

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION **REPUBLIC OF CONGO**



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION
efficiency COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sus
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FO
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness
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sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION



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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION **REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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FOREWORD

The Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) is one of the main areas of work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). It seeks to systematically and independently analyse the progress of key UNDP interventions in countries that it supports.

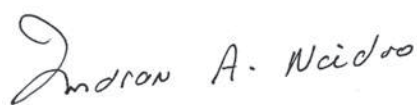
This ICPE was conducted in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, so as to foster ownership of the evaluation results by national partners, and thereby strengthen its credibility and usefulness. The evaluation was led by a senior evaluator from the IEO, with the support of a team of national and regional evaluators. This approach helped to ensure respect for the UNDP norms and standards for evaluations, such as independence, impartiality and methodological rigour.

Overall, the evaluation showed that the UNDP intervention in the Congo in the two cycles reviewed (2009–2013 and 2014–2018) was relevant to national priorities and the needs of communities. It also highlighted some very ambitious objectives, including in the area of governance, given constraints on the ground in the country. Encouraging results were observed in the different areas in which UNDP operates, but these have not yet brought about significant changes in the behaviours and practices of the country's institutions, particularly with respect to gender, due to insufficient ownership and cultural resistance. UNDP is hampered by inadequate communication of the outcomes of its work, and is often viewed as a donor, giving rise to expectations and frustrations. On the other hand, it brings United Nations branding, guaranteeing its neutrality, human development values and capacity for dialogue and coordination.

Major changes in the national context took place after the evaluation period, which were taken into account in the formulation of recommendations. The most important of these was the peace accord signed in the Pool region in December 2017. This was recorded in an evaluation results-sharing workshop held on 31 January 2018 by the IEO, the UNDP country office and representatives of the Government of the Congo.

Based on the findings, and analysis of what had worked (or not) over the years in question, this evaluation makes a number of recommendations on the roles that UNDP could play in the future. The Independent Evaluation Office very much hopes that this will contribute to increasing and improving UNDP support to the Government of the Congo and other national partners in the area of human development.

We consider this evaluation to be very timely, taking place at a time of national strategic planning, a new UNDP country programme cycle, and innovative processes for a peaceful and sustainable future. The Congo is currently undergoing a period of transition after recent crises and plans to review its national development policies in light of its status as a middle-income country. Given this, and following adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, we hope that this evaluation will help to guide UNDP strategy.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
ADR	Assessment of development results
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CGDC	Community Development Management Committee
CO	Country Office
COP	Conference of the Parties
COSA	Health Committee
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSI	Integrated Health Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DSCERP	Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FCFA	Financial Cooperation in Central Africa (CFA Franc)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross National Income
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture and Development
IGA	Income-generating activities
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDP	Local Development Plan
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MID	Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report
NIM	National Implementation Modality

ODA	Official development assistance
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
PDD	Departmental Development Plan
PLWHA	People living with HIV and AIDS
PNAE	National Environment Action Plan
PNRE	National State Reform Plan
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PUDC	Emergency Community Development Project
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
UN	United Nations
UNCHRD	United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNS	United Nations System
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WEA	Women and Energy Association
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE)¹ was conducted in the Republic of the Congo in 2017 by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). It presents an overall assessment of the UNDP contribution to the development of the country over the last two UNDP programme cycles: 2009 to 2013 and 2014 to 2018. Recommendations were made to guide future UNDP programme strategies in the Congo, particularly the strategy for the next programme cycle. The ICPE for the Congo examined the strategy and performance of the Congo UNDP country office in relation to the previous and current country programmes and their action plans. The evaluation team endeavoured to gain an understanding of UNDP contributions over the two cycles, on the basis of effectiveness (including cross-cutting dimensions related to gender, the fight against HIV/AIDS, young people, etc.), the promotion of human rights and gender equity, and the quality of interventions using the criteria of relevance, efficiency and sustainability.

Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with 204 relevant stakeholders², either face-to-face or by telephone/ Skype, to gather their opinions about the issues raised by the ICPE. Group interviews were also conducted with local leaders and beneficiaries in villages affected by UNDP interventions. The evaluation team also conducted fieldwork in Brazzaville and in parts of the country where UNDP has a strong concentration of projects, in the Plateaux, Cuvette and Sangha regions in the north of the country and Pointe-Noire, Kouilou, Niari, Bouenza and Lekomou in the south west.

The **main findings and conclusions** indicate that, in terms of relevance, during the cycles under review, all components of the UNDP country programme in the Congo were aligned with national priorities as stated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PSRP) and the subsequent National Development Plan (NDP). They partially met the needs of communities and were consistent with the UNDP mandate, though the country office strategy was based on very ambitious targets, especially in the area of governance, given the actual constraints of the country. Results in terms of strategic planning, local planning, results-based management, gender, project management and compliance with international environmental conventions are encouraging, but have not yet brought about significant change in behaviours and practices in the country's institutions. UNDP results are often not very visible, due to the nature of its interventions which may be demonstrative (pilot projects) or not clearly tangible (such as advocacy and advisory support). Visibility also suffers from the agency being too low profile in its communications. In addition, UNDP is often seen as a donor, which gives rise to unrealistic expectations and frustrations.

Programme efficiency is considered satisfactory in view of the partnerships established and an incipient refocusing of interventions, while overall operational efficiency is moderately satisfactory due to delays in the provision and use of resources and in the choice of service providers in the field. Sustainability is considered unlikely given that national ownership is judged unsatisfactory overall. This is mainly due to a frequent rotation of administrative managers,

1 Formerly “ADR” (Assessment of development results).

2 Interviews were conducted with 41 central government officers and 40 representatives of local authorities, 73 members of civil society organizations, including beneficiaries, 27 representatives of United Nations System agencies and other technical and financial partners, and 23 UNDP managers including project coordinators.

low skills transfer and a low level of accountability and, in institutions and the field, the lack of prior risk analyses, monitoring activities and exit strategies.

Gender issues have been assiduously advocated by UNDP, resulting in some encouraging outcomes, especially in governance, which are likely to lead to noticeable changes in the medium term. However, these changes remain modest so far, due to insufficient ownership and cultural resistance.

In terms of strategic positioning, UNDP brings United Nations branding, guaranteeing its neutrality and values, as well as its capacity for dialogue and coordination. UNDP is often seen as interchangeable with the United Nations, or associated with United Nations Coordination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **UNDP should, in its next country programme, retain the promotion and consolidation of peace as a central axis of its intervention.** This can be achieved by using its comparative advantages, with the support of a peace and development advisor. Currently, the Congo's major challenge is to strengthen democratic processes and the rule of law. To do this, it is essential to maintain the recently-established climate of peace. Initiatives in support of peace should underpin all UNDP interventions.
2. **During its next programme, UNDP could concentrate its interventions on just two strategic axes** – 'Democratic governance and consolidation of peace' and 'Inclusive sustainable development'.
3. **With regard to electoral governance, a major challenge in the Congo, UNDP should, alongside other international agencies, contribute to efforts to bolster the electoral system with interventions to establish an environment favourable to citizen participation and free, transparent elections.** UNDP could play a mediation role to facilitate the process of national dialogue between
- the parties and offer innovative ways of supporting non-traditional actors through mediation and support activities. It could do more to train and guide the media covering elections and encourage them to adopt and adhere to a code of conduct, to develop the capacities of CSO observers and provide technical support to associations that encourage participation, particularly of women, young people and indigenous populations or support conflict-prevention strategies.
4. **The country office should develop the next country programme underpinned by a theory of change** that makes clear its intervention strategy: in relation to perceived constraints of the context (assumptions); and as a function of the factors (drivers) relating to the comparative advantages it can rely on to bring about change.
5. **UNDP should further encourage and engage in joint activities with other United Nations agencies** and, failing that, continue its collaboration with agencies specialising in priority areas that fall outside its own area of expertise.
6. **UNDP should continue to encourage national ownership in order to secure sustainability and help leverage outcomes, thus instigating a dynamic of transformation and change on a larger scale.** UNDP should expand its grassroots consultations when designing and implementing its programmes and projects, linking its traditional and non-traditional partners, the private sector and local communities. Civil society should also be more involved.
7. **During the next programme, UNDP should adopt a communications strategy based on the results of its interventions,** not just the launch of activities.
8. **In terms of resource mobilization, UNDP should intensify its advocacy for the Government to make national counterpart funds available and seek new opportunities to diversify its sources of funding.**

9. **UNDP should strengthen its results-based monitoring and evaluation activities** at programme level and continue to support partners to produce reliable statistics.
10. **UNDP should continue its support to national counterparts for effective gender mainstreaming**, which must translate, as a minimum, into systematic reporting of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive budgeting.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts country-level evaluations entitled Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPE)³. These identify elements which demonstrate both the contribution of UNDP to national development results and the effectiveness of its national strategy and support in achieving development objectives.

The ICPE forms part of the general provisions of the UNDP evaluation policy. The objectives of the ICPE are:

- To support the development of new UNDP country programmes;
- To enhance the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders; and
- To strengthen UNDP accountability to its Executive Board.

The IEO is independent from UNDP management, led by a director who reports to the UNDP Executive Board. This office has a dual responsibility:

- a) To present the Executive Board with credible and reliable information from evaluations, with a view to improving institutional accountability and decision-making; and
- b) To strengthen the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation role, its consistency, harmonization and alignment in support of the reform of the United Nations and national ownership.

Under the principle of national ownership, the IEO is dedicated to conducting ICPEs in close collaboration with the national authorities of the country in which the UNDP program is implemented.

The UNDP office in the Republic of the Congo was subject to an ICPE in 2017, as the current country programme reaches an end in 2018. This ICPE will provide useful pointers for the development of the new country programme to be jointly implemented by the UNDP country office and national authorities from 2019 onwards.

1.2 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

The Republic of the Congo (the Congo), located in Central Africa, has a surface area of 342,000 km² and is bordered by Cameroon, Central African Republic, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and the Atlantic Ocean. The population is estimated at 4.6 million (World Bank, 2015), over 45 per cent of whom are aged under 15. This situation can be explained by a high fertility rate estimated at 5 children per woman between 2010 and 2015.⁴

The Republic of the Congo is among the most urbanized countries in Africa, with more than two thirds of its population residing in urban areas. The main driver of urbanization is the concentration of public services and economic activities in the country's two main cities – Brazzaville and Pointe Noire.

3 Replacing the Assessment of Development Results (ADR).

4 UNDP in Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

The Congolese economy is dominated by the oil sector, and it is the fourth biggest oil producer in Sub-Saharan Africa (and thirty-fifth largest worldwide).⁵ Oil production accounts for more than 60 per cent of GDP and 90 per cent of exports. Growth in national oil production has been maintained despite a downturn in the world economy, though the growth rate of the Congolese economy declined by 1.2 per cent between 2014 and 2015 and national oil production has been well below the 8.5 per cent expected in the National Development Plan (NDP).⁶ According to the World Bank, per capita Gross National Income (GNI) was US\$2,520 in 2014,⁷ placing the Republic of the Congo in the lower bracket of middle-income countries.

Logging is the second most important export sector and source of income after oil, accounting for 15.85 per cent of GDP with a potential estimated at more than 150 million m³, generating some 10,000 jobs. However, its economic importance has been declining.⁸ As the domestic market is limited, wood is mostly exported to China and Europe. Industrial wood processing is little diversified and produces low added value, being composed solely of primary processing units (sawing, peeling and slicing).

Given this situation, the country is faced with several major challenges, the most important of which is the diversification of its productive system and exports. At the same time, it faces

growth that is not very inclusive and does not generate much employment, and human development progress has slowed.

The overall poverty rate has decreased, falling from 50.1 per cent in 2005 to 46.5 per cent in 2011,⁹ but in rural areas it has grown from 65.2 per cent to 74.8 per cent over the same period.¹⁰ The rate of underemployment in the labour-force was 27 per cent in 2011.¹¹ The unemployment rate fell from 19.7 per cent in 2010 to 16 per cent in 2014,¹² but this performance hides considerable vulnerability since most jobs are being created in sectors that make only a small contribution to national wealth. In addition, the unemployment rate remains very high among people aged 15 to 29, at 42.2 per cent.¹³ Gender inequalities have also increased, with female unemployment at 11.4 per cent in 2014, substantially higher than for men, at 6.1 per cent.

The poverty rate has therefore remained high at 46.5 per cent, as has the Gini inequality index (0.593), according to the 2015 Human Development Report (HDR). With this mixed record, in 2014 the country's Human Development Index (HDI) was only 0.59,¹⁴ placing it 136th out of 188 countries.

