



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

SUMMARY:

# EVALUATION

OF THE UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN,  
GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme



## Contributors

**Evaluation Managers at IEO:** Alan Fox, Vijayalakshmi Vadivelu and Ana Rosa Monteiro Soares

**Evaluation Advisory Panel Members:** Ray Rist, Elliot Stern and Thomas Schwandt

**Research Team:** Dilnoor Panjwani, Genta Konci, Youri Bless, Sonjuhi Singh and Anshu Shroff

**External Consultants:** Allan Rausch and Richard Carlos Worden (sustainable development and poverty reduction); Sue Nelson, Jonas Lovkrona, Sarah Wood, Jups Kluyskens and Richard Langan (governance for peaceful and inclusive societies); Tim Clary (HIV/ AIDS); Stephanie Hodge and Julian Murray (resilience building); Nadine Jubb and Grace Okonji (gender); Naresh Singh and Claudia Marcondes (global and regional programmes); and Christine Heyting and Patrick Breard (institutional effectiveness)

Full Report can be accessed at:

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/sgrp.shtml>

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# FOREWORD



It is my pleasure to present this comprehensive assessment of UNDP's Executive Board approved Strategic Plan 2014– 2017, Global Programme and five regional programmes. The assessment comes at a time when UNDP has undergone significant restructuring and reorganization processes, to strengthen organizational effectiveness and enhance its contribution to development. This evaluation looks at the results that have been delivered during this challenging period and examines these processes and the reorganization effects on UNDP.



The evaluation used multiple data collection and analysis methods and took an iterative approach to gather and analyse multiple perspectives to measure UNDP performance. Evidence has been obtained and triangulated from document reviews, a meta-analysis of evaluations and audits, regional and country case study missions, interviews, focus groups and surveys. The analysis sampled the work of UNDP in 68 of the 170 plus country programmes across the globe. It formed critical country-level narratives of UNDP performance and includes 45 independent country programme evaluations. The assessment was further augmented by more than 1,000 interviews, to cross-check and validate perspectives against a thorough assessment of documentation. Methodological rigour and report quality were ensured through invaluable guidance from members of the International Evaluation Advisory Panel.

The evaluation concludes that UNDP's integrated and multifaceted approach to development challenges is well suited to respond to national development needs, and at the same time is consistent with United Nations priorities. The Strategic Plan takes an issues-based approach to global development needs and priorities. The evaluation highlights the UNDP role and contribution in support of national and local programmes and policies to protect the environment and adapt to a changing climate. Further, it finds that UNDP has successfully

established its niche as a trusted and reliable intermediary and neutral convener on democratic governance issues. UNDP governance support has filled critical gaps in countries that face significant systemic challenges. In the early stages of crisis recovery, UNDP capacity-building support has helped to stabilize national institutions by working successfully with government partners to address immediate needs. UNDP continues to play an important role in risk reduction and recovery related to conflict and disasters. Disaster risk reduction is an area that has important synergies with UNDP's rapidly expanding support to countries working on climate change adaptation. In terms of gender, there have been incremental improvements in implementation of UNDP's gender equality strategy but also limitations in mainstreaming gender equality across UNDP programme areas.

The evaluation also calls attention to organizational challenges, including limitations in harnessing knowledge, solutions and expertise to improve results and institutional effectiveness. Further, the financial sustainability of UNDP is challenged by declining resources that are mostly tied to specific initiatives, limiting UNDP's engagement in evolving development priorities.

The evaluation provides a number of recommendations for achieving the overarching strategic objective of UNDP: supporting the poorest of the poor and the most marginalized members of society. As UNDP develops a new Strategic Plan, I hope this evaluation will inform how the organization can further enhance its contribution to global sustainable development and inclusiveness.



**INDRAN A. NAIDOO**

**Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP**

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# BACKGROUND

The Strategic Plan 2014–2017 (henceforth Strategic Plan of the UN Development Programmes (UNDP) starts with a vision “to help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion”. It sets out seven outcomes, designed to support the priorities and needs of each country and region, and capture the development changes UNDP will contribute towards directly, significantly and verifiably during the course of the Strategic Plan.

The seven outcomes of the Strategic Plan are:

- 1 Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and the excluded.
- 2 Citizen expectations for voice, development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.
- 3 Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services.
- 4 Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women’s empowerment.
- 5 Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and lower the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change.
- 6 Early recovery and rapid return to sustainable development pathways are achieved in post-conflict and post-disaster settings.
- 7 Development debates and actions at all levels prioritize poverty, inequality and exclusion, consistent with UNDP’s engagement principles.

The seven outcomes are addressed through three areas of work:

- How to adopt sustainable development pathways
- How to strengthen governance for peaceful and inclusive societies
- How to build resilience for sustaining development outcomes achieved

These areas reflect a coupling of poverty and environmental programming into a combined sustainable development pathways area, and a closer integration of work on peacebuilding and state-building across the governance and resilience portfolios.

