HDRs?</p>	<p>a) Is the management of global HDRs conducive to producing high quality reports?</p> <p>b) Is the publication and dissemination processes sufficiently developed to maximize global HDR reach?</p> <p>c) Is HDR production and dissemination cost-effective?</p>	<p>Management and oversight of the global HDRs</p>

Evaluation criteria Key questions	Sub-questions	Means of verification
<b>EFFICIENCY:</b> Did UNDP make best use of its resources in production and dissemination of the regional HDRs?		
<b>Regional HDRs:</b> Did the management processes enhance the contribution of regional HDRs?	d) Is the management of regional HDRs conducive to producing high quality reports? e) Is the publication and dissemination processes sufficiently developed to maximize regional HDR reach? f) Is HDR production and dissemination cost-effective?	Management and oversight of the regional HDRs
<b>SUSTAINABILITY:</b> Were the messages of the global HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?		
<b>Global HDRs:</b> Was the messages of the global HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?	How are global HDRs positioned within the human development discourse? Are adequate partnerships forged to sustain the contribution of global HDRs? Are there strong linkages with UNDP programmes and publications to promote global HDR messages?	Perceptions of the development actors at the global, regional and national level Partnership with research institutions, universities, think tanks UNDP support to global HDR outreach activities
<b>SUSTAINABILITY:</b> Were the messages of the regional HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?		
<b>Regional HDRs:</b> Were the messages of the regional HDRs sustained beyond the immediate period following the launch?	How are regional HDRs positioned within the human development discourse? Are adequate partnerships forged to sustain the contribution of global HDRs? Are there strong linkages with UNDP programmes and publications to promote regional HDR messages?	Perceptions of the development actors at the regional and national level Partnership with research institutions, universities, think tanks Outreach activities at the regional and national level

## Annex 5

# CYBERMETRIC AND BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS-METHODOLOGY

This annex provides a detailed overview of the methodology used to for the web and bibliometric analysis of Global and Regional Human Development Reports conducted by MediaBadger Inc. to support the larger evaluation of the Human Development Reports led by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP.

### 1.1. SCOPE

The scope of this study included nine Global HDRs covering the years 2004 to 2014 published in the four languages covered by this study: Arabic, English, French and Spanish, 19 regional HDRs published during the same time period and 300 background paper titles that were published as accompanying resources for the global HDRs.

### 1.2. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

MediaBadger used a two-part methodology: a bibliometric component focused on citation of the reports and a qualitative component that focused on analysis of web-based sources. The bibliometric analysis was conducted by a partner firm, Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA). The overall evaluation framework that guided the research was devised with support from Goss Gilroy, Inc., a firm that specializes in evaluation methodology and implementation.

### 1.3. BIBLIOMETRIC RESEARCH

#### DATABASE ACCESS

HESA conducted a content and citation search related to the sample set of titles within the established citation databases. The bibliometric analysis in HESA's paper derives its data from Thomson Reuter's Web of Science Core Collec-

tion and Google Scholar's publicly available citation index.

HESA used a combination of automated and manual data collection processes to collect the data, and MediaBadger completed a manual data confirmation and cleaning process to ensure data accuracy.

#### INDICATORS

Four core indicators were chosen to represent the scholarly impact of each publication based on their effectiveness in representing key elements of scholarly impact, the availability of necessary source data and ease of understanding. The indicators chosen include each of the following:

##### Citing Publications

This metric measures the number of times that a publication has been cited. This is the simplest and most common indicator of impact.

##### Sub-citations

Also known as secondary citations, this indicator measures the sum of all citations earned by the articles that originally cited the paper in question.

##### H-index

The h-index, or Hirsch index, is a common measure used to assess the publication record of academic researchers. It considers both the number of publications of the researcher and the citations accrued by those publications. Increasingly, the h-index has been applied to units of analysis other than individual researchers, and, as will be done in this analysis, it can also be applied to measure the performance of individual works. This is done by treating each publication as the unit of analysis. The h-index is then calculated by combining the number of citing publications and

the number of sub-citations accrued in turn by each citing publication. In this adaptation from Hirsch's 2005 definition, a paper with an  $h$ -index of  $n$  has been cited by  $n$  secondary papers each of which has in turn been cited in other (tertiary) papers at least  $n$  times.