The Republic of the Congo has great development potential, but the capacity and effectiveness of public authorities to manage public investment programmes, and of the public to develop initiatives in the productive economic sectors

5 UNDP in the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

6 World Bank <https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=CG>.

7 At current values. World Bank website: <http://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=CG>.

8 National Institute of Statistics (INS), 2014.

9 African Development Bank: www.afdb.org/fr/countries/central-africa/congo/congo-economic-outlook/.

10 <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?q=Congo+poverty++rural&d=MDG&f=seriesRowID%3a583%3bcountryID%3a178%2c180>.

11 According to the 2011 Congolese Household Survey and UNDP Demographic and Health Survey on the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

12 ADIAC (Central Africa Information Agency) article of 15 July 2015.

13 UNDP in the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

14 The Human Development Index increased only slightly between 2005 and 2012, from 0.506 to 0.534. UNDP in the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

(agriculture, fisheries, tourism, etc.), are limited. This inhibits non-oil growth, which must be the engine of the country's development.

As regards social services, the quantity and quality of public services, particularly health and education, are low. Government spending has increased over the last decade, but progress has been slow. In 2014, health budgets accounted for only 8.71 per cent of government spending.¹⁵ The percentage of citizens with access to improved sanitation facilities fell from 19.0 per cent in 2005 to 14.6 per cent in 2012.¹⁶ In education, the primary phase net enrolment rate increased from 86.5 per cent in 2005 to 89.5 per cent in 2011, but the quality of education in the Congo continues to be an issue.¹⁷

Finally, tensions in the Pool region and a climate of uncertainty have persisted since the 2016 elections. The parliamentary and local elections of July 2017 were not held in some parts of the Pool region, due to the armed conflict taking place there.

The Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP) 2012-2016 acknowledged that the results of the previous poverty reduction strategy had been mixed and introduced significant changes to the country's strategic priorities. The previous Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), designed in the context of reconstruction after several years of conflict, focused on the consolidation of political and macroeconomic stability. The new DSCERP places strong emphasis on the

promotion of diversified and inclusive growth. Thus, the new medium-term vision of the Government revolves around five themes:

- a) governance;
- b) growth and diversification;
- c) development of economic and social infrastructure;
- d) social development and inclusion; and
- e) balanced and sustainable development.

The Government intends to intensify its efforts to diversify the economy through the construction of competitive infrastructure, improving governance and human resources and promoting regional integration.¹⁸

With regard to environmental issues, there has been very little observable change in the period 2009 to 2013. The Congo has 65 per cent forest cover, and national parks cover 12 per cent of the territory, but rural areas remain highly vulnerable because of strong pressures on timber resources. This pressure is linked to the levels of poverty in the population and weakness in the energy supply. Farming methods include the use of rudimentary tools and brush fires to clear planting areas, factors that undermine the environment and worsen deforestation. Efforts to improve the living environment, to create greater resilience to internal and external shocks, to manage waste and prevent natural disasters have been weak, but their importance was made clear further to the explosions that occurred on 4 March 2012 in a munitions depot in Brazzaville.¹⁹

15 World Bank website, World Development Indicators (WDI).

16 African Development Bank website, data portal.

17 UNDP in the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

18 Source: Republic of the Congo, Country Strategy Paper 2013-2017 – African Development Bank https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/2013-2017_-_Congo_-_Document_de_strat%C3%A9gie_pays.pdf.

19 Draft programme description for the Republic of the Congo (2014-2018) (in French) <http://www.africa.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Programme%20Documents/Congo%20CPD%202014-2018%20%28fr%29.pdf>.

Table 1. The Congo indicators

Indicator	ADR 2008 ²⁰	ICPE 2017
GNI per capita ²¹	930 (current USD), that is, a purchasing power parity (PPP) of USD 2800 (middle-income country, lower bracket)	1710 (current USD), that is, a PPP of USD 5380 in 2014 (middle-income country, lower bracket)
Average rate of growth of GDP	5.8 per cent from 2004 to 2006	2.6 per cent between 2014 and 2015
Human Development Indicator	0.548 in 2005, 139 th of 177 countries	0.59 in 2014, 136 th of 188 countries
Gender-Related Development Index	0.540 in 2005	0.922 in 2014 ²²
Population	3.7 million inhabitants in 2006	4.6 million inhabitants in 2015
Fertility rate	5.1	5.0 children per woman between 2010 and 2015
Population living below poverty threshold	50 per cent in 2006	46.5 per cent in 2011
Gini inequality index	47.3 in 2007 (HDR, 2009)	59.3 in 2014 (HDR, 2015)
Total dependency ratio (population aged 0 to 14 and over 65 years per 100 citizens aged 15 to 64 years)	84 in 2005	86 in 2015
Percentage of women	51.7 per cent in 2006	52 per cent in 2011
Percentage urban population	60 per cent in 2006	65.4 per cent in 2015
Life expectancy at birth	54.0 years in 2005	62.9 years for women and 60 years for men between 2010 and 2015
Adult literacy rate ²³	79.3 per cent between 2005 and 2013 ²⁴	80.9 per cent in 2015 (UNESCO data) ²⁵
Net primary enrolment rate	86.5 per cent in 2005	89.5 per cent in 2011
Children underweight for age	15 per cent in 2005	11.8 per cent in 2011
Population with access to clean drinking water	58 per cent in 2005	95.8 per cent for urban areas / 40 per cent for rural areas in 2015
Population growth rate	2.2 per cent	3.2 per cent between 2010 and 2015
Population density (number of persons per square kilometre)	10.4 in 2005	13.9 in 2016
Percentage of Congolese economy accounted for by oil industry	70 per cent in 2007	60 per cent in 2015
Women in parliament (per cent of seats)	12 per cent in 2005	7.4 per cent in 2016
Forest coverage ²⁶	65.77 per cent in 2006	65.4 per cent in 2015

20 Assessment of Development Results: Republic of the Congo, 2008 <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/3688>.

21 <http://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD?locations=CG>.

22 http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report_0.pdf p. 222.

23 <http://hdr.undp.org/fr/content/adult-literacy-rate-both-sexes-ages-15-and-older>.

24 Human Development Report 2015.

25 <http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=166>.

26 <http://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/AG.LND.FRST.ZS?locations=CG>.

1.3 UNDP IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

UNDP has been present in the Republic of the Congo since 1976. During the period covered by this ICPE (2009 to mid-2017) UNDP structured its interventions into two successive programming cycles: 2009 to 2013 and 2014 to 2018.

The first programme formed part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the same period, which was developed in response to challenges identified in the Congolese Government's strategic plan (DSCERP 2012-2016). UNDP interventions reflected in the Country Programme Document (CPD) were structured around three main themes:

- Support for democratic governance and the consolidation of peace;
- Poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and
- Crisis prevention, support for community recovery and promotion of energy and the environment.

Other UNDP priorities for action included the promotion of results-based management (RBM) in state and parastatal institutions, gender and the fight against HIV/AIDS.²⁷ The main results of this first programming cycle were identified through annual reviews of the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) and of projects.

The second programming cycle, from 2014 to 2018, took into account consultations with national partners on the achievement of the strategic priorities of the DSCERP (2012-2016), as reflected in UNDAF 2014-2018. This second programme is related to three of the five national priorities:

- Strengthening democratic governance (theme 1);
- Social development and inclusion (theme 3); and
- Protection of the environment and promotion of balanced and sustainable development (theme 5).

UNDP monitors the implementation of the principles of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Action Plan, as well as the integration of cross-cutting themes such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, gender, capacity-building, the promotion of human rights and results-based management.²⁸ In addition, UNDP in the Congo is paying increasing attention to the promotion of youth employment. It is considered one of the few United Nations agencies to have access to top decision-makers in the Congolese Government.

There is some continuity between the two programme periods. Key themes – poverty reduction, strengthening democratic governance and environmental protection – appear in both programmes. Social and inclusive development and the integration of HIV/AIDS and gender can also be found in both programmes. Differences in the UNDP strategy between the programmes for 2009-2013 and 2014-2018 include: a reduction in the number of programme impacts and a reorientation towards specific issues such as electoral processes, vulnerable people's access to social services and sustainable policies on the fight against global warming, particularly with greater participation by women.

During this period the country office has undergone major restructuring which has led to a reduction in staff and financial resources. This is due to a reduction in UNDP regular resources, as the Republic of the Congo is now among the middle-income countries, and to delays in payments of the national financial contribution, which finally ended in 2014.

27 UNDP in the Republic of the Congo website: <http://www.cg.undp.org/content/congo/fr/home/countryinfo.html>.

28 Draft programme description for the Republic of the Congo (2014-2018) (in French) www.africa.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Programme%20Documents/Congo%20CPD%202014-2018%20%28fr%29.pdf.

The expected results and indicative budgets of the two programmes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Programme impacts ²⁹ and indicative budgets			
2009-2013 programme		2014-2018 programme	
Impact of country programme	Indicative budget (CPAP) US\$	Impact of country programme	Indicative budget (CPAP) US\$
Component: Democratic governance			
62 – Capacity-building of institutions and the establishment of democratic, transparent and accountable governance at national and local levels is ensured.	Regular resources: 700,000 Other resources: 2,600,000	70 – By 2018, electoral processes will be conducted in a free, fair, credible and transparent manner.	Regular resources: 500,000 Other resources: 5,500,000
63 – National institutions and other bodies effectively use tools for the planning, monitoring and follow-up/ evaluation of policies, development programmes and budgets.	Regular resources: 420,000 Other resources: 1,900,000		
64 – Local groups apply the decentralization policy effectively.	Regular resources: 400,000 Other resources: 2,300,000		
Component: Poverty reduction and achievement of MDGs			
65 – Building national capacity for the development of policies, strategies and baseline human development indicators, and advocacy of and follow-up to MDGs.	Regular resources: 500,000 Other resources: 900,000	71 – By 2018, the most vulnerable people will have access to quality basic social services (education, health, food security, water and sanitation), including appropriate financial services.	Regular resources: 475,000 Other resources: 6,000,000
66 – Capacity-building in local development and community management.	Regular resources: 600,000 Other resources: 3,500,000		
67 – Job creation and improvement of living conditions.	Regular resources: 461,000 Other resources: 3,000,000		
Component: Environment, crisis prevention, recovery and natural disaster and risk management			
68 – National capacity-building in terms of conflict prevention and natural disaster and risk management.	Regular resources: 1,403,000 Other resources: 3,500,000	72 – By 2018, government institutions and the population have implemented sustainable environmental policy measures integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change. Particular attention is paid to the active participation of women in the programmes.	Regular resources: 751,000 Other resources: 22,400,000
69 – National capacity-building in terms of coordinating planning and management, and environmental and low-cost energy issues.			

29 The impacts listed in this table are taken from the CPAP results and resources matrix.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The ICPE is based on country programme documents approved by the UNDP Executive Board. In the case of the Republic of the Congo, these are the 2009-2013 CPD and corresponding Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) and, for 2014-2018, the common UNDAF action plan.

The scope of the ICPE includes all UNDP activities conducted in the country. It covers interventions funded by different sources, that is to say, from regular UNDP resources, from donors and from government funds. The ICPE also takes account of various 'non-project' activities such as coordination and advocacy that are essential to political and social projects in the country. The selection criteria for the projects reviewed (see list with corresponding annual spending in annex 4) were:

1. Years of development and implementation (with priority given to interventions developed during the period covered by the ICPE);
2. Thematic continuity over both programme periods;
3. The gender equality marker;
4. Continuity of partnership with national actors; and
5. Project budget and spending levels.

Project sampling was finalized after additional analyses, before commencement of the main data-collection exercise.

The evaluation methodology consisted of two main components:

1. Analysis of the contribution of UNDP to development outcomes by thematic/programme area (effectiveness criterion); and
2. Evaluation of the quality of this contribution (relevance, efficiency and sustainability criteria).

In addition, the evaluation included analysis of the strategic positioning of UNDP relative to its

mandate and known or emergent needs, as well as national development priorities. As this ICPE is the second evaluation of the UNDP country programme in the Congo, it is an opportunity to review the extent to which the recommendations made in the 2008 Assessment of Development Results (ADR) have been implemented.

The methodology used several methods, covering the following components:

- **Desktop review:** various documents were consulted (see annex), including: country programme documents; documents and reports on projects and programmes carried out by UNDP and the Congolese Government; institutional UNDP documents (e.g. global staff surveys, strategic plan, multi-year financial plans, results-oriented annual reports); available reports on previous project evaluations; and all available research studies and publications on the country, including the 2008 ADR.
- **Interviews:** 204 face-to-face (individual or discussion group) or telephone/ Skype interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders (41 central government officials, 40 local leaders, 73 members of civil society organizations including beneficiary organizations, 27 representatives of United Nations System (UNS) agencies and other technical and financial partners, and 23 UNDP managers, including project coordinators). These interviews gathered opinions on the evaluation questions posed by the ICPE, including UNDP provision, the execution of projects and programmes and their impacts (strengths, weaknesses and funding committed). Group interviews were also conducted with local leaders and beneficiaries of UNDP interventions in selected villages.
- **Field visits:** The evaluation team visited the regions of the country where UNDP has a high concentration of key projects, as well as Brazzaville, to see any results achieved first-hand. The sample of selected sites included the regions of Plateaux, Cuvette and Sangha in the north of the country and Pointe-Noire,

Kouilou, Niari, Bouenza and Lekomou in the south-west. Identification of relevant stakeholders for interview and of sites to visit was based on available programme documents and on dialogue with programme managers in the UNDP and with national partners.