The Global Programme and the five regional programmes have a complementary mandate to facilitate UNDP’s engagement in policy debates at global and regional levels. The Global Programme aims to develop rigorously researched, practical solutions that draw on UNDP’s global pool of knowledge, learning and expertise. Guided by the broad priority areas of the Strategic Plan, the Global Programme is intended to provide a coherent architecture for UNDP’s global policy advice and programme support services. The regional programmes have objectives largely comparable to those of the Global Programme. They aim to promote regional public goods based on strengthened regional cooperation and integration. In addition to regional projects, the regional programmes provide advisory services and knowledge management functions, often in collaboration with the fifth Global Programme efforts. The regional programmes are broadly aligned with the outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2014–2017, and with exceptions, the choice is similar across regions.

# 3

## AREAS OF WORK

How to adopt sustainable development pathways

How to strengthen governance for peaceful and inclusive societies

How to build resilience for sustaining development outcomes achieved

Employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded.

Development debates /actions prioritizing poverty, inequality and exclusion.

Stronger systems of democratic governance.

Early recovery / rapid return to sustainable development pathways.

**7**  
**OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Universal access to basic services.

Reducing conflict and lowering risk of natural disasters.

Reducing gender inequality / promoting women's empowerment.

# WHAT WE EVALUATED

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the UNDP carried out the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan, Global Programme, and Regional Programmes (2014-17). The purpose of the evaluation is three-fold: to strengthen UNDP accountability to global and national development partners, including the UNDP Executive Board; to support the development of the next Strategic Plan; and to support organizational learning. The evaluation was designed to inform both internal and external stakeholders of how UNDP is addressing development challenges.

The purpose was to ascertain whether UNDP is making progress in achieving its stated goals and whether the Strategic Plan, Global Programme and regional programmes are serving as effective tools for organizing and guiding UNDP programming and activities.

The evaluation touched on all aspects of the Strategic Plan and considered UNDP's contribution to the goals established in the Strategic Plan's results framework, covering the three main areas of UNDP development work: Sustainable development pathways; Governance for peaceful and inclusive societies; and Resilience.

## Cross-Cutting Programmatic Principles

The evaluation assessed the cross-cutting programmatic principles outlined in the Strategic Plan: gender equality and women's empowerment; South-South and triangular cooperation (SSC-TrC); and partnerships.

## Global And Regional Policy and Advocacy

The evaluation assessed the performance of UNDP under the fifth Global Programme and the regional programmes in the five regions. Findings at the regional level have been aggregated to identify common issues.

## Institutional Effectiveness

The evaluation assesses how UNDP has progressed in enhancing institutional effectiveness through various strategies during the current Strategic Plan. This builds on the Institutional Effectiveness Joint Assessment conducted by UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office and the Office of Audit and Investigations.





