

youth in both the formal and non-formal sectors. What the innovative thrust requires are approaches to scaling up opportunities to implement job-rich strategies, especially involving public private partnerships. The public sector must focus on creating an enabling environment for decent job strategies to be implemented through policy dialogue and establishment of implementation and coordination structures capable of sustaining and strengthening of youth employment measures beyond the YEP. Efforts to foster learning, networking and innovation from development best practices also need to be strengthened.

## **B. Best practices and lessons learned**

- i. Programme planning and design needed to be more realistic and ensure **matching of the available financial resource envelope**; with more realistic timeframes, in particular, for programmes that require longer duration planning, implementation and results-based monitoring, to achieve desired results.
- ii. There is need for the YEP to prioritise the key issue of **financial inclusion**, micro finance and access to finance, on a sustained basis for youth oriented micro enterprises. The existing financial services support system for the youth is ad hoc, under-developed and incapable of enabling substantial and sustained capacity development to facilitate entry by youth into decent productive jobs on a sustainable basis.
- iii. There was need for policy advocacy activities to be undertaken with a focus to create a more enabling environment for youth oriented SMEs in the informal sector. The existing absence of substantial project-policy level interactions, is a notable gap. The absence of engagement with the Executive, Legislature and other arms of the state, meant that the YEP may not be tackling a key area that is central for establishment of sustainable pathways to progress.

## **C. Key Recommendations**

- i. The Evaluation recommends that the YEP be extended by a minimum of one year to enable a proper winding down of the current programme phase; enabling adequate time to design the follow up phase of the programme.
- ii. The present YEP PMU ought to be turned into a Technical Assistance Team (TAT), with all key staffing gaps filled, which include senior economic empowerment officer.
- iii. Review YEP design so it fits into the current scheme of things, linking up with the national policy development processes, especially the current National Youth Policy (2016 – 2020), refocusing the actions, more upstream, use of downstream effort to feed into scaled up engagement up-stream. The future YEP design must also be planned on the basis of more realistic financial resource planning, ensuring correlation between the actions and available financial resource envelope.
- iv. Policy advocacy and key issues of financial inclusion need to be prioritised in the design and institutional implementation arrangements, with clearer policy level targets and indicators defined in the logframe. There is also need for capacitating the monitoring and evaluation component of the YEP, at the MWCSO, ensuring a result based M & E system. Consideration was needed for short-term external expertise to nurture and mentor in-house human resource capacity. It is noted that efforts towards this in the form of UNDP technical advisers and UNVs, have been provided to the MWCSO. A UNV from Japan to support YEP activities in Savaii was due to start at the end of October 2017. UNDP's regional technical adviser, operating from its regional sub-office in Fiji, also acted as Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) for the project and

provided substantive technical inputs to the project. Going forward, the technical support needs to be continued, and possibly scaled up.

- v. The role of the UNRC in ensuring visibility of the YEP at high policy level also needs to be strengthened and consolidated to ensure sustained government buy-in at the highest decision making structures, namely the Executive and other arms of the state such as the Legislature and Cabinet and Local Government.
- vi. There are opportunities for the UN to provide more substantial technical assistance (TA), in the medium and long term. The MTE recommends that the UN and cooperating partners adopt more robust financing strategies for the YEP, innovative and sustainable approaches that should feed into the next YEP design. The mechanisms can incorporate the PPPs which the YEP had already begun to explore in many of its components and sub-components;
- vii. The National Youth Volunteer Service Scheme – UN/MWCSD ensures current efforts feed into a sustainable youth employment and empowerment mechanism, nationally owned, beyond the YEP funded phase;
- viii. There is need for the UN and MWCSD to firm up the institutional and organisational structure of the SBI and small business development initiative, with the understanding that the MWCSD has as its mandate a focus on social development; whilst MCIL for example, has a focus on productive enterprises;
- ix. There is need for clearer implementation, coordination and monitoring of and evaluation arrangements, with improved accountability;
- x. The UN and development partners needed to make concerted effort to capacitate the Samoan National Youth Council to become a more vibrant organisation, with better human resources capacity and skills and better funding base to tackle youth development issues, including youth unemployment. This capacity is needed at the operational and technical as well as at the strategic and policy level.
- xi. Savaii Cocoa – Climate Change and Disaster Resilience – There is need for more synergised approach between YEP stakeholders, namely, UNDP and FAO inputs to the value chain development, both hardware and software skills, technical and marketing capacity development, drawing upon lessons learnt in the current development phase; and with involvement of local private sector champions and promoters, other key partners such as SBEC, CoC and MCIL.
- xii. Farm to Table – A value chain approach to organic farming – This has been funded by the UNDP SDGs Trust Fund for 18 months duration. The intervention needs to be more closely supervised by the YEP PMU, to ensure its full integration into the policy, legislative and M&E frameworks under the MWCSD. This will ensure its sustainability and scalability beyond the lifetime of the project.