Safety precautions were taken, and some regions were only accessible by air. In view of the security situation in the Pool region, which is susceptible to violent armed conflict, the evaluation team was not able to go there. This part of the evaluation was based on available documents and interviews with UNDP experts. This was the main and only limitation encountered during this evaluation.

UNDP contribution by thematic and programmatic area: An analysis was conducted of the effectiveness and quality of the UNDP contribution to development outcomes in the Congo through its programme activities in each thematic area. This contribution was especially assessed in relation to the UNDP global engagement principles, defined in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017,³⁰ and to its vision for the promotion of gender.³¹ The ICPE also looked into the potential of UNDP to establish a strategic partnership with members of civil society and its capacity to mobilize resources from other partners. For each thematic area, the theory of change was applied to understand how the intervention strategy was envisaged by the country office. For each of the impacts of the current CPD, progress made and the UNDP contribution were examined using predefined evaluation criteria and identifying specific factors that influenced this contribution. For each impact, contributions to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment were analysed.

The strategic positioning of UNDP: Analysis of the organization's positioning was carried out on the basis of its mandate, and relative to recognized or emergent needs and national development priorities. This was done using the current CPD, which was prepared by the former UNDP team and implemented under the responsibility of the current team, paying special attention to governance issues, including support for elections. The analysis helped to determine the challenges faced and to understand the role played by UNDP. The evaluation team also assessed UNDP positioning in conflict areas, based on activity reports and other documents provided by the country office on its interventions in the Pool region. The team also reviewed the UNDP mediation role, its capacity to manage collaboration between United Nations System agencies and its support for the Government in the coordination of development assistance.

It is important to note that, despite a reduction in staffing further to the 2014 restructuring, the institutional memory of the UNDP office in the Congo is relatively well preserved, as several members of the current team have over 10 years' service and participated in the 2008 ADR process.

From a more technical point of view, the evaluability of the programmes has made it possible to examine the contribution of UNDP to objectives in each area and to compare reference data and target values in performance indicators for the two CPDs. For the current programme, the evaluation focused on results achieved up to and including June 2017, around 70 per cent of the programme duration (three and a half years out of five). Progress for each CPD outcome and each criterion was measured on the basis of information obtained during semi-structured interviews

30 The engagement principles in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 comprise: strengthening governance; social development and inclusion; and the promotion of balanced and sustainable development. It aims to strengthen the capacity of institutions at national and local levels, focusing on community participation to improve social cohesion and sustainable human development.

31 Drawing on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/UN-SWAP-Framework-Dec-2012.pdf.

and qualitative reviews, or using quantitative data as appropriate.³² Qualitative analyses were also conducted in order to report on progress made on certain objectives that have been slower to materialize. This includes UNDP support in the form of advice, facilitation and guidance activities with the goal of developing and strengthening public institutions or policies, which take time to set up and become operational.

Validation: The evaluation team triangulated the information gathered, checking the validity using several sources and/ or different methods before drawing conclusions, so as to be as objective and inclusive as possible.

Stakeholder participation: At the start of the evaluation process, a thorough stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify all the UNDP partners, as well as stakeholders with whom UNDP does not directly collaborate but who play a key role in obtaining impacts in priority areas. The evaluation followed an inclusive approach in its development and operation, and for the validation

of deliverables. In this process, the country office involved national stakeholders from Government, civil society, United Nations agencies, technical and financial partners and other partners.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured into five chapters. After the executive summary and this first introductory chapter, chapter two analyses the contribution (effectiveness) of UNDP to development outcomes and includes, for each thematic area, an application of the envisaged theory of change. Chapter three assesses the quality of this contribution (relevance, efficiency and sustainability). Chapter four analyses the strategic positioning of UNDP in the Congo, and chapter five draws conclusions from the evaluation team's analysis, makes recommendations and provides the management response to the evaluation. The report is followed by annexes (available online) providing an overview of the country, the programme results framework, and a list of persons and documents consulted.

32 For more information on the scale system, see the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, IEO, 2011.

Chapter 2

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This chapter examines the contribution of UNDP to development results in the Republic of the Congo between 2009 and mid-2017, in the areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, achievement of the MDGs, environment, crisis prevention, recovery and the management of natural disasters and risks. This analysis of the effectiveness of UNDP seeks to answer the fundamental evaluation question on the UNDP contribution to the expected impacts stated in the country programme documents. Analysis by thematic area is followed by an analysis of the contributions of UNDP interventions in the specific case of the Pool region, and on the promotion of gender. Finally, there is a section on the influence of the specific context of the Congo, to ensure comprehensive understanding.

2.1 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Impacts 2009-2013: National institutions and agencies will promote democracy, respect for human rights and effective, transparent management of public resources, with a view to consolidating peace, security and the rule of law.

Impacts 2014-2018: Electoral processes will be conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner.

2.1.1 DESIRED IMPACT AND UNDP STRATEGY

Background: In the early 1990s, the Republic of the Congo ended the single-party regime that had prevailed since 1963 with the establishment of a multiparty system and the election of the President of the Republic by direct suffrage. The presidential, local and parliamentary elections of 1992

and early parliamentary elections in 1993 enabled institutions to be established, though due to a weak political consensus and divisions between political parties, these were not able to prevent civil wars in 1993 and 1994 and later from 1997 to 1999.

It was only in 2000 that peace was gradually restored. Measures were taken to promote the disarmament and reintegration of former militia members and the Government adopted a 2000-2002 post-conflict programme to rebuild the national economy, which received the support of international institutions including the United Nations System. Parliamentary and presidential elections held in 2007 and 2009 respectively took place in a peaceful climate, even if the participation rate was very low. Opposition parties called for a boycott, denouncing the lack of independence of the Electoral Commission and the mechanism for distributing voting cards. According to NGOs, the conditions for democratic elections were not met. The mainstream view of the opposition was that 90 per cent of the electorate in the country did not turn out to vote.

The parliamentary elections of 2012 also resulted in low voter turnout and low representation of women in parliament,³³ and in regional and municipal councils. Once again, the results were disputed by the political parties of the opposition, who reported a lack of reliability in voter lists, ineffective mechanisms for the distribution of voter cards and poor organization of polling stations.

The latest presidential election, held in March 2016, was precipitated by the constitutional referendum of October 2015³⁴ which claimed a turn-

33 Of 139 members of parliament elected, only 12 were women, that is, 8.6 per cent.

34 Concerning a new Constitution authorising the current President to run again and for three further terms (Source: *Le Monde Afrique*, 24 March 2016).

out of 72.44 per cent and a “yes” vote from 92.96 per cent of votes cast.³⁵ This led to a worsened political climate marked by tension and violence including several deaths, and by challenges on the part of the opposition parties. The violence occurred in southern districts of Brazzaville and extended to other districts, especially in the Pool region. The United Nations System identified nearly 20,000 displaced people who had fled their homes due to the conflict and were living in very precarious conditions.

The problems raised by the organization of the elections and low representation of women attested to the need for significant support to manage the electoral process. The aim was to strengthen the legitimacy and representativeness of the process, and improve outreach to the population, including vulnerable groups, to increase mobilization and participation, particularly of women.

In response to these challenges, the Government, with UNDP support, encouraged political parties to adopt a code of conduct to regulate the organization of the parliamentary elections of 2012 and ensure a peaceful climate throughout the country before, during and after polling. One of the key elements of the strategy was to hold national consultations³⁶ for the political parties to reach consensus on participation in elections and find solutions to any potential problems. In May 2017, a joint mission of the Government, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations visited the Pool region for a primary assessment of the humanitarian situation. In terms of decentralization, a law was adopted by parliament setting out the competences and devolved powers of departmental councils, with a budget enabling them to contribute to local development.

UNDP strategy: Against this background, UNDP established a strategy which included support to the Government in the area of democratic governance as one of its key elements.

During the period 2009 to 2013, based on the government priority to establish quality governance, UNDP offered its support with the following objectives:

- To consolidate peace and security, building the capacity of the institutions responsible for the organization of elections and of the press to manage and disseminate information on the implementation and outcome of the electoral process. The goal was to meet the needs of the Government while harmonising UNDP interventions with those of other United Nations System agencies and development partners.
- To strengthen decentralization by (as in the previous cycle) supporting departmental councils to develop their local development plans (LDPs) in a participatory manner and by training elected officials to play their role as effective representatives of grassroots communities in relevant institutions.
- To improve financial governance and the rule of law through support to institutions fighting corruption and to those responsible for inspecting the management of public finances and State reform.
- To support human rights during the period by building the capacity of judicial institutions and expanding citizens’ and vulnerable persons’ access to justice through the expansion of ‘legal clinics’, legal advisory services provided by civil society.
- To strengthen the strategic planning and results-based management of public administrations.

During the period 2014 to 2018, the UNDP strategy for democratic governance consisted of pursuing and extending the main actions carried out during the previous programming cycle to ensure a peaceful election cycle in 2016 and 2017. Emphasis was placed on consolidation of

35 Source: Le Monde Afrique, 27 October 2015.

36 Consultation of political parties and associations of Dolisie (2011), Sibit (2013) and Ouesso (2017).

the decentralization process. This consisted of: targeted strengthening of political institutions and civil society organizations involved in electoral processes; strengthening the capacity of Parliament to play its role as legislator and hold the Government to account; strengthening the capacity of public administrations such as the Constitutional Court and the Court of Auditors; supporting 12 departmental councils to draw up local development plans; and strengthening the capacity of local officials and communities to implement these plans.

The theory of change for democratic governance was applied by the evaluation team to understand the logic underlying UNDP interventions. Figure 4.1: Theory of change: democratic governance (see annex) illustrates the approach adopted by the country office in this thematic area to achieve the expected results over the 2014-2018 programme.

2.1.2 RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH UNDP SUPPORT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

The results of UNDP support for institutions and agencies involved in electoral processes were significant during the 2009-2013 cycle, but very modest in light of the ambitions stated for the following cycle, and did not bring about changes in governance practices.

UNDP was approached by the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (MID) for assistance in organising the presidential election of July 2009, the parliamentary elections of 2012 and the local elections of 2013. The MID worked

differently during the electoral cycle of 2016 and 2017, particularly due to political tensions arising from challenges to the 2016 elections. National actors showed a lack of responsiveness to proposals made by the United Nations System and reluctance to accept any kind of support in this area. This was evident in their response to various actions relating to the substance of the electoral process, including the Resident Coordinator's requests to develop a programme of support for the Government on the electoral system, and a series of unanswered letters to the Government from the UN Secretary General and UNDP.³⁷ UNDP did organize political dialogue bringing political parties together on its premises, and conducted a series of training activities for election observers, journalists and civil society organizations.³⁸ It was not, however, able to contribute to improving the electoral process which, on the contrary, deteriorated, especially during 2016, giving rise to challenges and violence in which several people were killed.

Similarly, the results of UNDP capacity support to ministries, to improve their performance as promoters and regulators of democracy, were not sufficient to bring about progress towards the desired impact or any significant changes.

At central level, UNDP support has helped several ministries (including those of Justice, Trade, Tourism, Land Affairs and Decentralization) to develop strategic plans to better manage their sectoral policies. Though these plans have not yet been implemented, actions taken by UNDP led to the convening of a National Decentralization Conference in 2017 and the adoption of a

37 These letters were: 1) A letter from the Secretary-General of the United Nations dated 14 April 2016, stating the need to promote political dialogue to overcome the incidents that occurred after the elections of 2016. This letter received no response; 2) A letter from the Resident Coordinator dated 9 September 2014 to the Minister of the Interior and Decentralization emphasising the prospect of developing a new, more holistic cooperation framework to include both support for the next electoral cycle and for decentralization and strengthening the capacities of actors. The ministry in question did not answer this letter, neither to approve nor to reject the initiative; 3) A letter from the Resident Coordinator dated 13 February 2017 to the Minister of the Interior and Decentralization, suggesting a request for an evaluation mission from the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division that could lead to a programme to strengthen the achievements of the electoral system.