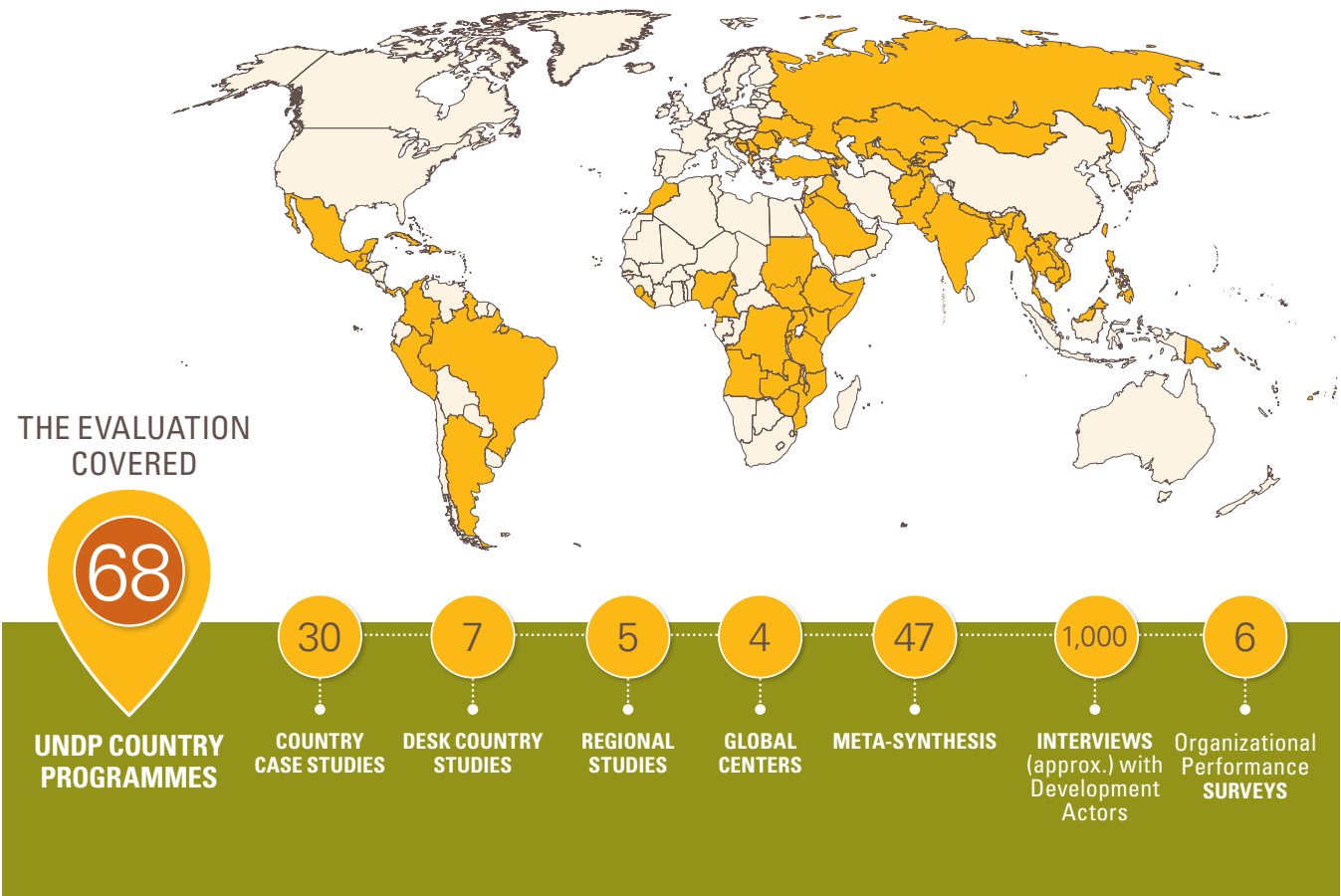
# METHODS USED

The evaluation established a Theory of Change to frame the results of UNDP programme support and consider approaches taken, the process of contribution and the significance of UNDPs contribution. Pertinent evaluation factors include whether UNDP support is strategic for development, peacebuilding and crisis prevention outcomes in programme countries, the nature of the contributions, whether UNDP support enabled partnerships at the country level; and whether UNDP has maximised its comparative advantage across the areas UNDP supported. The evaluation recognises

that contextual factors have considerable bearing on the pace and extent of the UNDP contribution.

The evaluation has used multiple methods and taken an iterative approach to gathering multiple perspectives to measure UNDP performance. Evidence has been gathered from document reviews, a meta-analysis of evaluations, regional and country case study missions, interviews and surveys. A wide range of strategy, guidance and programme-specific documents have been reviewed.

## Data collection method and sources



# WHAT WE FOUND

## Sustainable Development Pathways

### Support to Fulfilment of the MDGs and SDGs

UNDP support to MDG fulfilment was particularly relevant during the several years leading up to 2015. The roll-out of the MDG Acceleration Framework created opportunities for cross-practice collaboration to accelerate MDG fulfilment and positioned the organization well to help countries achieve the SDGs.

UNDP has been an important implementing **PARTNER** in the successful global effort to reduce OZONE-DEPLETING substances.

### Livelihoods and Social Protection

UNDP has helped governments and other stakeholders through policy and capacity development with job creation, income generation and livelihoods. While corporate guidance and methodological notes on accounting for job creation have been established within the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, country office interpretation is variable, and there has been insufficient attention paid to tracking the longer-term sustainability of job creation and entrepreneurship support. UNDP has contributed to improved social protection, at national scales, in many countries, yet measuring impact at the beneficiary level remains a challenge. UNDP

Social and Environmental Standards and related Accountability Mechanism came into effect on 2015.

### Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Energy

UNDP continues to be an important implementing partner to the Global Environment Facility. In its environmental programming, UNDP has demonstrated success in securing environmental benefits at global, national and community levels. UNDP's deepest global engagement at community level is through its management of the Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility, successfully delivering grants to communities in over 125 countries since 1992, directly affecting biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land and water resources, and the use of chemicals. UNDP has helped partner countries make progress in developing sound management practices for hazardous waste management, including for extractive industries. UNDP has been an important implementing partner in the successful global effort to reduce ozone-depleting substances. UNDP has a wide-ranging climate change programme in place. It played a prominent role in regional and global policy debates on global climate change in support of countries preparing for and then responding to the 2015 Paris Agreement. It is well positioned to support countries in their fulfilment of the SDGs relating to climate and energy. UNDP support to partner governments to improve access to clean, affordable, renewable energy and its support for adoption of more energy-efficient technologies has been

positive, though constrained by limited financial resources, policies and practices in many developing countries.

UNDP restructuring combined three practice areas into a Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster. The process of integrating tools and methodologies from these disciplines remains a work in progress, and an actionable internal framework for integrating disaster risk reduction/climate change adaptation into programming has yet to be completed. Yet climate change action/disaster risk reduction approaches are being applied to develop community, subnational and national capacities to support risk-informed development in many countries.

