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INDEPENDENT OUTCOME EVALUATION REPORT UNDP INDIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JANUARY 2017



The cover features a large, abstract graphic composed of several overlapping geometric shapes. A prominent black shape, resembling a stylized 'X' or a large arrow, is positioned on the left side. To its right, there are several blue shapes, including a large trapezoid and a smaller rectangle, which together form a stylized 'N'. The background is a light gray with four vertical lines that align with the text and the graphic elements.

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This outcome evaluation was commissioned by the UNDP Country Office in India for the purposes of arriving at an independent assessment of the progress of UNDP projects in contributing to the objectives of the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) (2013 – 2017). The evaluation reports on almost four years out of a five year programme.

The overall position of the evaluation is positive. UNDP has returned strong results across the four outcome areas over the four year period. Within a fairly strong portfolio of projects there have been some exemplary achievements. Few, if any, projects have failed to make some kind of meaningful impact or contribution at the level of outcome.

The central theme of the 2013 – 2017 CPAP was inclusivity. This resulted in programmes being designed with deliberate focus on poverty reduction and targeting particularly marginalized communities. The expressed aim was to strengthen service delivery and increase rights, social protection and access among population cohorts facing the greatest challenge to human security. Last mile impact became the 'litmus test' as to ultimate effect.

In these regards, this evaluation is pleased to report that a number of population groups, often most at the periphery or margin of mainstream society, including transgenders, scheduled tribe communities, the HIV/AIDS affected, and rural communities and women, have all in some way had their status and dignity supported from the UNDP programme.

Technically, the evaluation met with a methodological problem, in that a small number of the indicators set for the determination of progress towards outcomes had not been well devised or articulated within the CPAP. In those cases, and to adjust for this, the evaluation has sought to offer a more penetrating assessment against outcomes on an output by output basis that provides for an equally rigorous and balanced assessment.

The collective outcome of all these endeavours spanning the period to date is that UNDP's response to addressing the national development priorities is entirely relevant, generally effective and to a great extent efficient. Within each of the outcome areas there are nuances and opportunities presented for improvements and these are discussed within the main body of the report.

Regarding financing, the original CPAP projected the mobilization of around US\$ 260 million of investments across the four outcome areas. Of this US\$ 66 million was intended to be from UNDP core resources, of which US\$ 35 million has so far been mobilized. The remainder, US\$ 194 million was to be mobilized from external sources. Of the latter, around US\$ 135 million has so far been raised. At the time of preparing this report a total of around US 170 million has been disbursed. Final expenditure figures for 2016 are awaited and 2017 is yet to run its course. The maximum UNDP has delivered in any of the past four years is US\$ 50 million. Hence the likely overall expenditures covering the entire CPAP 2013 – 2017 will be in the region of US\$ 230 million, slightly below that forecast at the outset. This is still broadly within the parameters given a more constrained internal UNDP financing context.

The evaluation observed that the CPAP and outcomes designed by UNDP were closely aligned to the development vision of the Government and to the UNDP strategic plan at the global level. The preferred project implementation modality places UNDP technical staff within line ministries and state authorities which lends support to capacity building, institutional strengthening and promotes sustainability. Government speaks highly of the merits of this approach and regards UNDP as a longstanding partner. Government has increased its engagement of UNDP advisory support provided through the DSS facility – a demonstration of the confidence Government has in UNDP being able to provide consistent, high quality development support.

In terms of Outcome One the evaluation generated sufficient evidence to conclude that UNDP had made a significant contribution to advancing the outcome: 'Inclusive and equitable growth policies and poverty reduction strategies of the Government are strengthened to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalized people in rural and urban areas have greater access to productive assets, decent employment, skills development, social protection and sustainable livelihoods.'

Justification was based on UNDP being able to provide projects that in large measure had met the outputs that had been established, as per 'effective policy options for inclusive growth, poverty eradication and human development are provided to national partners', and 'Scalable solutions for inclusion of marginalized groups are designed and implemented'. Practically speaking, UNDP support did assist the Government bring adjustments to the flagship MGNREGA programme, as acknowledged by national government counterparts, which led to vulnerable and marginalized populations gaining greater access to the national programmes. A further practical measure saw the rolling out of an electronic fund management system which helped to reduce delays in payments.