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Overview**

The One-UN (Samoa) Youth Employment Programme (1UN-YEP) is a comprehensive response by the United Nations Country Team to the request from the Government of Samoa to provide assistance targeted at tackling youth unemployment. The specific objective of the YEP is to develop the knowledge and skills required for entry into the labour market, and to provide young women and men with additional support services needed to secure decent work opportunities in either the formal wage employment or in micro and small businesses, which are organised and managed in a largely non-formal manner. The YEP is aligned with the National Youth Policy (2011 – 2015). The programme seeks to adopt an inclusive approach with strong considerations of gender dimensions and taking special care to include youth who are marginalised from mainstream socio-economic life. The implementation modalities of the YEP combine the different strengths and technical capacities of the UN agencies in Samoa to deliver as ‘One-UN’, thereby maximizing the positive impact for the youth. UN agencies in this partnership include UNDP, ILO, FAO, UNESCO and UNV. The YEP activities are implemented with the close collaboration of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development. The programme has the support of a number of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and private sector organisations.

### **1.2 The One-UN Youth Employment Programme and the Mid-Term Evaluation**

The Midterm Evaluation (MTE) focuses on assessing and analysing the extent to which the 1 UN YEP has contributed to the achievement of a number of outputs as described in the following section.

Addressing the challenge of youth unemployment in Samoa is a complex process. It requires political willpower and strategic inputs coordinated with actors in both the economic and social sectors. The 1UN-YEP seeks to bring government policy-makers and legislators together with strategic positioning of various actors within the private sector and civil society to deliver results that will impact practically and sustainably on youth in Samoa. The 1UN-YEP outputs seek to contribute strategically to the following outcome:

*‘Youth in Samoa, inclusive of those who are marginalised from mainstream economic activities, secure productive employment and decent work and contribute to sustainable and resilient economic growth’.*

The programme is designed to be holistic in addressing specific labour market constraints on the supply- and demand-side, and to ensure that youth have access to the information and other supporting services they need in order to access employment opportunities.

**Output 1:** specifically addresses the gap between supply and demand in the labour market. Youth need to be facilitated to access information about employment and business opportunities, support services, including work experience. These are key to facilitate their successful entry to the labour market. In this regard, the establishment of a youth-led and technologically enabled ‘Youth Employment Network’ that provides information and employment services that will facilitate their successful entry to the labour market.

**Output 2:** addresses the supply-side bottlenecks, assisting youth to gain the technical skills and entrepreneurial knowledge that enable them to generate and access employment and improved income opportunities created by climate change adaptation strategies and specifically within the agricultural, community-based tourism and creative industries value chains.

**Output 3:** By addressing demand-side constraints, the rationale is to strengthen youth-led micro and small businesses resultant upon tailored and comprehensive support services, which include private sector-led growth and policies, strategies and dialogue that facilitate an enabling environment for the growth of micro and small businesses, not only to survive but to sustainably thrive and enhance the protection of youth through the legislative measures instituted to empower the informal sector. The establishment of a legally empowered informal economy that offers greater protection and reduced vulnerability for youth is also foreseen.

### **1.3 Objective and Scope of the Evaluation**

The MTE focuses on analysing and assessing the extent to which the 1UN-YEP has achieved its outputs within the context of the following major goals:

- Establishment of the Youth Employment Network which is synchronised with the National Youth Volunteer Scheme (NYVS) to enable young women and men to access decent employment in both the formal and non-formal sectors;
- Extent to which the 1UN-YEP has provided entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to the youth to access employment opportunities in agricultural value chains, One-Village One Product approach to community based tourism and creative industries;
- Assisting and facilitating the establishment and development of youth oriented micro and small enterprises; opportunities created with climate adaptation strategies and new job creation avenues for the youth;
- Establishment of the Youth Small Business Incubator Scheme, progress in achievement of stated outputs;
- Assessing the policy development processes, business and employment creation environment, including the legal empowerment of the non-formal sector, and
- Greater awareness on partnership between a variety of stakeholders on a holistic package of interventions on youth employment involving Government, private sector, international development partners, NGOs and other stakeholders promoted; including the achievement of gender equality outcomes.

The MTE would ensure the following specific objectives are achieved:-

- i. Assessing the relevance of the outputs to the effective achievement of the outcome;
- ii. Assessing and analysing the progress made by the programme to date towards achieving the programme outputs and outcome and the sustainability of these results;
- iii. Examining and analysing factors which have positively and negatively affected achievement of programme outputs and outcome;
- iv. Assessing the effectiveness of institutional arrangements and partnership strategies amongst the UN and other stakeholders, including Government;
- v. Assessing the sustainability of the programme contribution in the achievement of the outputs and outcome; and,
- vi. Making recommendations in strategic areas for improving the programme design, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, partnership arrangement and key cross-cutting issues, including on gender equality.

## **1.4 Methodology**

### **1.4.1 Theory of change**

The evaluation methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. In this mid-term evaluation, there is reliance on both qualitative and quantitative methods because of the need to link the development challenge being addressed in the results chain, to the outcome areas. The theory of change (TOC)/logic model guides the evaluation, with a conceptual framework leaning toward qualitative analysis and less toward quantitative. The TOC takes into account new emerging development realities and challenges facing Samoa. Many of the realities and challenges did not exist when 1-UN-YEP was designed, yet have become central to progress toward achievement of the programme objectives and outcomes. (*Refer to table 1*).

### **1.4.2 Assessment by Evaluation Criteria**

Overall progress of the programme is reviewed with a focus on each of the programme focal areas. The evaluation assesses, independently the criteria of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability.

#### **Relevance**

Whether the programme is in line with national development policies, national youth policy, reviewed and the UN-wide development programming, including contribution to the SDGs, and

Whether the outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets are clearly defined and are achievable within the timeframe