## **Governance for Inclusive and Peaceful Societies**

### **Strengthening Constitutional Bodies and Democratic Processes**

UNDP is globally well positioned in providing expert electoral support to governments and electoral management bodies, helping to strengthen processes for more structured and transparent engagement of parliaments with governments and civil society. UNDP has successfully established its niche as a trusted and reliable intermediary and neutral convener on democratic governance issues. Its approach tends to be overly cautious, to avoid preempting and jeopardizing government relationships. While prudent, this approach has led to some missed opportunities to make significant contributions to electoral and parliamentary reform.

### **Increased Integrity in Public Institutions, Access to Justice, Community Security, Human Rights**

Direct measures to reduce corruption, such as the establishment of anti-corruption commissions, had limited outcomes. Comparatively, strengthening accountability processes in specific sectors had greater potential for anti-corruption outcomes. UNDP support contributed to enhancing institutional capacities, specifically institutional frameworks, and processes necessary for delivering justice and security. In countries affected by conflict, UNDP's contributions to justice sector reforms were important in developing capacities allowing justice institutions to function. UNDP capacity-development initiatives in the justice sector are most successful when grounded in detailed situation analyses. UNDP citizen security initiatives were well-designed and harmonized with peacebuilding and state-building priorities of the supported countries. UNDP support to legislative reforms for human rights, particularly on criminal justice and anti-discrimination, has contributed to the incorporation of international human rights norms into domestic legal processes.

### **Strengthening Core Government Functions and Basic Services**

The public administration and local governance area of support in the development context is more crowded than in the conflict context, but UNDP's efforts to implement the SDG global agenda have placed it at the forefront of core government capacity development efforts.

## **HIV, Health and Development**

As an implementing partner, primarily for the Global Fund, UNDP has successfully worked in fragile and challenging political circumstances and weak governance contexts. UNDP's technical support has been important in the management of Global Fund grants. Challenges remain for UNDP as it transitions out of its principal recipient role. Another challenge is in enabling national institutions to take over the management of Global Fund grants and address systemic issues rather than just specific bottlenecks. Notwithstanding the acknowledgment of UNDP's positive contributions in managing Global Fund programmes, there is a need for better articulation of UNDP's role in HIV and other health-related work.

## **Transition Challenges in Countries affected by Conflict**

UNDP has carved out an important niche providing governance support to countries affected by conflict. Its contributions have been substantial in providing specialist technical expertise along with human resource support to government institutions. UNDP, to its credit and that of its partner governments, has sought to address each of the most intractable structural causes of conflict. Capacity-development programme design greatly impacts the sustainable transfer of skills and knowledge in peacebuilding and state-building contexts. UNDP is a natural collaborator in the UN peacebuilding architecture, given its interest in building peace through development. Lacking a clear strategy and measurement framework for engaging in fragile countries undermines UNDP's contribution and its ability to leverage its comparative advantage to engage in global and regional policy debates.

## **Resilience for Enhanced Development Results**

### **Disaster Risk Management**

During this strategic planning period, UNDP has actively participated in regional and global advocacy concerning disaster risk management. UNDP is one of the multiple international players in the disaster risk management sector, including international financial institutions and non-resident UN agencies. While the participants are many, the funding is limited. The lack of long-term funding sources for disaster risk reduction is due in part to the short-term, disaster relief orientation of many funders. UNDP is a valued partner on disaster risk reduction, providing demand-driven, strategic and substantive support to countries. Missing from most country-level UNDP (and UN country team) risk work are the political economy analyses that can yield better risk-informed planning and decision-making.

UNDP is a natural  
**COLLABORATOR** in the  
UN peacebuilding architecture,  
given its interest in building peace  
through development.

### **Crisis Recovery**

UNDP has been an important participant in the evolving international effort to more closely coordinate humanitarian and development efforts in crisis situations. UNDP has a comparative advantage in supporting country efforts to restore the capacity of national and local governments to provide essential services after crises. Spending patterns over the past three years show a



steady increase in crisis response funding, measured at the output level, with a major focus on the output related to economic recovery and livelihoods. The strong focus of UNDP support towards emergency livelihoods in countries affected by crisis is important to long-term recovery/development and poverty reduction. Yet it can distract from the opportunities for UNDP to help host governments plan for recovery, and in some cases, duplicates the work of other crisis response actors. UNDP continues to be valued in its coordinating role in crisis recovery efforts in countries affected by conflict, yet the Early Recovery Cluster, which it chairs, is underutilized as a tool for accomplishing strategic objectives, including fostering humanitarian-development links. Funding for early recovery is insufficient, as UNDP's new funding windows have not met expectations for crisis recovery support. UNDP partnerships with other UN agencies and international financing institutions in support of conflict-affected countries continues to evolve and expand. The UNDP crisis response system is not well calibrated for handling slow-onset crises, resulting in some slow-onset and protracted crises falling through the gaps.