38 Training of 200 observers from civil society in election observation techniques, 24 media monitors from print and audio-visual media, 52 journalists and two NGOs. 100 women candidates and five young people were trained in candidacy techniques for elections. (Source: UNDAF mid-term review 2014-2018).

national strategy in this area. Furthermore, thanks to UNDP support, the National State Reform Plan is in approval process and was the object of an awareness day. UNDP, working in collaboration with other agencies including UNCHRD in Yaoundé, UNESCO and UNOCA, offered interventions targeted at capacity-building for actors working in the field of human rights, and training for journalists covering the elections, but these had rather limited impact. Similarly, UNDP provided support to the Government in the fight against the radicalization of young people, training more than 500 young people in trades and entrepreneurship, creating a young peoples' radio station to educate them in democratic values and citizenship, and engaging with 3,000 young leaders portraying republican values and support for the democracy.

As part of its remit,³⁹ UNDP also strengthened the skills of various ministries in monitoring and evaluation, especially in results-based management.

UNDP has strengthened the capacities of members of departmental councils, delivering training and raising their awareness of the importance of strategic management tools. However, the results achieved are below the targets set, since only two of an expected 12 local development plans have been prepared and approved, those of Pool and Plateaux.

Interviews with beneficiaries in Brazzaville and the regions revealed that, through the exercise of preparing LDPs, decentralized authorities have become more aware of the importance of having a strategic management tool in the form of a multiannual plan. Prior to UNDP intervention these institutions, responsible for promoting local development, had not based their operation on any specific strategy or development plan. The

participatory approach to the formulation of these plans, and proper consultation of communities in the districts, made it possible to consider the needs of communities⁴⁰. Projects within the LDP were selected on the basis of these needs. Finally, though members of the departmental councils enjoyed the training they received, the councils have not yet used the training modules to train other members and thus ensure the sustainability of any advances made.

The quantitative objective set by the 2014-2018 CPAP, which was to support the development of 12 development plans, was not achieved given the limited financial and human resources of the regions concerned. At the time of the evaluation, only four plans had been prepared, and two approved. This represents a delivery rate of 33.3 per cent for development and 16.6 per cent for approval. This objective, besides being extremely ambitious, did not correspond to the UNDP mandate. The UNDP mission was to conduct pilot projects of a demonstrational and educational nature so that national actors could learn from and replicate them. Thus, UNDP should have left national institutions to create their own development plans on the basis of a successful pilot. This approach would have enabled UNDP to help national actors to act appropriately, and especially to take ownership of good initiatives, drawing on successful pilot projects and learning from those that were unsuccessful.

2.2 POVERTY REDUCTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF MDGS

Impacts 2009-2013: By 2013, populations will have equitable access to quality social services in the health, education, water and sanitation, social protection and HIV/AIDS sectors, and will use them.

39 Under the five standard United Nations programming principles (human rights, gender, RBM, environmental sustainability and capacity-building).

40 Conversely, the approach often used by the central power is top down, as consultations with regions are not conducted and the needs expressed are those of the ministries based in Brazzaville. Formulation of the NDP faithfully reflects this approach. This plan is articulated around projects per ministry, and the project distribution criteria make no reference to the regions.

Impacts 2014-2018: By 2018, the most vulnerable populations will be using quality basic social services (education, health, food security, water and sanitation), including appropriate financial services.

2.2.1 DESIRED IMPACT AND UNDP STRATEGY

Background: In terms of reducing inequality, the Republic of the Congo faces several challenges. Despite the economic performance of 2003-2010, human development indicators are still below those of countries with the same level of national income per capita. In general, there are significant differences between urban and rural areas,⁴¹ and within populations.

- Regarding access to health care, progress has stalled, resulting in, among others: inadequate health governance; weak health facilities especially in rural areas; insufficient human resources; a lack of monitoring and evaluation; and limited technical platforms.
- With regard to access to education, while the Congo has one of the highest enrolment rates of the subregion, there are problems with the quality of education, with the link between education and employment (most of the courses delivered do not equip people for the jobs on offer), and with disparities between localities and for indigenous peoples (Bambenga, Babongo).⁴²
- In the area of food security, the Congo is only self-sufficient in the production of manioc and bananas, relying on imports for all other products.
- In terms of gender equality, although legislation prescribes equality between men and

women, the situation of women remains marked by blatant discrimination in the law, reinforced by the cultural environment (practices such as levirate, widowhood rites, inheritance, sexual harassment, early pregnancy and marriage).

- In the water and sanitation sector, rural communities have limited access to drinking water (40 per cent, against 96 per cent in urban areas),⁴³ to electricity (10 per cent, against 61 per cent in urban areas) and to a healthy sanitation system (0.9 per cent, against 33.9 per cent in urban areas).⁴⁴
- Finally, as regards access to financial services, microfinance institutions are mainly found in urban and semi-rural areas, and the populations of rural areas tend to use tontine and hoarding, limiting their ability to finance high-yield activities.

The Republic of the Congo failed to achieve key MDG targets. The poverty rate remains high at 46.5 per cent⁴⁵ and the child mortality rate exceeded 68 per thousand in 2011. More progress was made on MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education), MDG 3 (eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education), MDG 5 (reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio) and MDG 6 (halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases).

In response to these challenges, the Congolese Government developed various strategies and policies in the 2008-2011 PRSP and the 2012-2016 National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP targeted: the acceleration of modernization and industrialization; the acceleration of growth and better distribution of its benefits; and the

41 According to the Congolese household survey of 2011, the proportion of people living in poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban areas (75.6 per cent, against 32.3 per cent).

42 65 per cent of indigenous adolescents aged 12 to 15 years do not attend school, against 39 per cent for the general population (NHDR, 2015).

43 Source: World Bank statistics, 2015.

44 Congolese Household Survey, 2011.

45 Congolese Household Survey, 2011.

development of the social sector. Both documents had objectives aligned to the MDGs.

UNDP strategy: During the first programming cycle (2009-2013), the UNDP aimed, at strategic level, to strengthen capacities for the development of policy, strategies⁴⁶ and indicators relating to human development, and, at local levels, to promote income-generating activities in agriculture, fisheries and livestock. UNDP also aimed to support the creation of four Millennium Villages.⁴⁷

During the second programming cycle (2014-2018), UNDP interventions were focused on the continuation of strategies and interventions from the previous cycle, after incorporation of the recommendations of the evaluation conducted in 2008. These interventions aimed to build capacity at central level to harmonize government actions and projects with the MDGs. Thus, UNDP was to continue to support the Government, especially the statistical services, to produce the disaggregated MDG data needed for planning. In terms of community and local development, UNDP was to conduct advocacy to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs in rural areas, to promote an environment conducive to the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples and women, and to increase youth and women's access to decent jobs. The expected result of this advocacy was for the State, United Nations System agencies and businesses from the oil sector to assist local communities and target villages⁴⁸ to build their production capacity and diversify their sources of income. Pig and sheep breeding, poultry breeding, manioc plantations and fish farming were to be introduced and developed in places where these activities had previously been insignificant.

The theory of change reformulated by the evaluation team and underlying the UNDP approach for achievement of the MDGs and reduction of inequalities is described in Figure 4.2: Theory of change: achievement of MDGs and reduction of inequality (see annex online).

2.2.2 RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH UNDP SUPPORT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

During the period under review (2009-2017), UNDP contributed to strengthened institutional capacity at central (ministry), departmental and community levels. UNDP support helped to substantially improve access to basic social services for populations in target areas. With regard to local economic development, no significant change was found.

UNDP contributed to the Government's development of tools for planning, programming, and monitoring and evaluating national development programmes and the MDGs. The Government adopted a new strategic planning framework that incorporates a forward-looking vision and a budgetary planning framework. Several policy, strategy and action plan documents were developed. These include the National Development Plan (NDP) 2012-2016, National Human Development Reports (NHDRs), the National Report on Progress towards Achievement of the MDGs, the National Policy on the Development of Domestic Commerce, the National Land Policy Document, and the National Tourism Strategy. These documents rationalize the interventions of the State. The efforts made by UNDP helped to harmonize planning activities in the short, medium and very long terms, with a focus on poverty reduction. As regards the achievement of the MDGs, one element of the 2014-2018 programme, impact was

46 Encouraging self-employment through the establishment of an institutional and regulatory framework for the promotion of microfinance to help low-income people launch income-generating activities, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and industries (SME and SMI) and micro-businesses, and implementation of the national employment policy.

47 Etoro, Obaba, Tandou Bizenzé/Tandou Mboma.

48 Madingo Kayes, Tandou Bizenzé/Tandou Mboma and Tchamba Nzassi, Etoro and Obaba.

not achieved, but UNDP did help to establish the process to produce statistical data, that should culminate in an operational statistical system capable of producing disaggregated MDG data.

During both programming cycles, UNDP contributed to improving people's access to and use of quality basic social services in target villages, though with a low multiplier effect and low probability of sustainability. The plan was to create 15 additional Millennium Villages. To date, only the four villages that were built and equipped during the previous cycle are in operation, and there is no guarantee of the sustainability of these actions. These villages were provided with equipment through UNDP partnerships with the State, civil society (Generation Future Foundation) and Total. Two NGOs (Doctors of Africa and Water and Sanitation in Africa) supported the Millennium Villages in their areas of competence.

The project helped to build and equip integrated health centres (CSIs) in Obaba and Bisenzé/Tandou Mboma that are still operational, although the structure of the CSI building in Tandou Bisenzé appeared to have defects.⁴⁹ Health workers are present (three in the CSI of Bisenzé/Tandou Mboma). The project helped build a good-quality school⁵⁰ in Etoro, attended by children from target communities. There are teaching staff, albeit in insufficient numbers (three teachers for six classes), but the schools are not equipped with books and other teaching equipment. The villages of Etoro and Obaba were equipped with a multifunctional platform for grinding grains and tubers, to ease women's workloads.

This local equipment and infrastructure temporarily helped the local population to access basic social services, which contributed to improving living conditions, reducing deaths from water-borne diseases and easing workloads, especially for women. However, this pilot project encoun-

tered some serious problems. Some of the technical equipment at Etoro and Obaba was not sustainable (solar panels, fufu mills, boreholes, etc.) and local authorities were not involved in the design, preparation and commissioning of projects, hampering sustainability due to lack of ownership. Income-generating activities (IGAs) were concentrated in one area (the villages of Etoro and Obaba), and not supported by finance structures which could have encouraged local economic growth by linking production with microcredit. The application of project management frameworks was difficult in Tandou Bisenzé and there have been no recent meetings of the Community Development Management Committee (CGDC). The Health Committee (COSA) is not operational, whether from lack of leadership (Tandou Bisenzé) or from lack of participation of villagers. The management frameworks put in place are not operational: firstly, the beneficiaries do not have the necessary technical skills to operate the structures installed in the district; and secondly, the technical administrations that should provide the populations with support have no interest in the structures put in place (CSIs, piped potable water systems), arguing that these are not part of their brief. The main problem is that the administration does not consider the functioning of the Millennium Villages. The CGDCs in Etoro and Obaba have not been operational for several years.

The evaluation team found that, in Etoro and Obaba, IGAs promoted by UNDP for groups of agricultural producers initially mobilized large numbers of men and women farmers. In each village, more than 50 people contributed to producer organizations and succeeded in cultivating large land areas (9 hectares in Obaba, for example). A great quantity of produce (manioc and maize) was harvested and sold in Brazzaville markets. However, the takings were not returned to the producers involved due to the patriarchal and authoritarian management of former village

49 Cheikh FAYE, 2013 : Project evaluation «Villages du Millénaire au Congo», executive report (UNDP).

50 Idem.

chiefs. This discouraged producers, leading to the dissolution of their groups. This failure can be explained by, among other things, an absence of prior analysis of social relationships in the village. Another negative factor was the remoteness and relative isolation of the village of Obaba, which led to increased transport costs.

At the time of the evaluation, access to drinking water in participating villages was by borehole, but this is very vulnerable to breakdowns in the system.⁵¹ Despite receiving training to repair any breakdowns, the local population did not take ownership of the project, seeing themselves as beneficiaries rather than owners, and expecting UNDP to act on their behalf. The same applies in Etoro, where the borehole system has been broken for several years, and the population are using poorer quality water from a river.

Regarding the multiplier effect of the Millennium Villages project, after analysis the State launched a programme entitled “Revitalization of the Village Fabric” in 15 villages. Studies were carried out and a pilot project was implemented in the village of Tongo in the Lékoumou region. The buildings for a secondary school have been constructed and are ready to use, and an integrated health centre (CSI) is under construction.

The results of the UNDP contribution to developing policy documents are indisputable, but the same cannot be said of the impact of its local development interventions. Infrastructure exists, but there is weak institutional capacity. It seems that social constraints and dynamics were not subjected to sufficient analysis. Observation during field visits to the CGDC and COSA pilots suggest that the population never took real ownership of the projects.

During the second cycle, UNDP contributed to the promotion of job opportunities for women and young people, through the development of

microenterprises in target areas, but with no significant observable transformative impact.