The GOALS project contributed to social mobilization and participatory planning in rural areas and provided tangible assistance to rural livelihoods and technical support in line with the national rural housing programme. Skills transfers among women participants was evident in the DISHA project, which struck a new public-private partnership. UNDP provided advocacy leadership by championing the rights of the less privileged and hosted national dialogue on manual scavengers, a round table on social inclusion, a national consultation on bonded labour, and further consultations on PVTGs. It is regrettable that the programmes intended to work in the UNDAF-identified most-affected left-wing extremism areas did not commence sooner.

In terms of financing to outcome one a goal of US\$ 80 million had been established, of which US\$ 25 million was to come from UNDP's own core resources, plus US\$ 55 million from funds external to UNDP. Whilst UNDP may not quite meet its core target in this outcome area, since around US\$ 17 million of core has already been allocated by the end of 2016, it will be disappointed with its resource mobilization of non-core financing, which currently runs at around US \$14 million, in particular the shortfall of investment in the sub-component of the programme focused on 'scalable solutions for inclusion of marginalized groups'.

In terms of progress towards Outcome Two UNDP has worked within NITI Aayog and national ministries at the federal level and within state authorities at the decentralized level to 'improve policies, planning, coordination, capacities and systems' to enhance District Planning Committees and to PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas). UNDP continued to provide its trademark support for the promotion of human development, with the Indian Government now being fully adept in the application of its principles and methodologies. Meanwhile UNDP could have taken greater advantage of the opportunity to strengthen lateral collaboration across its governance portfolio, and thereby across ministries. Furthermore, UNDP should have sought to support the implementation processes further downstream through to the level of impact, for example, to fully test the efficacy of its planning guidelines for the prospect of achieving the much sought after 'convergence' outcomes, 'last mile effect' and multiple SDG impact.

Progress was recorded in 'access to justice and entitlements under government programmes for marginalized groups', courts and as a result judicial processes stand to become more women-friendly. In addition, 'undertrials' were provided greater access to justice. The evaluation also found 'service delivery of government schemes to have been strengthened' through UNDP's investment in the health sector. This has paid dividends in full, resulting in solid last mile achievement by virtue of the management improvements to the vaccination systems. As a result, service delivery has been made more inclusive, effective, efficient and accountable. Marginalized groups have gained better access, with women and children being the main beneficiaries. The project represents a triple win, for Government, for UNDP and for Indian citizens.

In terms of financing for outcome two a target of US\$ 32 million had been established. US\$ 18 million was to come from UNDP's own core resources and US\$ 14 million from external sources. To date, around US\$ 8 million of UNDP

core funds had been spent by the end of 2016 – less than projected. However, UNDP has greatly exceeded its non-core financing with over US\$ 60 million of expenditures – the majority of which were in transformative service delivery support.

Outcome Three concerning environmental sustainability, climate change, disaster risk and resilience has also witnessed important progress. Numerically the outcome target of dramatically increasing the 'number of government's schemes and missions which incorporate climate resilience measures' has undoubtedly been achieved. The wider implication of the indicator is that a cultural shift in the collective conscious and in behaviour is occurring towards climate change, resilience and protection of the environment. This, the evaluation perceives, to be a reality in the making.

Clean energy has most definitely been expanded within small scale industries, if not so convincingly within poor communities. UNDP's energy efficiency interventions have been extremely well received by Government and operators with demonstrable and measurable impact in the small-scale steel and railways sectors. UNDP has also been successful in Nagaland and Maharashtra in 'enhancing the sustainable management of biodiversity and land resources' through its GEF financed portfolio. Equally, good progress is recorded in the output area associated with the 'phasing out the ozone depleting substances'. Solid foundations have been put in place to 'promote climate change adaptation and community resilience to disasters'. Extending the programme and consolidating the partnership with the private sector represents the logical next steps for this important initiative.

In terms of resource allocation for the attainment of outcome three a target of around US\$ 128.5 million had been set. US\$ 13 million was to come from UNDP's core funds, plus around US\$ 115.5 million raised from external resources. To date, around US\$ 6.5 million of UNDP core funds have been utilized and US\$ 61 million of expenditures have occurred from external financing.

For CPAP Outcome Four there has been a series of significant breakthroughs especially from a human rights perspective. The advocacy work undertaken by UNDP allied to an effective partnership with civil society led to transgenders being recognized as the third sex. UNDP's support via the project on tribal development supported the landmark legal ruling (FRA) and triggered the next generation of programming to help realize the livelihoods opportunities among the tribal communities who have now been granted forest rights. Not least, creation of the 'single window' model of service delivery for more effective 'joined-up' social protection for people living with HIV/AIDS.