### **Enhancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

There have been incremental improvements in UNDP's gender equality and women's empowerment policy, institutional measures and programming. Despite progressive frameworks such as the Gender Equality Strategy, challenges remain in consistently mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment across the organization and meeting UNDP's financial

and results targets for it. UNDP's work at global and regional levels has a strong research and analysis approach, which seeks to identify gaps and good practices to inform policy and advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment. Lack of implementation of this aspect of UNDP's work undermined the organization's contribution to global and regional policy and advocacy processes. The democratic governance programme demonstrated particularly strong gender-inclusive approaches. UNDP supported the improvement of economic opportunities for women, helping to usher in upstream policy reforms and downstream microcredit schemes and employment opportunities. Progress in mainstreaming gender aspects to environmental and energy programming has been limited. In crisis response and disaster risk reduction, important steps have been taken to mainstream gender, but most efforts are focused on trainings, which did not result in the creation of a gender-responsive plan. Further strengthening is needed, especially in the preparation of national disaster response plans, along with a cross-sectoral approach to resilience. UNDP made contributions to building institutional processes to prevent sexual and gender-based violence. While such contributions are important, the level of support is not sufficient to reduce sexual and gender-based violence. As in disaster response, there is a lack of explicit use of the Eight-Point Agenda. While joint programming involving UNDP and UN-Women has shown good results, the two organizations have yet to develop agreements and operating procedures to clarify their respective roles and reduce competition.



UNDP and UN-Women have yet to develop **AGREEMENTS** and operating procedures to clarify their respective roles and reduce competition.

### **Facilitating South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

UNDP has clarified its corporate structure and more precisely defined its operational approaches to SSC-TrC. UNDP's recently adopted SSC-TrC strategy has filled a fundamental policy gap and has the potential to provide direction for managing and facilitating South-South knowledge exchange for enhanced development results at country level. Challenges remain in mainstreaming SSC into UNDP's programme implementation. UNDP is yet to prioritize areas where South-South exchange will be pursued more systematically. Demand for facilitation of global development exchanges between countries is growing in the South. While UNDP made efforts to respond to such demands, the scale and scope of such facilitation are not commensurate with UNDP's potential. Building national SSC capacities to harmonize policies, legal frameworks and regulations has received the least amount of attention. The links between internal and external knowledge management and South-South facilitation are important for more effective support. While UNDP recognizes this, knowledge management remains a weak link in its support to SSC. Knowledge management, innovation and South-South facilitation links are evolving at a slow pace. UNDP provides financial and operational support to UNOSCC and has collaborated with the office on promising new initiatives.

### **Partnerships for Development**

At the corporate level, the UNDP partnerships strategy lacks the nuance needed for developing new long-term partnerships and non-traditional funding mechanisms. Institutionalizing government cost-sharing across country offices brings new dimensions to UNDP's country-level partnerships. Promising efforts are under way to build partnerships with the private sector, especially for improved environmental management and job creation. UNDP has recently developed a due diligence policy to safeguard the integrity of its public-private partnerships. Partnerships with other UN agencies at the country level have evolved and been strengthened. The results from Delivering as One pilot countries and through the UNDAF process suggest more work is needed to harmonize systems before joint programming can routinely be done effectively and efficiently. The UNDP partnerships with the Global Environment Facility, Global Fund and other vertical funds is crucial for both UNDP and the funds.

### **Global Programme**

The programme support requirements of the country offices are too diverse and specialized for the advisory services to respond. Funding constraints meant regional hubs had to make hard staffing choices that left advisory gaps. UNDP has been less selective about the areas where advisory services would be made available, leaving critical areas understaffed and lacking adequate technical expertise. The fifth Global Programme and regional programme policy team support to innovation has been important in identifying, testing and scaling up innovative applications. Knowledge management did not receive adequate attention at the regional

level UNDP has a comprehensive knowledge management strategy, and there is considerable emphasis on knowledge facilitation. Challenges remain, however, in the systematic application of knowledge and lessons for improved programming at the country level. In supporting global policy centres working on themes that are central to UNDP's programme mandate, UNDP recognizes the importance of centres of excellence for knowledge facilitation and enabling of policy support. The potential of the global policy centres remains to be tapped both for facilitating knowledge exchange and supporting UNDP's global policy and advocacy role.

Challenges remain, however,  
in the systematic application  
of **KNOWLEDGE** and  
**LESSONS** for improved  
programming at the country level.