This evaluation found two levels of performance in the UNDP contribution to this objective. UNDP supported the development of a national policy to foster domestic trade, and stimulate poverty reduction, but this has not yet been adopted. The same applies to the national land policy document, which considers inequalities between urban and rural areas (where the incidence of poverty is higher). A national strategy for tourism and a national policy for employment have also been developed, and a regulatory framework for employment of young people and women in different sectors of activity has been promoted.

On the development of microfinance, considered an important financial structure for populations living in poverty especially in rural areas, the results achieved are not satisfactory. The national microfinance policy has not yet been adopted, even though UNDP provided assistance for a situation report on the microfinance sector in 2008.⁵² Microfinance institutions are still largely located in major centres and departmental capitals, out of reach of the most vulnerable people – rural women and young people.

UNDP has given strong support to the process to elaborate and adopt laws and regulations to protect people living with HIV/AIDS and promote prevention activities in target areas.

UNDP advocacy can be clearly seen in awareness-raising for legal protection for people infected and/ or affected by HIV/AIDS. Thanks to UNDP intervention, all legislation and implementing decrees and orders have been developed, giving full legal value to the protection of people living with HIV/AIDS. It should be noted that, given the specific nature of HIV/AIDS and the existence of a UN agency dedicated to this area (UNAIDS), UNDP has gradually withdrawn

51 In Tandou Bizenzé, for example, the functioning of the public standpipe has been variable since February.

52 H. Defoundoux-Fila, J. R. Dirat, C. Mayoukou, 2008 : Analyse de l'offre et de la demande de produits et services de microfinance en milieu urbain et rural au Congo (UNDP).

from this sector. For this reason, the evaluation team's analysis on this subject will go no further.

2.3 ENVIRONMENT, CRISIS PREVENTION, RECOVERY AND NATURAL DISASTER AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Impacts 2009-2013: National capacity for conflict prevention and the management of natural disasters and risks is strengthened; capacity for the planning and coordinated management of environmental issues and lower cost energy is strengthened.

Impacts 2014-2018: By 2018, government institutions and the population have implemented sustainable environmental policy measures integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change. Particular attention is paid to the active participation in the programmes of women.

2.3.1 DESIRED IMPACT AND UNDP STRATEGY

Background: The structure of the Congolese economy is weak and little diversified, essentially based on the exploitation of oil and timber, which are mainly exported unprocessed. The country's other resources are copper, diamonds and iron. Despite a hydropower potential estimated at 4,000 MW, the installed electrical power capacity was only 600 MW in 2013,⁵³ which only covered the energy needs of 61 per cent of rural areas and 10 per cent of urban areas.⁵⁴ This explains the high dependence of people on firewood (90 per cent of household needs⁵⁵) and charcoal, which is produced using low-yield (10 to 15 per cent) traditional mills. Use of solar energy remains low in the Congo, at 72 kW.

The Congo is still largely dependent on food imports, which cover 90 per cent of its cereal

needs, 95 per cent of its meat product needs and 50 per cent of its fish requirements. Only 2 per cent of a potential 10,000,000 hectares of agricultural land is in productive use, generally by non-organized peasant farmers using traditional techniques and with limited financial resources. For the supply of drinking water, the 2015 coverage rate was 96 per cent in urban areas and 40 per cent in rural areas, but the processing and distribution infrastructure is obsolete and struggles to meet the needs of a growing population. Around 70 per cent of waste is biodegradable, but more than 85 per cent of the population has no access to adequate waste collection services.⁵⁶

Regarding climate change, the Congo has a positive carbon balance, turned towards CO₂ capture, thanks to its forest cover. However, an increase in average temperatures would have serious consequences for its water resources (particularly the flows of rivers with hydropower stations), causing flooding and creating heat islands, with a proliferation of mosquitoes and malaria zones, and would threaten food security.

The Congo faces significant environmental problems, such as degradation and destruction of forest and marine ecosystems, soil degradation and erosion, environmental damage, low quality of life in urban areas, continuous pressures on biological resources, and threats from natural or technological disasters. Moreover, the country's low ability to adapt exacerbates its vulnerability.

Since the 1990s, **in response to these challenges**, the Congolese Government has created a law for the protection of the environment (Law No. 003/91 of 24 April 1991), a National Forestry Action Plan (1992), a National Environment Action Plan (1994), a National Rural Development Scheme (1997) and a National Land-Use Planning Scheme (2005). The Poverty Reduction

53 Source: World Bank, «Revue de la gestion des dépenses publiques et de la responsabilité financière», May 2015.

54 Source: World Bank, 2014 statistics.

55 Source: CPAP 2014-2018.

56 Source: Second National Communication, 2009.

Strategy Paper (PRSP) adopted in 2007 includes the environmental objectives of protection of natural heritage and the sustainable use of biological diversity. More recently, the Congo has developed its first National Development Plan (NDP) – the Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (DSCERP) for the period 2012–2016 – which advocates balanced and sustainable development based on the protection of the environment and the fight against climate change.

UNDP strategy: It is against this background that UNDP and the Congolese Government signed country programme documents for 2009–2013 and 2014–2018 that form the legal framework for UNDP action in the country.

During the period from 2009–2013, based on the priorities identified in the PRSP, UNDP proposed to support the Congolese Government in the areas of crisis prevention and recovery, environment, energy, natural disaster and risk management, and adaptation to climate change. This included support for:

- Reducing insecurity by collecting and destroying illegal weapons from former combatants and civilians, improving regulatory and legal provisions for controlling the circulation of such weapons, and supporting the refurbishment and management of arsenals.
- Developing a national strategy for disaster management, updating the contingency plan and establishing local disaster prevention units.
- Building capacity for national stakeholders to coordinate prevention measures, with a view to improving preparedness for natural disasters and other risks.
- Developing a national intervention framework for sustainable management of the environment, conducting major advocacy initiatives for the protection of the environment and its integration into sectoral policies, and promoting sanitation models in urban areas through partnerships between the private sector, municipalities and civil society.

- Elaborating a strategy for energy development in rural areas through pilot projects promoting alternative and renewable energy sources.

During the period from 2014 to 2018, UNDP focused its interventions on the promotion of inclusive and resilient sustainable development by strengthening its support for:

- Reviewing the National Environmental Action Plan (PNAE) to reform the political, legal and regulatory framework;
- Implementing measures for afforestation and the conservation of biodiversity;
- Promoting renewable energy sources at national and local levels, with the participation of women heads of household;
- Advocating for operational waste management plans in the three largest cities in the Congo; and
- Strengthening the disaster management early warning and preparedness system through the mobilization of vulnerable groups (women, young people, the elderly, people living with disabilities and indigenous peoples).

The reformulated theory of change underlying the UNDP approach to environment and disaster management is presented in Figure 4.3: Environment and disaster management (available in annex online).

2.3.2 RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH UNDP SUPPORT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

During the period from 2009 to 2017, UNDP contributed to the development of numerous policy documents, strategies and action plans, providing the Congolese Government with a reference framework essential to the implementation of its environmental policies. However, few concrete results have been achieved to date, because of the lengthy timescales needed for approval and the financial difficulties that the Congolese Government has faced since

2014 that have slowed or stalled implementation of the identified actions.

UNDP support contributed to the approval of the National Strategy for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), a first version of which dedicated to tools was approved in December 2014 and the final version of which was approved in July 2016. UNDP promoted this programme at the highest levels, mobilising the participation of the Minister responsible for this sector. In addition, UNDP demonstrated the benefits of a decentralized approach, establishing three departmental units which benefitted from World Bank support up to December 2017, but whose sustainability is compromised due to a lack of additional resources. The planned expansion of this approach to five more departments has been problematic. The main option consists of using resources from the Green Climate Fund, with which UNDP is accredited and to which the Congolese Government has recently submitted an application.

On the issue of natural resource management, UNDP has made a significant contribution to the development of the National Strategy for the Distribution of Processed Wood on the National Market, which was approved in December 2015. The 1996 National Environment Action Plan (PNAE) was reviewed, starting in 2013. The revised PNAE document was approved in January 2017, contributing to the implementation of the environmental protection law.

The Strategy for the Development of the Artisanal Mining Sector and the ensuing National Action Plan were also prepared with UNDP support in 2013. They enabled the Ministry of Mines and Geology to conduct a thorough analysis of the sector and set out measures and actions to increase its value to the Congolese economy. The project also aimed to combat poverty by building the capacities of artisan miners, forming them into associations or cooperatives and providing them with better equipment. Environmental protection was to be ensured by enforcing the standards adopted in this area and by com-

batting poaching of protected species. However, it did not prove possible to continue the project at a sustained pace, due to financial constraints faced by the Ministry. In addition, delays (to date) in the distribution of equipment due to administrative complications resulting from the lack of legal status of some groups led to frustrations on the part of beneficiaries.

UNDP support, beginning in 2009 with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), made it possible to develop a strategy document on rural electrification using micro hydropower, which was approved in 2016.

Thanks to UNDP support during the period under review, the Republic of the Congo has been able to meet the requirements of conventions and other international agreement that it has ratified.

The Second National Communication of the Congolese Government was prepared and submitted to the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2009. This document is still the basis of Congolese policy on mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

UNDP support contributed to the implementation of a centralized programme for the recovery and recycling of substances that deplete the ozone layer, such as CFC 12, within undertakings made by the Republic of the Congo in the context of the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol.

UNDP supported the Ministry of the Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and the Environment to prepare a diagnostic report for presentation to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in March 2012 on the theme of the green economy. This report was based on a series of interdepartmental consultations (Sustainable development, Planning, Agriculture, Mining, Industry, Budget, Energy, Hydrocarbons, Ecology and Natural Resources) and with civil society (The National Convention of Development and Environmental Asso-

ciations and NGOs of the Congo, Santé Nature and Action for the Environment and International Solidarity).

Activities conducted under the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Artisanal Mining Sector project, which aimed to establish an appropriate national reference framework for effective and transparent management of artisanal mining, especially in relation to the traceability of marketing of precious minerals, enabled the Congo to meet its international commitments under the Kimberley process.⁵⁷

Similarly, regarding the protection of biodiversity, and in particular the fight against elephant and rhinoceros poaching, UNDP supported the Congo to implement the common African strategy to combat illegal exploitation of and illicit trade in products of the wild flora and fauna of Africa, itself the result of an international conference organized in Brazzaville in April 2015.

As part of the tri-national Dja-Odzala-Minkébé project, dedicated to the conservation of cross-border biodiversity between Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and Gabon, UNDP support was used to establish two memoranda of understanding: one to combat poaching across the borders of the three countries; and another on the inclusion of the migration corridors of large mammals in the national land allocation plans of the States parties.

UNDP helped raise the awareness of decision makers on broad environmental issues, but the principles of environmental protection are only slowly being applied across the board.

Awareness-raising efforts have reached the highest levels of decision-making, including the pres-

idency of the Republic, and culminated in the participation of the Congolese Head of State at the eighteenth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC in Doha 2012. More recently, the creation of the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin was announced on the margins of COP 22 in Marrakesh.⁵⁸ However, the General Directorate of the Environment lacks sufficient human and material resources and struggles to ensure compliance with the principles of environmental protection, such as the obligation to conduct environmental impact studies for all infrastructure projects.

Within the Africa Adaptation Programme, the capacities of senior officials in five ministries have been enhanced in relation to adaptation. Draft legislation for the integration of issues related to adaptation has been prepared, but little progress has been made on the review of legislation, except for general wording on the need to take adaptation into account in the agriculture sector. To date, the Congo is still without an adaptation strategy.

The integration of the environment has been particularly strong in the tourism sector, with the approval in April 2015 of the National Strategy and Sustainable Development Plan for Tourism. This provides a reference framework and operational tool to form the basis of sustainable development in this sector, considered to be crucial to the diversification of the economy. The first national conference on tourism in July 2017 marked the effective launch of the tourism policy in the Congo. This conference, mobilized by UNDP and organized with the support of experts from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), was an opportunity to show the Congo's immense potential for sustainable tourism. The presence of the Secretary-General of

57 Source: Central Africa Information Agency (ADIAC): The Kimberley process is an international certification procedure for uncut diamonds intended to prevent stones from conflict areas reaching official markets. The process requires members to export their uncut diamonds in sealed containers and to provide certificates authenticating their provenance. It ensures the traceability of all diamonds through the establishment of purchase and export registers. Having withdrawn from the process during the political crisis of 1997, the Congo re-joined this organization in 2008.

58 The Blue Fund promotes the use of water bodies for the production of hydroelectricity, providing the public with drinking water, practising aquaculture and agricultural irrigation, and for the sanitation of water courses. www.portail242.info/Congo-signature-de-l-accord-de-creation-du-Fonds-bleu-pour-le-Bassin-du-Congo_a2327.html.

UNWTO provided international validation for the creation of “Destination Congo”.