### **M-index**

This indicator is calculated by dividing the  $h$ -index measurement by the amount of time that has passed since the article's publication. The  $m$ -index is intended to prevent an undue weight from being given to publications that have had significantly more time (and therefore opportunity) to be cited.

A range of indicators were considered for inclusion but ultimately rejected due to data availability, unnecessary complexity, or overlap with the above indicators. These include 5-year Impact Factor, Cited Half-life, Immediacy Index, Eigenfactor, and Article Influence.

## **DATA SOURCES**

The data used for the bibliometric analysis is drawn from two research databases: Thomson Reuters and Google Scholar. Among the citation indexes maintained by Thomson Reuters, the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) was selected due to its strong reputation as a database of academic publications and its prevalence in other bibliometric analyses. HESA's preliminary analysis revealed low coverage in the SSCI, and, as a consequence, the search queries were expanded to include citations from the Web of Science Core Collection (Science Citation Index Expanded (1900–present), Social Sciences Citation Index (1900–present), Arts & Humanities Citation Index (1975–present), BIOSIS Citation Index, Chinese Science Citation Database, Data Citation Index, and SciELO Citation Index.

Despite this broadened inclusion, the low number of publications indexed by these databases meant they contributed minimally to increasing the number of citations. Low coverage of social science disciplines is common across most

citation databases. It is likewise associated with scholarly publications that are not technically peer reviewed, such as the HDRs. This weakness was anticipated and was a primary reason for including a second data source in the data collection plan: Google Scholar.

Google Scholar was chosen owing to its extensive coverage of non-academic publications, including articles that have not been peer reviewed. As the majority of HDRs are not peer reviewed, it was not surprising that Google Scholar was shown to have a broader coverage of HDRs than SSCI, Elsevier, or Academia.edu. Google Scholar's strengths also include automatic parsing of results in multiple languages (Arabic and Chinese results, for example, are not uncommon), automated and highly effective parsing of similar publication titles, and repeatability of results.

Google scholar also has several weaknesses that are also worth mentioning. First, Google Scholar does not include data that can be used to associate publications with a region or country. Second, data describing the publication's journal or venue of publication is often unavailable or truncated. Third, metadata errors are common in Google Scholar. In order to address these issues, HESA uses a two-step data verification process.

After data from Google Scholar was aggregated and recorded, results were automatically screened for common errors using a series of text-analysis tools. Next, every record was manually error-checked by HESA staff to ensure that the query was accurately constructed, that metadata is correct, that publications are not double-counted, and that none of the results are false positives. HESA's manual review process dramatically reduces the occurrence of these errors, but does not eliminate them completely.

## **ADDITIONAL BIBLIOMETRIC METHODOLOGY NOTES**

Three additional points regarding methodological choices are worth noting:

- Citation database queries were attempted using four different methods: based on full title, based on only subtitle OR only main title, based on primary author, or based on secondary author. Publications not found did not come up in a search for any of these terms;
- When the citation count on the main results page disagreed with the number of citations actually listed, the number actually listed was used. In a small number of cases this was smaller than the citation count; and,
- While both source databases handle special characters and non-English characters, a very small number of citations pulled from both databases appear to have encoding errors in the source database. This results in some encoding errors on the following pages. Simplified Chinese, for example, does not appear correctly.

## TITLE SEARCH

Using its own search and analytical tools, MediaBadger collected publicly available, unstructured data from the public Internet related to the sample set of titles. This approach supplemented the database analysis by searching for mentions or references that may not be captured in the citation databases (e.g. non peer-reviewed sources such as government websites, policy related blogs, research centre or advocacy group sites).

### 1.4. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research was undertaken of publicly available data from various Internet sources. Research was designed to provide a detailed understanding of the different kinds of development actors involved in discussions related to the HDRs and how the global and regional reports may be influencing public policy debate. This line of research is based on the automated and manual analysis of data collected by MediaBadger and third-party tools. The approaches both have strengths and weaknesses, and are utilised to balance each other out.

MediaBadger's automated system, Orphio, can deliver high-level results from social media data to give a sense of the size of relevant discussions, related topics in the same discussions and identify the more influential development actors engaged in the discussions. The data volumes are large through this tool, but the context is limited.