### **Regional Programme**

Although the regional programme model is an effective modality, and UNDP is well positioned to play a convening role on development issues at the regional level, the organizational challenges faced by the regional programmes during the restructuring have impeded results. Engagement with regional intergovernmental bodies varied across regions and was determined by the dynamics of the bodies. Strong partnerships have been established in Africa, and there is also momentum in Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States. Cross-border initiatives are valuable additions to regional programmes, but such efforts

need further consolidation. Regional programmes enabled country offices to pursue issues that could be sensitive for them to initiate. However, the lack of a regional dimension limited these initiatives in many cases, and many activities that could have been pursued at the country level were taken up at the regional level. The regional hubs are not adequately leveraging their comparative advantages to proactively engage in regional policy and advocacy.

### **Institutional effectiveness**

The Strategic Plan sets out expectations for higher quality programming, greater organizational openness, agility and adaptability to harness knowledge, solutions and expertise, and improved human and financial resources management. Evidence suggests there are signs of improvement at UNDP in terms of higher quality programming, openness, agility and adaptability, but these have had limited impact on harnessing knowledge, solutions and expertise to improve results and institutional effectiveness, as envisaged in the Strategic Plan. With respect to human resource management, the evaluation considers that the Office of Human Resources is limited in its ability to effectively contribute to institutional effectiveness, as it is not part of formal high-level decision making structures, and as such cannot make sufficient and timely input into corporate level strategic and budgetary decisions which may affect country office results. In terms of financial resources management, although a leaner and more cost-conscious organization, there has been insufficient progress on results-based budgeting, and the financial sustainability of UNDP is challenged by diminishing regular resources, inadequate funding models and exchange rate losses.



# SNAPSHOT

## of the OUR CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1:** UNDP development mandate is more focused, while still retaining flexibility to adjust to local needs using integrated approaches, yielding a multifaceted response capability.

**Conclusion 2:** UNDP remains relevant in middle-income countries but is increasingly challenged by diminishing regular resources, calling into question the relevance of the Strategic Plan in some contexts.

**Conclusion 3:** UNDP supported governments with the Millennium Development Goals, and is now assisting to integrate and prioritize the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning.

**Conclusion 4:** UNDP makes a difference with its multidimensional approach to poverty reduction, yet, sometimes settles too easily for small-scale livelihood interventions that do not scale.

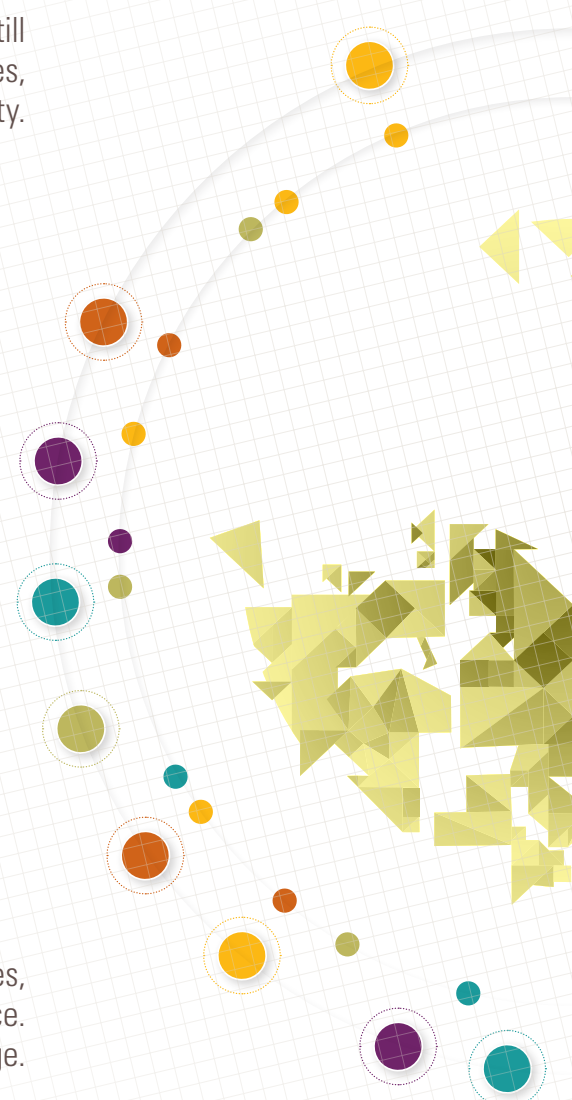
**Conclusion 5:** UNDP is a leader in the provision of adaptation services, with high standing on climate change, biodiversity loss, water pollution, land degradation and the control of persistent organic pollutants.

**Conclusion 6:** UNDP strengthened institutions and reform processes, filling critical gaps in public administration and democratic governance. Achieving sustained increases in capacities remains a challenge.

**Conclusion 7:** UNDP has missed opportunities for governance reform by hesitating to push for more inclusive and accountable government processes.

**Conclusion 8:** In countries affected by conflict, UNDP has enabled core institutions to function but more sustained efforts are needed to support a systematic approach to strengthening institutional capacities.