UNDP has been a catalyst in issues related to meeting the energy needs of the populations, but these initiatives have either not yet materialized or have had limited impact.

A project to build micro hydropower plants began in 2009, identifying around 17 sites where people do not have access to electricity. However, delays in implementation have meant that the feasibility studies have not yet begun and fundraising for implementation is ongoing. Moreover, the number of sites was reduced to eight, as the National Rural Electrification Programme took over the other sites.

In another area, the Women and Energy Association (WEA) received technical support for an improved cookstove programme which enabled 13 people to be recruited and 800 cookstoves to be built for sale. These cookstoves were in great demand, especially during a shortage of bottled gas in Brazzaville. UNDP support enabled the transfer of knowledge from a Senegalese expert to the WEA, as well as training for disabled metalworkers and ceramicists working as subcontractors. The construction of improved cookstoves is currently at a standstill due to lack of funding, and the absence of a holistic approach based on the value chain principle, which has been a major disappointment to the WEA and has led to the dismissal of people employed for their manufacture.

During these two programming cycles, UNDP has also been heavily involved in advocacy and training on monitoring and evaluation and results-based management (RBM). While it is undeniable that individual capacities were strengthened in this regard, it is not certain that any significant changes in behaviour and operation were observed at institution level.

Every manager in the general directorates of the forest economy, sustainable development, the environment, mines and geology, hydrocarbons and tourism received training in RBM. UNDP

supported some directorates to begin developing Annual Work Plans (AWPs), in collaboration with the Public Policies and Programmes Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, attached to the Presidency of the Republic and created under Decree No. 2011-17 of 12 February 2011.

2.4 THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION IN THE POOL REGION

Background: The conflict that raged in the Republic of the Congo from 1997 to 1999 caused enormous destruction and loss of life, especially in the Pool region. During the post-conflict period, after many years of social and political crises, the country entered a decisive phase in its development. The Pool region, however, was again struck by fighting between security forces and rebels after the disputed re-election of the President of the Republic in March 2016. According to various sources, between 10,000 and 30,000 displaced persons are living in very precarious conditions characterized by total insecurity and vulnerability to abuse.

UNDP strategy: UNDP and other United Nations agencies have been providing ongoing practical support to the efforts of the Government since 2005 through various projects, particularly on the issue of reintegration of residual groups of former combatants, estimated to number 5,000 men and women in this region. Despite these efforts, it was found that most former combatants were still waiting to be reintegrated, representing a serious threat to the security of communities if no action were taken to promote their sustainable self-development.

To better understand the nature of this problem and identify appropriate actions, in 2009 the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Human Security Trust Fund conducted missions in the Congo. Following these missions, the Pool region became one of the priority areas for intervention by the United Nations System, coordinated by UNDP. UNDP adopted a holistic approach, covering host communities and the different vulnerable groups, and integrated with

the decentralization process then under way in the country, to support the establishment of local decentralized administrations.

A number of joint interventions were identified and implemented, based on a survey of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of Pool and five selected districts and a needs assessment for reintegration activities, and in accordance with the capacity of target groups and the local availability of skills and economic opportunities. These were:

- A multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral security and humanitarian action programme, estimated at over US\$4,000,000 and implemented from 2012 to 2014 in Mindouli, Kindamba, Mayama, Boko and Kinkala. The implementing agencies were UNDP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA. The objectives were to:
 - i. support income-generating activities for members of producers' cooperatives;
 - ii. improve access to drinking water and health services in the five communities, through the provision of drinking water, health equipment and training of beneficiaries;
 - iii. improve the school environment for pupils and strengthen the capacity of school districts;
 - iv. develop civic education on peace initiatives through the organization of holiday camps and sports and cultural activities; and
 - v. contribute to better protection of women and girls from sexual violence.

- With respect to the reintegration of at-risk groups affected by the armed conflicts, a UNDP partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) aimed to promote community development and revitalize the local economy to the benefit of thousands of former combatants left to fend for themselves and consequently constituting a threat to peace and community development.

2.4.1 RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH UNDP SUPPORT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

Security and humanitarian action: One of the challenges faced by the programme was to internalize human security concepts in local government institutions and in communities. In a context where target communities had lived through armed conflicts and violence for a relatively long period (from 1997 to the early 2000s), with deeply traumatic consequences, a community radio programme was considered a relevant means of anchoring concepts of peace and human security.

Some activities conducted by the programme targeted young people and the protection of women and girls from violence,⁵⁹ although these results fell short of objectives.⁶⁰ One of the reasons for this poor performance was the deterioration of the security situation in the Pool region since 2016. This jeopardized any gains made, since thousands of people fled their villages and are living in precarious conditions. Even so, the programme did help to strengthen the capacity of existing community organizations, and create new ones, to develop livelihoods of their members and help them to access microcredit.⁶¹ Partnerships

59 1,674 pupils attending nine schools in three communities received support in the form of school kits; 120 young people attended a holiday camp; 3,505 people took part in awareness and outreach activities on violence against women and girls.

60 The programme planned to support 4,000 IGA beneficiaries by training them in the fields of agroforestry, stock-breeding and fishing; 70,000 people from target communities were to gain access to drinking water and basic health services, and the schooling conditions of 4,500 pupils were to be improved.

61 17 cooperatives and community organizations and 12 woodworking/cabinetmaking workshops were supported or newly created; 730 hours of training were delivered in the areas of market gardening, fish farming, pork and poultry rearing and organic farming, as well as on compliance with environmental standards; 4,723 m² of ponds were built and 11 ponds were restored; community microcredit networks were set up.

were forged with other United Nations agencies, including UNFPA, on gender issues.⁶²

The main constraint was the issue of ownership. Most beneficiaries preferred the emergency humanitarian approach that limited their responsibility and kept them in a situation of eternal assistance. Inadequate rural roads and tracks for the movement of products also limited the impact of projects in the agricultural sector. Moreover, devolved and decentralized public services seemed little involved and, consequently, did not provide the expected follow-up.

UNDP has heavily committed to decentralization. Its support has been relatively successful and reached conclusion in the Pool region, unlike most other departments. Participatory diagnostic exercises were conducted in the five districts of Pool, and the Departmental Development Plan (PDD) was developed and approved, serving as a basis for the formulation and implementation of a number of projects. The community project to support at-risk groups affected by conflict, jointly executed by UNDP and IFAD, was derived from the PDD.

Since 2016, all humanitarian interventions in the Pool region have been suspended. Following a request from the Congolese Government to the United Nations in June 2017 to assist displaced populations of the Pool region, a mission was launched under UNDP supervision to assess the humanitarian situation and needs.

2.5 THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO CONSIDERATION OF GENDER ISSUES

Background: In the Republic of the Congo, women represent 70 per cent of the agricultural

workforce, and undertake 60 – 80 per cent of food production and 100 per cent of artisanal processing of agricultural products. Despite significant progress made in recent years in terms of access to decision-making positions, women remain under-represented in the three branches of power – the executive,⁶³ the legislative⁶⁴ and the judiciary. The Congo is among the lowest-ranked countries for representation of women in decision-making posts and elected bodies (172nd of 193). Furthermore, recent studies reveal a feminization of poverty, due to weak economic power, and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and many other diseases.

One of the main challenges that the country faces is employment of young people under 20, who account for more than half the population of the Congo. The youth unemployment rate (using the ILO definition) is 25 per cent, as opposed to 16 per cent for the whole active population, making it three times as high as that of unemployed people aged 30 to 49 and 4.6 times as high as people aged over 50 years.⁶⁵ Two main causes explain this phenomenon:

1. The loss of State sovereignty in the education and employment of young people due to the austerity measures of the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, which limited recruitment to public services and introduced staffing reductions and privatization of state-owned enterprises, and drove the State to gradually disengage from its missions of education and the integration of young people into the job market;
2. The mismatch between the needs of the labour-market and education and training provision.

62 10,000 women and young people associated with and affected by conflict were targeted in 7 regions.

63 Since 1957, only 18 women have been ministers, out of a total of 340 (<http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201511070277.html>).

64 Further to the elections of July 2012, the National Assembly has had 7.54 per cent women members, that is, 10 out of 136 seats; the Senate has 19.4 per cent women. (<http://www.ipu.org/wmnf/classif.htm>).

65 Source: Central Africa Information Agency (ADIAC): «Emploi des jeunes ou le défi du chômage de masse au Congo», 15 July 2015.

To meet these challenges the Ministry for the Promotion and Integration of Women in Development committed, in 2002, to establish a strategic policy framework for national actions to promote gender equality and equity. This commitment also reflects the desire of the Government to harmonize the national vision with sub-regional, regional and global commitments. In 2010, the Congolese Government also developed a National Employment Policy to improve the employability of the working age population. This policy was technically validated in 2012.

UNDP strategy: During the period from 2009 to 2017, UNDP committed to mainstream gender issues in every economic sector of the Congo in all its interventions and, from 2015, within its country office. Specifically, gender was to be mainstreamed in reference frameworks and sectoral policies, especially those relating to the sustainable management of the environment. The goal was to conduct studies and issue publications related to gender issues, to promote income-generating activities and the creation of local microenterprises to improve the income and autonomy of women and young people, and to support the development of microfinance. Interventions were also to be carried out to increase the participation of women and young people in politics and, through the creation or strengthening of community organizations, to enable them to express their opinions and participate in village-level decision-making. Lastly, UNDP set itself the goal of supporting the reduction of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, including that of women and girls, providing education, awareness and legal and economic support through departmental prevention centres.

2.5.1 RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH UNDP SUPPORT AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACT

The most successful results were observed in the increased participation of women candidates to the parliamentary elections of 2012. An awareness and civic education campaign, including eight conferences on democracy and citizenship, was organized nationwide to reach out to

women, young people, people living with disabilities and indigenous peoples, who also received leadership training with UNDP support.

In addition, an amendment to the electoral law of 2014 allowed an increase in women representatives among political parties' election candidates, from 15 to 30 per cent, and integrated parity for the first time in the Constitution. Following the 2015 revision, article 17 states that "The Law guarantees parity and ensures both the promotion and the representation of women in all political, electoral and administrative functions". This progress, pending adoption of the law on parity, was achieved thanks to continuous advocacy by UNDP.

Another convincing result was the establishment in 2015 of the Congolese Youth Volunteer Corps, which aims to enrol 1,000 young volunteer teachers in the various districts of the country to improve access to education. UNDP, UNFPA, the UNV programme and France Volontaire have provided technical support in terms of training, strategic direction and programme management. To guarantee the sustainability of this initiative, a US\$3.5 million trust fund has been set up, the resources for which come principally from the Congolese Government, but also from other partners.

In 2016 UNDP support made it possible to revise and update the National Gender Policy, together with an action plan for 2017 to 2021. However, this plan is struggling to be implemented due to budget constraints of the Congolese Government. In addition, until 2014, the institution responsible for the promotion of women and the integration of women into development benefited from a considerable contribution in the form of advice and almost daily support from the UNDP country office gender focal point. More recently, UNDP supported the Ministry in training 150 women candidates for the parliamentary and local elections of July 2017.

UNDP also contributed to the inclusion of issues related to youth employment in the DSCERP. It

supported the review of the National Employment Policy, advocating for specific programmes such as community work for young people, self-employment and the creation of microenterprises, rural employment development and careers guidance in schools. With regard to results linked to UNDP support, some 2,192 jobs for young people were created between 2012 and 2017, 1,300 of which benefited 350 at-risk girls who became entrepreneurs. Two ministries, one responsible for the promotion of women and the other for civic education and young people, received capacity-building on strategic planning and results-based management.

There has been less progress on gender mainstreaming at sectoral level. Although overall the different ministries do have gender focal points trained by UNDP, gender is not yet systematically considered, except in the case of field interventions which sometimes include gender in income generation activities, information and outreach components. It is noteworthy that one of the strengths of the national decentralization policy, developed in 2017 with UNDP support, is the extent to which gender is mainstreamed in local development actions. As yet, however, no ministry, and few on-going projects, have gender-sensitive budgets, and statistics in reports are not systematically disaggregated by sex.

On the ground, and in sites visited by the evaluation team, some of the interventions implemented achieved their objectives, but only temporarily since benefits were not sustained. This was the case of projects supported by UNDP to improve women's living conditions, reduce their workloads and reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Equipment such as electricity generators, fufu mills and kneaders were distributed to the women of Etoro and Obaba, but these are not now in use. In addition, the electrical installations at Tandou Bizenzé and Tandou Mboma are not working optimally.

The health committees did not successfully implement preventive methods for the fight against HIV/AIDS, because of a lack of train-

ing of those responsible and insufficient support from the health districts. This also occurred with the improved cookstoves introduced by UNDP within the Women and Energy project. Though the stoves were very successful with their users, who could spend less time cooking, production did not meet demand because the association taking the project forward had no marketing, sales or funding support. UNDP also supported several young former combatants and other vulnerable community members to develop IGAs and trained them in trades and entrepreneurship to facilitate their social reintegration. With UNDP support, two Songhai Centres and three education, training and apprenticeship centres were created to receive them and help them set up in business. In all these initiatives, the female population was particularly targeted for help in cash or in kind (seed, fertilizer, agricultural equipment).