Manual analysis, on the other hand, can provide the context missing with automated tools. While the sample size is necessarily smaller than what automated tools can analyse, the level of detail is much greater. In this case, the research team analysed each relevant hit for 20 attributes, including type of actor, issue or context of the hit, sources of information cited, etc. This level of detail is not possible through automated processes.

## SEARCH LEXICON

The data collection for the qualitative research was guided by a search lexicon that was based on both the HDR titles, variations of the titles and three central concepts related to HDRs of the past ten years. All terms in the search lexicon were articulated equally in the four project languages. In the case of report titles, official UNDP titles in each language (no independent translations were used).

## THE POTENTIAL UNIVERSAL DATA SET

Determining the potential universal data set for any query involving publicly accessible Internet data is a significant challenge because the unstructured nature of the data makes it difficult to sort the relevant from irrelevant through an automated process. From a computer science perspective, the relevance challenge is captured by the notions of precision and recall in the search and collection process executed by any search tool.

- Precision refers to the percentage of retrieved results that are relevant.
- Recall refers to the percentage of relevant results that are retrieved from the universal data set.

The calculations of precision and recall are based on a series of equations that are best applied in experimental settings where the size of the universal data set is known. In real-world circumstances such as the HDR Project, the size of the universal data set remains a very rough approximation, at best. This study conducted search using various query pattern to establish approximate volumes that represent the potential universal data set for the global and regional reports. A sample data set of approximately 1,200 different records was established through

random sampling the universal data set for data coding exercise to conduct further analysis.

### **COMPARATIVE METHODS**

An analysis of the comparator sources of information was done to measure popularity of HDR and potential to make impact in the global development arena compare to its competitors. This data set was generated by a title search and citation analysis of HDR and its comparator reports.

## Annex 6

# DEFINITIONS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT USED IN THE REPORTS

Definition	Report
Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices	1990, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2014
The real objective of development is to increase people's choices	1991
Human development involves widening [people's] choices	1993
Human development is to create an environment in which all people can expand their capabilities	1994
Human development is about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value	2001, 2002, 2004, 2014
Human development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity	2003
Human development is about building human capabilities—the range of things that people can do, and what they can be	2005; 2014
Human development is about expanding people's real choice and the substantive freedoms—the capabilities—that enable them to lead lives that they value	2007/08
Human development is the expansion of people's freedoms to live their lives as they choose	2009
Human development is the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives	2010
Expanding people's choices and keeping those choices secure	2014

Note: The analysis for the years 1990 to 2009 is taken from Alkire, Sabina 2010. The analysis for the remaining years was carried out by IEO.

<b>Key human development dimensions used in the HDRs</b>
Long healthy life, knowledge, resources for decent standard of life (1990-2010; 2014)
Political freedom (1990; 1991; 1997; 2004; 2009)
Guaranteed human rights (1990; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2000 )
Self-respect (1990; 1995; 1997; 1999; 2000)
Good physical environment (1991; 1992; 1994; 1995; 1996)
Freedom of action and expression (1992)
Participation (1993; 1994; 2002)
Human Security (1994; 1996; 2009; 2014)
Political, social and economic freedoms (1995; 1997; 1998; 2000)
Freedom (1996)
Being creative, being productive (1995; 1997; 2000)
Enjoying political and civil freedoms to participate in the life of one's community (2003)
Cultural liberty (2004)
Social and political participation (2005)
Civil and political rights (2007)
Sustainability (2010)
Equity and empowerment (2010)
Human resilience (2014)

Note: The analysis for the years 1990 to 2009 is taken from Alkire, Sabina 2010. The analysis for the remaining years was carried out by IEO.

## Annex 7

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICES THE GLOBAL HDRS PRODUCED

Year	Index introduced
1990	Human Development Index (HDI)
1995	Gender-equity-sensitive indicators (GESI)
	Gender-related development index (GDI)
	Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)
1996	Capability Poverty Measure (CPM)
1997	The Human Poverty Index (HPI)
1999	Revisions to HDI
2001	Technology Achievement Index (TAI)
2002	Assessing progress toward the MDGs
2003	Top Priority and High Priority Countries for the MDGs
2005	Human cost of not meeting the MDGs
2006	HDI by income groups
2007	Measuring effects of climate-related disasters
2010	Revisions to HDI
	Inequality Adjusted HDI (IHDI)
	Gender Inequality Index
	Multidimensional Poverty Index
2014	Changes to HDI and MPI
	Gender Development Index