In terms of resource allocation for the attainment of outcome four a target of around US\$19.59 million had been set, largely in light of the fact that the objectives here were cross-cutting in nature. US\$ 9.59million was to come from UNDP funds, plus US\$10 million from external sources. To date, US\$ 3 million of UNDP core funds have been drawn down and US\$ 0.4 million of non-core expenditures have occurred.

Regarding scalability - all UNDP projects must begin with this ambition in mind. UNDP has been relatively successful, in particular over the current CPAP, at getting projects to go to scale. It must build further on those successes and craft a clear theory of change based on what works best in India for each intervention it backs. India is a vast country, as mentioned, containing the majority of the world's poor, and at the very same time, a nation of untold possibilities. 'Leave no one behind' permits no time for vacillation.

The current cycle has helped inform the evaluation that there are various routes, stages and critical success factors that determine whether a project will 'go to scale'. For example, scalability is possible through legislative advocacy, the creation of a replicable single window for service delivery, or an endeavour that has taken two decades of UNDP support to mature, such as planning for human development. Systemic changes in

the health sector went rapidly to regional scale through the cold store vaccine initiative, matched only in speed by the energy efficiency measures introduced at Indian railways and among small scale steel operators. Other scalability models have taken a longer gestation period, but are present and equally valid, including the natural resource management and bio-diversity endeavours in Nagaland and Maharashtra.

Regarding integrated development solutions – only a handful of projects within the current portfolio manifest signs that they are mature and multi-faceted enough in nature to qualify as 'integrated development solutions'. Such projects must simultaneously address dimensions of the institutional, environmental, social and economic and which in all likelihood embrace some aspect of technological innovation. They are at once more complex to manage, demand a more scientific rigor to their cycle, but could be infinitely more catalytic in their impact once they prove their worth. The challenge for the next UNDP cycle will be to learn more about how to identify, design, cultivate and manage a cluster of integrated development projects going forward. This has organizational implications too, which UNDP is already considering. The evaluation noted that the following projects perhaps contribute most to learning to the multi-disciplinary approach:

- a. Governance and Accelerated Livelihoods Support (GOALS)
- b. Improved Efficiency of Vaccination Systems (GAVI).
- c. Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management in Shifting Cultivation Areas of Nagaland for Ecological and Livelihood Security
- d. Mainstreaming Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation into Production Sectors in Sindhudurg Coast, Maharashtra
- e. Upscaling energy efficient production in small scale steel industry in India.
- f. Enhancing Institutional and community resilience to disasters and climate change
- g. Sustainable Urban Transportation Programme.

Regarding Last Mile Impact - UNDP has had more success in contributing towards last mile impact than might at first be imagined. The GOALS project delivered social mobilization and participatory planning to thousands of rural communities. The DISHA project is successfully pioneering skills and entrepreneurship among women, bridging the information gap, and offering a new public-private partnership arrangement. The Gram Panchayat development planning process incorporates gender mainstreaming and the social audit methodology to communities across the nation. UNDP interventions have informed the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) – though more work is needed here to expedite implementation. UNDP has advocated for policy and legislative changes for extending legal aid services to vulnerable populations and ICT-based kiosks have been installed to enable marginalized groups gain access to justice. Computer software supported by UNDP facilitated the appropriate release of significant numbers of undertrials

As noted already, health service delivery has been strengthened for last mile impact through the 'GAVI project' for a modernized management of vaccines. Thousands of rural villages and a number of cities are being systematically geared up for climate change and DRR measures. Bold advocacy work undertaken by UNDP in partnership with civil society led to transgenders being recognized as the third sex, thus ensuring equality under the Constitution and the creation of the single social protection window has directly helped people with HIV/AIDS. In such a short period of time the evaluation notes the considerable progress that has been achieved in advancing the rights, access and opportunities for last mile impact among some of India's most marginalized, and often stigmatized communities.

Regarding Knowledge Management - from the considerable array of results reported above it is clear to the evaluation team that UNDP is strongly oriented towards implementation. This is a good sign. However there also needs to be sufficient organizational space created for objective review

and reflection in the search for synergies, the identification of integrated approaches that cut across disciplines and to learn the lessons. At the macro level, the evaluation team notes that the Senior Management Team has adopted a posture for strategic review of the overall programme and is clearly seeking to learn from what is working best, whilst striving to craft an even more ambitious programme of assistance with the Indian Government and its core partners going forward. It is also important for UNDP to have on board independent academic units to support improved objective knowledge management.