In the Pool region, UNDP took preventive action and was proactive in establishing an initiative to counter the radicalization of young people, with a sizeable programme with a US\$1.5 million budget set up in 2016, financed by Japan and UNDP. Thirty per cent of the young people trained in different trades and entrepreneurship, and 30 per cent of those currently benefiting from help with their professional integration, are girls. Similarly, the schedule of radio programmes for young people created under this programme includes programmes specifically aimed at the female audience, but which could be of interest to both sexes. Half of the radio presenters are female. In addition, programmes specifically aimed at women were made as part of the community radio programming, especially in Kinkala.

At the community level, UNDP encouraged management and development committees to include women as members, especially at the executive office level, and strengthened their decision-making capacity. However, cultural obstacles persist that hamper women's and girls' development, and insufficient ownership of gender issues by national actors, along with financial constraints, have limited the impact of UNDP interventions during this period.

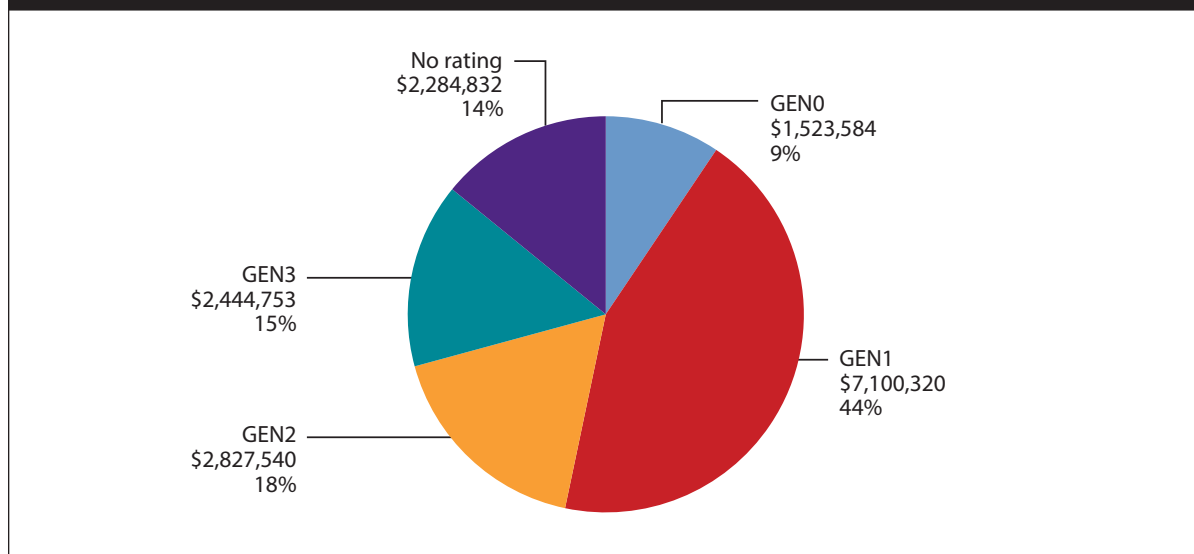
Recently, the UNDP country office has been making major efforts in gender mainstreaming, with the support of a United Nations Volunteer. A self-assessment was conducted in 2015, further to which the country office committed to prepare and implement an action plan to achieve Gender Equality Seal certification by the end of 2017. The evaluation team observed that advocacy on gender issues was conducted continuously and at all levels, and that significant efforts were being made to take these issues into consideration in newly developed projects. Programme officers are required to spend 30 per cent of their time on gender issues and this is monitored by UNDP senior management during individual annual performance reviews. These measures are designed to overcome the absence of a post of manager in charge of issues related to gender equality and HIV/AIDS, which was removed during the restructuring of the country office in 2014, and to increase the proportion of projects that contribute to gender equality.

Over the period 2009 to 2015 only one third (33 per cent) of programme expenses concerned projects that significantly integrated gender (Figure 1). Projects classified as GEN0 and GEN1,

which, respectively, do not contribute to gender equality or contribute to it to a limited extent, form the majority at 53 per cent. Around 14 per cent of spending corresponds to projects that had not been subject to assessment. Projects with gender equality as their main goal (GEN3) only represented 15 per cent of spending during this period. It is, however, important to note that in 2016, a project specifically related to gender issues was set up precisely to reflect the strategic thinking of the country office.

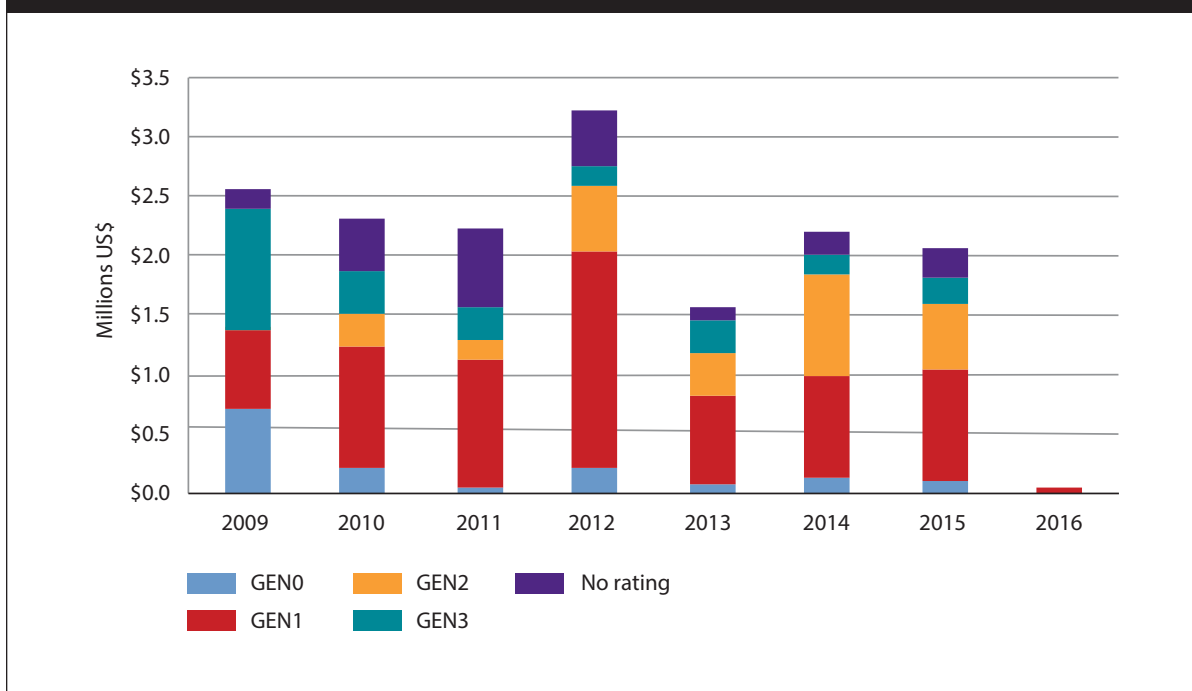
The evaluation team also found that the proportion of funds exclusively dedicated to gender equality programming fell significantly over the period (Figure 2). Analysis of the evolution of the GEN3 gender indicator since 2009 shows two distinct phases: a 60 per cent fall in spending from 2009 to 2010, then a slighter fall, then fluctuating spending between 2011 and 2015. With regard to projects attaching significant or principal importance to gender (GEN2 and GEN3), a definite improvement can be seen from 2012, with a 55 per cent increase in spending. Even so, for 2016 the country office only met 38 per cent of gender indicators, which explains the weakness of the data and the amount spent for that year.⁶⁶

Figure 1. Programme spending by gender equality indicator, 2009-2016



⁶⁶ Source: Interview with the UNDP Congo country office team, February 2017.

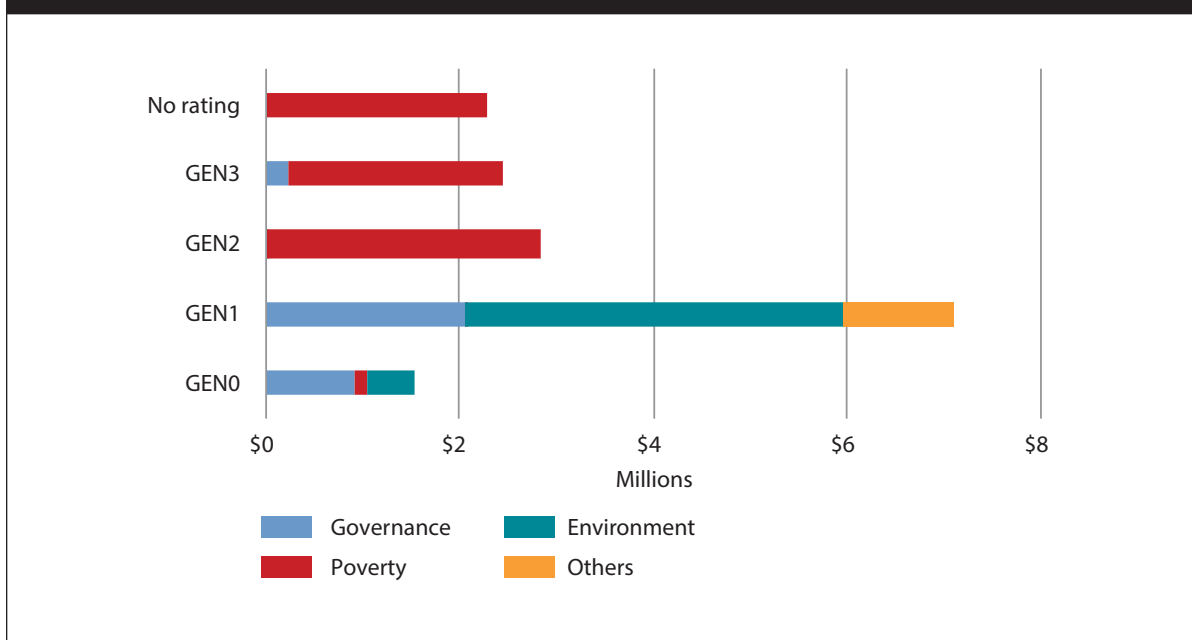
Figure 2. Programme spending by gender equality indicator and year, 2009-2016



Projects which pay significant attention to gender issues are mostly within the poverty reduction area. Analysis of spending by gender indicator and thematic area shows that the great majority of projects (95 per cent) paying

significant attention to gender issues (GEN2 and GEN 3) form part of the poverty reduction area, followed by governance (5 per cent). Projects related to the environment are classified in GEN1 and GEN0.

Figure 3. Spending by gender equality indicator and programme area, 2009-2016



2.6 LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF IMPACTS BASED ON CPAP 2014-2018 INDICATORS

Annex 5 (available online) presents annual trends in country programme impact indicators from

2009 to 2013 and 2014 to 2018, as per the UNDP institutional planning system at the date of the evaluation. Following recommendations from the 2008 ADR, the country office updated the indicators, as below:

Table 3. Monitoring of CPAP indicators 2014-2018		
No.	Indicator	Level achieved
Impact 1: By 2018, electoral processes will be conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner.		
1.1.1	Percentage of Congolese people (disaggregated into women, young people, elderly people, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples) who view the elections as free, fair, credible and transparent.	No data, as no perception survey has been conducted to date.
1.1.2	Increased participation rate in elections.	The participation rate in the last presidential election was 68.92 per cent, against 40 per cent for the municipal and local elections of 2014.
1.1.3	Number of challenges ruled admissible and considered by the institutions responsible for electoral disputes.	One appeal to the Constitutional Court registered the day after the presidential election. 52 appeals after the parliamentary elections of 2017, against 72 after those of 2012.
1.2.1	Number of measures taken to strengthen the operation of institutions.	One strengthening case brought to the Higher Council of Freedom of Communication on media monitoring.
1.2.2	The National State Reform Plan (PNRE) is validated and implementation has begun.	The PNRE is undergoing validation.
1.2.3	Number of ministries that apply administrative procedures.	Information for this indicator depends on validation of the PNRE.
Impact 2: By 2018, departmental councils and communities will assume responsibility for local development.		
2.3.1	Percentage of local development plan (LDP) activities implemented.	Four LDPs developed, of which two validated and partially implemented due to new orientation of decentralization policy.
2.3.2	Number of texts developed and implemented.	Data not available. Only the Pool LDP is well advanced.
2.3.3	Number of regions with LDP that incorporates gender and is in operation.	The 4 LDPs incorporate gender.
Impact 3: By 2018, the most vulnerable populations will be using quality basic social services (education, health, food security, water and sanitation), including appropriate financial services.		
3.1.1	Rate of access to appropriate financial services in target areas.	Data not available.
3.1.2	Multidimensional poverty index in the target areas.	Document to improve living conditions of populations developed, but not implemented due to lack of funding.
3.1.3	Number of planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation tools validated with UNDP support.	The country office assists the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Regional Integration in strengthening the planning system – programme budget-monitoring and evaluation. Validation of these tools early December 2017.