## Annex 8

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

### Recommendations related to the global Human Development Reports

<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b>  <b>Given the positive reputation, the global HDRs have the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. The time is ideal to re-launch the idea of human development much more strategically, and help UNDP regain the intellectual space in the global development discourse that it once commanded. It is also recommended to address factors causing damage to the reputation of the report and its contribution.</b></p>		
<p><b>Management response:</b>            UNDP welcomes this recommendation and agrees that the time has come to revisit the human development paradigm in terms of concepts and measurements to ensure the thought leadership of UNDP. UNDP will initiate discussions with leading scholars in this field and commission analytical papers on rethinking human development.</p>		
Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
1.1 Discussion with leading scholars on human development (e.g., Nobel Laureates Prof. Amartya Sen, Prof. Joe Stiglitz, Prof. James Meade) as well as other academics and researchers in various regions of the world	By September 2015	HDRO
1.2 Proposing the theme of HDR 2016 (the 25th HDR) as 'Human Development Revisited: Concepts and Measurements'	By September 2015	HDRO
1.3 Commissioning analytical papers and in-house research on rethinking human development	By December 2015	HDRO, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)
1.4 Global Forum on Rethinking Human Development	By December 2015	HDRO, BPPS, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, regional bureaux,
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b>  <b>UNDP should revisit the purpose of human development indices and examine their value added to the messages of the reports. Given the computation and data issues, HDRO should not proliferate the report with composite indices which have limited value.</b></p>		
<p><b>Management response:</b>            UNDP management acknowledges that the robustness, relevance and value added of different composite indices need to be reexamined. UNDP will address this through discussions with renowned experts in this field.</p>		
Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
2.1 Brainstorming with experts and statisticians and in-house discussions in the context of various regions	By September 2015	HDRO
2.2 Roundtable on gender-related composite indices with academics, researchers and experts	By September 2015	HDRO, BPPS
2.3 Active engagements with the Data Revolution initiative	By September 2015	HDRO

<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b>  <b>There have been efforts by the HDRO in the past years to address various criticisms related to methodology of the HDI, and there have been revisions to the index. While such efforts are important, they are not sufficient to address the fundamental limitations of the index. To be able to achieve greater policy and analytical influence, consider reconstructing the HDI following a thorough review.</b></p>		
<p><b>Management response:</b>  UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and recognizes the need for a review and revision of the HDI to reflect the changed realities of the development scenarios of the world. A review paper will be commissioned on the HDI and will be discussed at the Global Forum on Rethinking Human Development.</p>		
<b>Key action(s)</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Responsible unit(s)</b>
3.1 A review paper on the HDI by an eminent human development thinker with strong quantitative skills	By November 2015	HDRO
3.2 Global Forum on Rethinking Human Development	By December 2015	
3.3 Analytical paper on HDI with new realities	By June 2016	
<p><b>Recommendation 4:</b>  <b>UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of the global HDRs on public policy process. The role of UNDP programme units is extremely important in achieving this.</b></p>		
<p><b>Management response:</b>  UNDP management takes note of the recommendation and will undertake specific efforts to promote and disseminate key messages of the global HDRs.</p>		
<b>Key action(s)</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Responsible unit(s)</b>
4.1 Ensure extensive consultation between senior management of UNDP Country Offices and HDRO throughout the process of preparation of HDRs.	Continuously	Regional bureaux
4.2 Following completion of each HDR, develop and disseminate corporate policy brief on the key messages that the various programme units should pursue.	Continuously	Regional Bureaux, BPPS
4.3 Provide advisory support to UNDP Country Offices in launching the global HDRs and exploring innovative processes to disseminate key messages.	Continuously	Regional bureaux, BPPS, HDRO
<p><b>Recommendation 5:</b>  <b>The management of the global HDRs needs to be adequately strengthened to provide a stable environment for report preparation and to enhance the reputation of the reports.</b></p>		
<p><b>Management response:</b>  UNDP management takes note of the need for strengthened management of the HDR processes, and confirms that the organizational structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework, and the HDRO management team has been newly established with clear roles and responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Director with expertise in human development, historical substantive engagements with nine HDRs and institutional memory has been appointed (appointment was made in September 2014);</li> <li>• A team leader with substantive analytical capabilities and extensive management experience has been recruited (recruitment took place in December 2014);</li> <li>• The HDRO management team has been strengthened with clear responsibilities, mutually synergetic tasks and complementary roles for the Director and Deputy Director (these actions were completed in October 2014);</li> <li>• The organization structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework (the structure was streamlined in December 2014).</li> </ul>		
<b>Key action(s)</b>	<b>Time-frame</b>	<b>Responsible unit(s)</b>
No action required		