Key Programmatic Observations & Recommendations

Looking back over the past four years of UNDP's programmatic operations it is important to distil what interventions have delivered greatest impact, and why. A number stand out across the governance, poverty reduction and environment and energy pillars.

The evaluation recommends the following for the governance area:

1. Systems strengthening should be pursued in areas where institutional baselines can be established and performance is measurable. Clear service delivery objectives and enhancements should be unambiguously stated, usually with an indicator for assessing last mile impact. UNDP should be encouraged to support service delivery to achieve SDG 1 (end poverty) and SDG 10 (reduce inequalities), which apply to all sectors, as per the current UNDP Strategic Plan.
2. In terms of strengthening the relationship between systemic institutional reforms UNDP should continue to support the judicial reform process and access to justice agenda. Further assistance should be considered to help panchayats move towards freedom from poverty through local service delivery points and single window access. Improvements to

innovations in governance, service delivery planning, convergence approaches and implementation will be important. Finally, in line with population migration, work on urban governance challenges may be given higher priority.

3. Capacity building support to line ministries and state authorities should be pursued where there is strong prospect of being able to influence and improve the implementation of national programmes and missions for last mile impact. For capacity building DSS modalities it will be increasingly important to ensure capacity benchmarking and capacity development goals should be established at the outset (in line with recommendation 1 above). A regular monitoring and review mechanism should be mutually agreed to ensure that Government and UNDP are clear on the value added that is expected.
4. UNDP should look to provide support for citizen centric approaches where budgets and planning are convergent for maximum SDG effect. This should include in areas of special measures or population cohorts, such as the scheduled tribal areas where more sensitive approaches are required, around which UNDP can bring its particular comparative advantage.

The evaluation recommendations coming out of the energy and environment area for UNDP to consider going forward is:

5. UNDP has built a good foundation in climate change mitigation and adaptation, allied closely to a basis of work in disaster risk reduction. These endeavours should be more closely integrated and pursued as one going forward. The evaluation report contains suggestions and opportunities to expand climate change and DRR planning deeper into urban management and to other sectors through stronger participation of the private sector. This should be regarded as a strategic opportunity for UNDP.

6. UNDP has carried out some exciting project work in natural resource management, which should be expanded, as it includes the best features of providing integrated development solutions. There is a very strong relationship between sustainable natural resource management and economic and social prosperity. Too often the complex relationship is not fully understood and therefore not exploited for its maximum 'win-win' possibilities. The evaluation finds cases in point relative to vast coastal and mountainous areas, as well as prospectively India's mighty river basins. Area-based programming, although complex and challenging, entailing as it does cross-ministerial collaboration, is nevertheless a potential avenue of work from which a more robustly integrated development solution will emerge. This fits well into the 2030 agenda for sustainable development on which the Government of India is a global player. A strategic opportunity has been presented.

7. Based on UNDPs recent track record of achievement in the railway and steel sectors, the portfolio on energy efficiencies and renewable energy technologies holds further prospects.

8. A further technical area for UNDP to consider in the next cycle relates to chemical management, waste management and recycling. There area are vital for a comprehensive approach to sustainable environmental management.

In regard to inclusive growth, employment and livelihoods the evaluation recommendations for UNDP to consider going forward is:

9. Creating local exemplar projects for entrepreneurship, skilling and employment generation that have real potential for upscaling and private sector partnership.
10. Move from 'design' to 'implementation' with regard to the rural housing programme. Here

UNDP should look to mobilize support for the implementation of integrated skills-build solutions to address the national rural housing mission utilizing the housing typologies developed under the GOALS project. A more comprehensive training and livelihoods programme wrapped around the delivery of scaled up housing solutions is within range for UNDP grounded in an area-based approach.

11. Creating integrated employment and poverty reduction programmes for urban and rural development for the poor.
12. Promoting social inclusion and social safety nets for poor and marginalized population groups around the design, piloting and roll out of single window access points would represent an important breakthrough in the challenge of 'leaving no one behind'.

For more generic programme management and cross-cutting issues UNDP should draw on a more creative diversity of financing solutions:

13. Investigate more thoroughly the options and prospects of alternative inclusive financial models for development.
14. Attempt to design financial sustainability and scalability within project documents alongside the theory of change, as in many of the instances there is no formal exit strategy stated.
15. Engage private sector in CSR development priorities.
16. Develop a cell for the promotion of public private partnerships.
17. Foster a greater level of regional and global cooperation.





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