**Conclusion 9:** UNDP working collaboratively with peacekeeping missions, brought a more developmental approach to joint peacebuilding and state-building efforts, helping to smooth post-mission transitions.





**Conclusion 10:** UNDP helps to stabilize institutions in early stages of crisis recovery, yet funding and operational constraints often impede national efforts to address the structural causes of conflict.

**Conclusion 11:** Structural changes have weakened the resilience programme coherence of UNDP and its service offering on crisis risk reduction and recovery.

**Conclusion 12:** UNDP provides valuable services to partners on disaster risk reduction strategies, and is well positioned to develop contextual analyses. Funding support for risk reduction remains weak.

**Conclusion 13:** In the aftermath of crises, UNDP is highly valued, although ad-hoc responses focusing too much on short-term employment and cash assistance divert attention from planning and governance support.

**Conclusion 14:** UNDP faces continuing challenges in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment across the organization and meeting relevant corporate financial and results targets.

**Conclusion 15:** UNDP's commitment to South-South and triangular cooperation, while strengthened, lacks prioritization, systematic utilisation and wide-spread knowledge sharing.

**Conclusion 16:** The Global Programme fulfils an important policy support function. Expectations are excessive, and it operates more as a funding line for staff positions than a distinct Global Programme.

**Conclusion 17:** Regional programmes are an effective modality to support regional initiatives. Further attention is needed to address regional public services and management of cross-border externalities.

**Conclusion 18:** UNDP's improved openness, agility and adaptability had limited impact on harnessing knowledge, solutions and expertise due to insufficient investment in results-based management and organizational learning.

**Conclusion 19:** As the Office of Human Resources is not part of the formal high-level decision-making structures at UNDP it cannot effectively engage in corporate-level strategic and budgetary decision-making.

**Conclusion 20:** UNDP is a leaner and more cost-conscious organization. Its financial sustainability remains challenged by declining resources and insufficient progress on results-based budgeting.

# WAY

## Recommendation

1

Fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and integrated approaches should be pursued where possible, taking national contexts and implementation efficiency into consideration.

## Management Response



UNDP will expand its support to national partners in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans, through the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) missions and other forms of support together with other United Nations development system partners. UNDP will provide policy support to countries through the application of tools and quantitative methodologies that can help Governments to make informed decisions on prioritization and implementation of the Goals in line with national priorities and context. Upon request from Governments, UNDP is committed to supporting countries in the follow-up and review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Recommendation

2

Future resources and programming should aim to help countries accelerate the achievement of development results especially for those left behind, based on fulfilment of the SDG.

## Management Response



The 2030 Agenda's ambition of "leaving no one behind" will be proposed as an important element of the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, including in the integrated results and resources framework. UNDP intends to implement this recommendation through its support to national and local partners on the Sustainable Development Goals, and including through tools and promoting development solutions identified through South-South and triangular cooperation, and fostering partnerships that have a strong potential to harness transformational change and support achievement of the 2030 Agenda on the ground.

## Recommendation

3

UNDP should retain its global reach. Programming in middle-income countries should align with the SDGs placing focus on vulnerable populations and assistance at subnational levels.

# FORWARD



Recognizing the specific challenges facing middle-income countries in continuing development processes in a fundamentally different financing environment, UNDP will consider continuing to undertake development finance assessments in middle-income countries. UNDP will continue supporting localization of the 2030 Agenda as a central focus of support through the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) approach.

UNDP should emphasize climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction linkages, capabilities and services to assist national and subnational governments meet challenges.

UNDP management agrees with the recommendation and intends to expand its work in the area of adaptation, in close coordination and synergy with disaster risk reduction efforts. UNDP will continue to expand its roster of experts to deliver adaptation services at global, regional and national levels.

UNDP should be proactive in supporting sectoral governance approaches and more persuasive in promoting democratic governance reforms.

UNDP management takes note of the recommendation and strives to be proactive in supporting sectoral governance approaches and to be persuasive in promoting democratic governance reform, while fully recognizing that its support for reforms is based on requests from national governments in line with national contexts and priorities.

Governance support needs to be targeted to critical government functions that are essential to stability and UNDP should strategically support SDG 16 and related intergovernmental agreements on peacebuilding and state-building.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of the peace and development agendas, UNDP will continue to engage in international networks such as the International Network on Conflict and Fragility, the International Dialogue on



## Management Response



## Recommendation



## Management Response



## Recommendation



## Management Response



## Recommendation



## Management Response

Peacebuilding and state-building and its strategic relationship with the g7+ group of countries, having signed a memorandum of understanding in 2016. UNDP will continue to advocate for the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States internationally as well as at country level, promoting the principles of the New Deal in aid coordination, use of country systems, Sustainable Development Goal implementation, the Sustaining Peace Agenda and peacebuilding and state-building efforts.

## Recommendation

7

UNDP should retain resilience as a distinct area of work core of the UNDP service offering and for crisis risk-reduction and recovery support, refine the roles and scope of Bureau for Policy and Programme Support and Crisis Response Unit.