## Recommendations related to the regional Human Development Reports

**Recommendation 1:**  
**UNDP should revisit the purpose of the regional HDRs and explore options to strengthen the contribution of the reports. The regional HDRs should not publish thematic reports unless there is something significant to talk about. It is imperative that the reports have a strong human development perspective.**

**Management response:**

UNDP management concurs with the recommendation to revisit the overall purpose of the regional HDRs and consider the options for strengthening their contributions. UNDP management agrees that the thematic focus of regional HDRs should be driven by demand and supported by the process of consultations on the themes for greater use and impact. Regional priorities often differ from global priorities. Experience to date confirms that thematic regional HDRs served to stimulate discourse and inform policy and programming at national, regional and continental levels. These reports consistently had been framed around thematic areas pertinent to regional dialogues and firmly anchored in a human development perspective. The themes for the regional HDRs were chosen based on country-level consultations. The regional HDRs were used as an analytical and advocacy tool to promote the human development agenda as part of the Regional Programme, consistent with the priorities expressed in the strategic plan. Moreover, the human development lens and impartiality of the reports have been effectively used by UNDP to raise highly sensitive matters that few other credible policy actors were able to raise. These reports effectively focused on significant and distinctive cross-boundary and regional issues, highlighting the need for the regional public goods to address these issues, and serving as a convening power around issues of common concern. Regional HDRs aimed to enhance the development debate and actions to prioritize eradication of poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The proposed themes will be carefully selected based on regional needs to enhance the contribution of these reports while ensuring a strong human development perspective in the analysis. Building on the lessons learned from previous evaluations, experience from the previous report and feedback from stakeholders, the process for developing the regional HDRs will be further enhanced.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
1.1 Ensure that standardized processes are implemented by UNDP in conducting systemic and inclusive consultations on the relevance and significance of the themes of the regional HDRs.	Continuously	Regional bureaux
1.2 Robust communication and outreach plan implemented to engage various stakeholders in the development of the report and monitor its use.	Continuously	Regional bureaux

**Recommendation 2:**  
**The subregional scope of the regional HDRs proved to be a useful approach both to cover issues that are specific to a few countries or subregion and also provide in-depth analysis. This approach should be thought through and adequately strategized for a greater impact of regional HDRs.**

**Management response:**

UNDP management concurs with the recommendation and underscores that a measure of subregional analysis is an important way to enhance relevance. UNDP has consistently framed a good deal of analysis around subregional groupings, which has helped to solidify relevance and uncover key points of regional development diversity. Several ongoing subregional initiatives covering the Sahel, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes will capitalize on these opportunities to produce specific analysis without subsuming the regional nature of the HDR and its intended audience.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
2.1 Whenever appropriate and feasible, regional Human Development Reports will be supplemented by in-depth subregional-level analysis.	Continuously	Regional bureaux

**Recommendation 3:  
UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of regional HDRs on regional and national policy processes.**