## Management Response



UNDP will consider its approach to resilience building drawing on findings and recommendations of an external evaluation of the lessons learned from its role in early recovery coordination. The UNDP approach to early recovery coordination will be revisited in light of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the new way of working. UNDP takes note of the recommendation about strengthening the coherence of its crisis prevention and recovery support, while recognizing that details regarding potential reforms of the United Nations peace and security architecture and wider development system will also guide UNDP work in these areas.

## Recommendation

8

UNDP should strengthen implementation of its gender policies, taking measures to ensure adequate funding to mainstream gender across all programming areas.

## Management Response



UNDP aims to address it in the forthcoming gender equality strategy which will include a more robust gender architecture, stronger accountability mechanisms and budgetary commitments as well as reporting targets. Progress will be reported through a strengthened Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and the annual report to the Executive Board. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening partnerships with UN-Women and other technical partners to deliver gender results across all programming areas.

## Recommendation

9

UNDP should take a more systematic approach to South-South cooperation, selecting specific areas and partners for expanded cooperation.



UNDP commits to strengthening its systematic approach to South-South and triangular cooperation through leveraging opportunities offered by the implementation of the South-South cooperation corporate strategy. UNDP will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by continuously taking stock of the challenges facing developing countries, systematically fostering exchanges and partnerships, supporting policy frameworks and institutional capacities, stimulating targeted research to inform global policy dialogues and relying more heavily on country programming as an efficient way to leverage South-South cooperation at the national level.

**UNDP should change the Global Programme to a service line for supporting staff positions at global and regional levels.**

The relevance and role of programmatic instruments including the global and regional programmes will be further reviewed in the coming year(s). UNDP will explore the idea of converting the current Global Programme into a service line as one of the options going forward.

**UNDP should determine specialties within its sustainable development, governance and resilience areas to build world-class technical expertise in those areas.**

UNDP is committed to having world-class technical expertise in the areas of sustainable development, governance and resilience. UNDP will identify the specialized capacities needed to best implement priorities and support country offices to respond to the priorities of national partners. Regional bureaux will continue developing and implementing Sustainable Development Goal toolkits, and investing in the capacity of UNDP staff and other partners through trainings, community of practice meetings, and others.

**Reassess the roles and financial sustainability of the regional hubs to make them centres of excellence for innovation and learning, expanding cooperation and partnerships with regional institutions.**

UNDP management will review the financial sustainability and roles of the regional hubs over the next Strategic Plan 2018-2021.



## Management Response

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## Recommendation



## Management Response

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## Recommendation



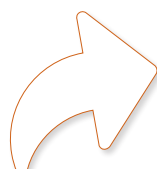
## Management Response

12

## Recommendation



## Management Response



## Recommendation

13

UNDP should develop its regional programmes as frameworks, outlining the regional issues to be addressed and approaches to be followed with focus on a more select number of areas.

## Management Response



Management agrees that regional programmes should be developed as frameworks outlining the regional issues to be addressed and approaches to be followed within a select number of areas in support of the 2030 Agenda.

## Recommendation

14

UNDP should promote a results culture that encourages critical reflection and continuous organizational learning for improved results and institutional effectiveness.

## Management Response



UNDP will streamline its results architecture, reporting and performance analysis systems to allow all parts of the organization to use results and evidence for learning and strategic decisions.

## Recommendation

15

UNDP should increase the involvement of the Office of Human Resources in strategic decision-making, especially in future institutional restructuring.

## Management Response



UNDP is committed to ensuring pivotal importance of human resources matters, including Office of Human Resources representation at early stages of decision-making.

## Recommendation

16

UNDP should transition from political budgeting to a more risk- and results-based budgeting process, to more effectively link results to resources and work with funders and influence groups to raise understanding of the unintended effects of reductions in core funding.

## Management Response



UNDP will strengthen its results based budgeting process through the analysis of demand (from country programme documents) and supply (from pipelines and donor intelligence), UNDP will establish a close link between the Integrated Results and Resources Framework indicator targets and the resource plan in the Integrated Budget, which will enable the organization to analyse investment gaps and facilitate dialogue with stakeholders.



## About the Independent Evaluation Office

At UNDP, evaluation is critical in helping countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. By generating objective evidence, evaluation helps UNDP achieve greater accountability and facilitates improved learning from past experience. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) promotes accountability and learning by conducting independent evaluations at the country, regional, and global levels, as well as on thematic topics of particular importance to the organization. It also promotes development of evaluation capacity at the national level, and provides critical support to the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).





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United Nations Development Programme  
Independent Evaluation Office

220 East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street,  
New York, NY 10017, USA  
Tel. +1(646) 781 4200, Fax. +1(646) 781 4213

Web: [www.undp.org/evaluation](http://www.undp.org/evaluation)

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