**Management response:**

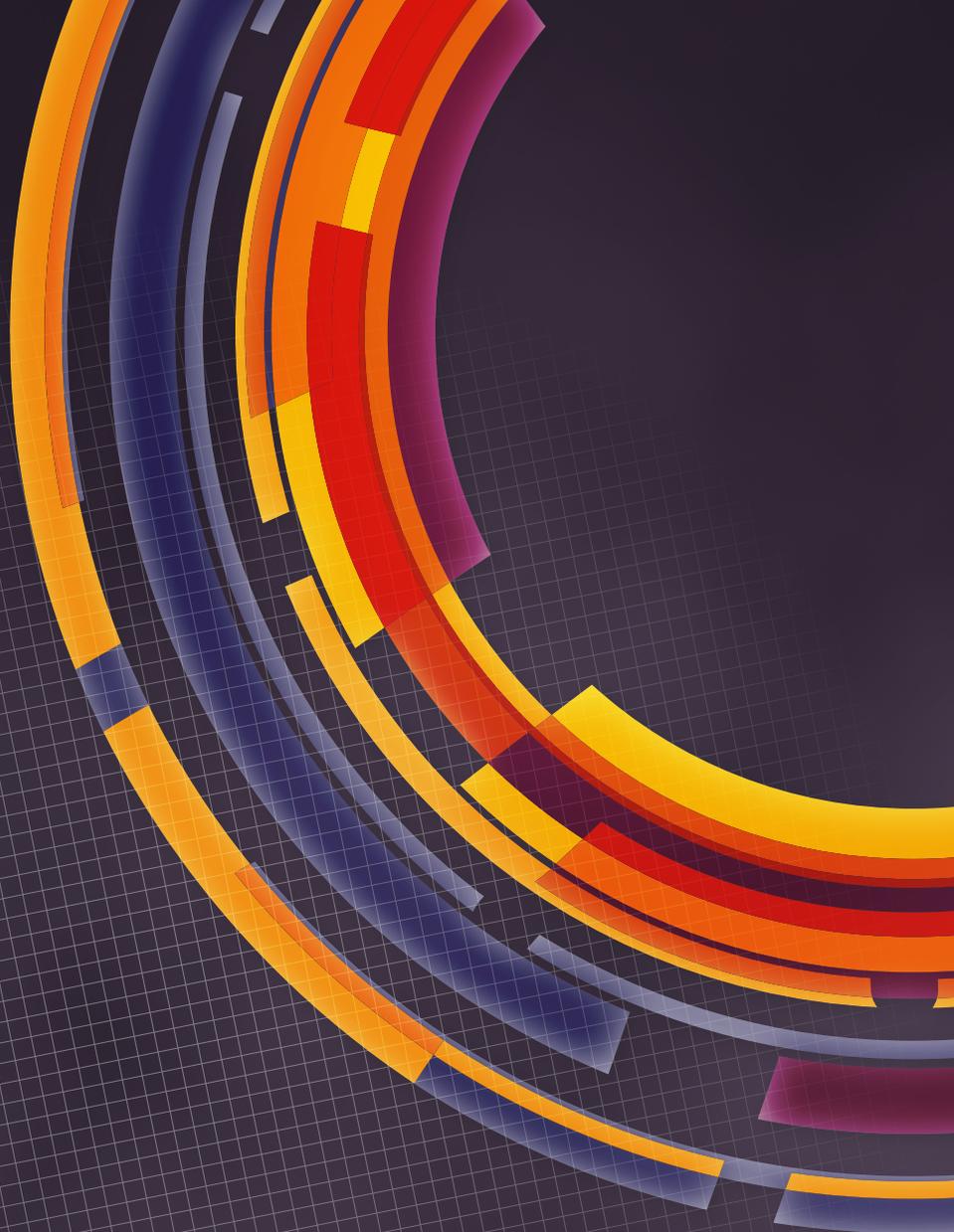
UNDP management agrees with the recommendation that confirms the central objective of regional HDRs to enhance their influence on regional and national policy. UNDP has consistently complemented regional launches with national launches and/or policy workshops intended to bring together key national stakeholders to unpack the regional analysis and develop policy insights tailored to the national level. UNDP will continue to do so and scale up relevant best practices as needed. For example, to enhance the impact of regional HDRs at the national level, operational programme guidance notes were prepared for Country Offices for operationalizing HDR recommendations (e.g. by Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific immediately after the launch of two most recent regional HDRs in that region). Concrete measures and initiatives include establishment of regional gender and climate change fund (immediately after the launch of regional HDRs on these themes in the Asia-Pacific region) to operationalize HDRs recommendations. Before and after preparation of HDRs, the regional bureaux organized multi-stakeholder consultations and policy symposiums, and provided financial support to Country Offices for translating HDRs into local languages and for launching HDRs at the national level. In response to the evaluation's findings and recommendations, the regional bureaux will further review and improve the current process of conceptualizing, preparing and following up the regional HDRs, building on its strong representation in the region including the regional service centres and network of advisors, in the context of further enhancing the influence on regional and national policy processes and UNDP programming.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
3.1 Design and implement an outreach strategy that engages Country Offices and regional service centres in dissemination and follow up of impact of the HDRs.	By December 2015	Regional bureaux, BPPS





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