(continued)

(continued)

Impact 5: By 2018, government institutions and the population have implemented sustainable environmental policy measures integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change. Particular attention is paid to the active participation of women in the programmes.		
5.1.1	Percentage of households with access to at least one renewable energy source in target areas.	No data available.
5.2.1	Number of artisan cooperatives operating in target areas.	7
5.2.2	30 per cent of artisans are equipped and trained and are members of an artisan cooperative in the target areas.	15 per cent to date.
5.3.1	Number of sectoral policies, strategies and programmes developed or revised that take the principles of sustainable development into account and that are accompanied by an action plan and budget for their implementation.	5
5.3.2	Number of projects funded by the Youth Support Fund.	There is an enterprise and trade training project running in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie under the Ministry of Youth.
5.4.1	Number of government agencies and relevant CSOs that have received capacity-building for the management of protected areas.	15
5.4.2	Percentage of population in target areas made aware of and contributing to reducing threats to biodiversity and maintaining the carbon sink function.	35 per cent
5.5.1	Number of sectoral policies integrating crisis and disaster prevention and management developed or revised and implemented with UNDP support.	One crisis management strategy has been developed and is being validated.
5.5.2	Number of notes taken and operational disaster prevention and management units in operation.	Effect of strategy under validation.

Source: UNDP country office in Congo monitoring and evaluation

Examination of the country programmes for 2009-2013 and 2014-2018 shows that the recommendations made in the ADR of 2008 have been the subject of various follow-up actions:

- The country office has focused its programme on governance, poverty reduction and community development, and the environment and sustainable development with a regional approach. The gender dimension has been addressed transversely. The office has also disengaged from interventions related to the post-conflict period.
- The recommendation on the need to consider the consolidation of peace has been accepted and included in the governance programme. UNDP has concentrated its interventions on advocacy initiatives with the

Government and on support for local-level community projects.

- With regard to shared costs, the UNDP office has initiated negotiations for the Government to increase its contribution to match that of UNDP.
- The country office has focused on building the capacities of institutions, communities and individuals, looking to the sustainability of projects.
- Throughout the two cycles, UNDP has sought to improve coordination between technical and financial partners (TFPs). The establishment of results groups to which all the TFPs belong has improved the operation and effectiveness of project review and steering committees.

On the other hand:

- It was not possible to evaluate the Centre for Project Execution and Support because it has been dissolved. Efforts have been made to improve programme execution.
- Regarding formulation, this recommendation has been only partially implemented during the two programming cycles, and the UNDP strategy has not been clearly defined. Impacts (desired changes) are not always clearly expressed and there is confusion between impacts and outputs.
- UNDP has encouraged national ownership throughout the second cycle but has not succeeded in enforcing a completion (exit) strategy.
- UNDP and other United Nations System agencies have worked in a coordinated manner to open offices outside Brazzaville when this was necessary to support community projects, and one office has been maintained in Pointe-Noire.

2.7 IMPACT OF THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Given the specific context of the Republic of the Congo during the period under review, the evaluation included a detailed presentation of the main economic, political and social factors that might affect development results, especially those supported by UNDP.

2.7.1 ECONOMIC FACTORS

The economic crisis that has held sway since 2015, further to the drastic fall in the world oil price, has had a significant impact on budget receipts in the Congo, which fell from 4,000 billion FCFA in 2014 to 2,800 billion FCFA in 2017. During this period, government policy was primarily to invest in infrastructure such as roads, hydroelectric dams and bridges. A new National Development Plan has been in preparation since early 2017.

The Congo has experienced alternating periods of peace and conflict since the late 1990s, which have had a major impact on the economic, social and political development of the country. The war that raged in the country from 1998 to 2000 dealt a heavy blow to the economy, but a lengthy period of relative peace (2000 to 2016) has made it possible to reverse much of the impact. During this period, the Congolese economy experienced strong growth, of 5 per cent on average, but this was mainly dependent on the oil sector and on a peace that remains fragile.

Apart from the oil sector, other drivers of Congolese growth are wood, transport and communication, and construction and public works. The current drop in oil prices has reduced the share of the oil sector, though it still represents more than half of the Congolese economy. The structure of exports from the Congo reflects that of production, and consequently oil exports (about 80 per cent of total exports between 2000 and 2014) are placed well ahead of wood (6 per cent) in second position.

Lack of diversification in the Congolese economy has underpinned its poor reaction to the fall in the price of oil. This weak resilience is also explained by the weakness of political and social institutions, such as the State, political parties and CSOs, and the private sector. The weakness of public institutions is manifested in high levels of corruption, which has repercussions on democratic governance (transparency of elections), on the management of public finances and on the implementation of policies and strategies to reduce poverty and protect the environment.

2.7.2 POLITICAL FACTORS

From 2009 to 2013, the Congo made notable progress in the consolidation of peace and security. The 2009 and 2012 elections were held in a peaceful environment and did not lead to violence, despite some opposition parties challenging the results.

However, since 2016 and further to the presidential election, the climate worsened and cul-

minated in conflict in the Pool region. Due to clashes between armed groups and the Congolese armed forces and security forces, this region is cut-off from the rest of the country and is experiencing the progressive destruction of its rural economy. There is practically no movement of people and goods there. The train linking Pointe-Noire to Brazzaville no longer runs, and populations are moving to Brazzaville or neighbouring regions (Bouenza and Plateaux) to seek refuge. This situation is leading to an exacerbation of poverty for the entire population of the region.

The consequences of this situation are economic and social on the one hand, and political on the other. They are not confined to this region and extend throughout the nation, leading to the break-up of the social fabric, which was re-established with difficulty between 2000 and 2016.

The new Constitution adopted in 2016 led to several institutional reforms, including the establishment of a government led by a Prime Minister. This new measure makes it easier to coordinate government action.

2.7.3 SOCIAL FACTORS

Measures taken under the PRSP and DSCERP lowered the poverty rate, from 50.7 per cent in 2005 to 46.4 per cent in 2011. Similarly, there was a decrease in the high rates of child and maternal mortality. According to the 2016 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, conducted by the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Regional Integration in collaboration with UNICEF, the child mortality rate fell from 36 per cent to 17 per cent. Regarding education, gross enrolment ratios in the primary phase experienced a significant increase, which enabled the Congo to achieve the MDG on primary education for all. Household vulnerability remains high, as does youth unemployment, estimated at 42.2 per cent

(2015). The Human Development Index (0.592) places the Congo in 135th place out of 188 countries in 2015. The magnitude of inequalities persists, with a Gini index of 0.47 (UNDP, 2013). Gender inequality is similarly high with an estimated index of 0.617 in 2012 (NHDR 2015, UNDP).

In this context, one of the major factors to have influenced UNDP results is a change in budgetary resources. During the period from 2009 to 2013 there were considerable resources, due to the conjunction of two factors: high oil price and increased production. Government resources contributed significantly to funding UNDP activities. From 2014 to 2017, State budgetary resources experienced a major fall. The budget deficit reached 17 per cent of GDP in 2016, which had a serious negative impact on the execution of the provisions of the joint Government and UNDP programme (2014 to 2018) and has prevented the disbursement of counterpart funds since 2015.

Another context-related factor is the lack of responsiveness by national actors to UNDP proposals to support the electoral processes of 2016 and 2017. These elections were considered very sensitive, prompting the Government to conduct them without the collaboration of development partners as had happened previously. The appearance of political tensions after the amendment of the Constitution and violence in the Pool region were perceived to be, and treated as, matters falling exclusively within national sovereignty.

Finally, weak national capacity for the formulation, strategic planning and implementation of projects has had significant repercussions. In this context, UNDP tended to substitute national institutions and carry out work in their place, with consequent impacts on the sustainability and ownership of projects.

Chapter 3

THE QUALITY OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the quality of the UNDP contribution to development in the Republic of the Congo, using the criteria of relevance, efficiency and the sustainability of results to which UNDP has contributed.

3.1 RELEVANCE

This section examines the extent to which UNDP interventions were aligned with national priorities and the UNDP mandate, and whether they were consistent with human development needs in the country. The relevance of UNDP approaches and strategies to achieve the desired impact is also analysed.

Overall, UNDP interventions have been very relevant as they are aligned with national priorities, the needs of communities, the organization's mandate and the priorities of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017, as well as with the MDGs and other international commitments. The continuity of themes over both programming cycles should also be noted.

The activities carried out by UNDP to promote democratic governance are of great relevance, because they correspond to needs expressed by the Government, especially during the period from 2009 to 2013. It was the Government itself which called on UNDP, in relation to its need to organize peaceful elections, and this support proved useful and was well appreciated by national actors. The expected impact of the UNDP on governance was formulated in alignment with the first pillar of Book One of the NDP (DSCERP), which is devoted to "The strengthening of governance".

Regarding poverty reduction, UNDP interventions in the period from 2009 to 2013 were

aligned with the national priority, set out in the PRSP, to improve people's access to basic social services. The expected impact of the 2009-2013 programme was: "By 2013, populations will have equitable access to quality social services in the health, education, water and sanitation, social protection and HIV/AIDS sectors, and will use them." The interventions planned in the 2014-2018 programming cycle were also aligned with national priorities set out in the NDP, deepening interventions of the previous period as a logical continuation of the PRSP. Interventions considered the needs of communities, especially those from vulnerable groups (women, young people and indigenous peoples). All of these interventions are aligned with the organization's mandate.

On the environment, UNDP action mainly pertained to themes 2 and 3 of the PRSP for the 2009 to 2013 cycle. Interventions focused on "the promotion of strong, sustainable and equitable growth" in the energy, forests and mining sectors and "the promotion of rights, sustainable human development and improved living conditions", with the main goal of guaranteeing protection of natural heritage and the sustainable use of biological diversity. UNDP is also positioned in axis 1 of the NDP, particularly through the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programme goals to reduce the illegal circulation of small arms and reintegrate former combatants and other young people. Over the period from 2014 to 2018, UNDP is aligned to axis 5 of the NDP, "Balanced, sustainable and lasting development", and especially "The protection of the environment" and "The fight against climate change", in support of objectives prioritized by the Congolese Government. UNDP interventions on the ground also helped meet the needs of communities and benefited various vulnerable groups of society (women, young people, persons with disabilities). Lastly, all

UNDP interventions were in accordance with its mandate and the priorities in its strategic plan for the period, as well as with the MDGs and international environmental objectives.

The UNDP approach has been characterized by continuity in its interventions from one cycle to the next, though with some refocusing of the programme during the second cycle into themes considered particularly strategic and priority for the Government, including diversification of the economy and women and youth. This increased the likelihood of receiving government funding, alongside the adoption of an 'opportunistic' strategy targeted at mobilising available financial resources such as GEF, Green Climate Fund and others.

Following the restructuring of the country office and the abolition of a post dedicated to the poverty programme, the portfolio of projects related to poverty reduction and the environment were brought together under a single programme officer. This makes sense in the Congolese context. However, there has not yet been a formal revision of the country office strategy to emphasize cross-cutting issues in the two components. Although the current trend indicates a greater number of projects focused on the reduction of poverty and the environmental footprint, issues related to poverty at macroeconomic level now come under the responsibility of the chief economist.

3.2 EFFICIENCY

This section analyses the efficiency of UNDP interventions in terms of the use of human and financial resources. It will firstly analyse programme efficiency, to answer the following questions:

- Have UNDP resources been focused on interventions that would produce meaningful results?
- Has UNDP concentrated its resources to intensify impact?
- Has UNDP pursued synergies to reduce costs and strengthen results?

- Has UNDP established effective partnerships?

Then, the evaluation will examine the level of efficiency of the organization (management and operational efficiency) to produce the expected results.

3.2.1 PROGRAMMATIC EFFICIENCY

In the area of democratic governance, the amounts committed have been relatively large. This was due to a partnership with the European Union (EU), which entrusted UNDP with the management of financial resources. Nonetheless, given the political context, it was not possible to carry out all of the planned actions, despite UNDP offers of support to which the Congolese Government did not respond. According to information gathered during interviews with UNDP experts, the European Union were to provide an additional 90,000 Euros in 2014, but it did not pursue its financial support due to the postponement of local elections, and UNDP had to return US\$1,313 in unspent funds that had been intended for this purpose. This was probably a missed opportunity to contribute to this impact. On the other hand, UNDP did persuade USAID to allocate US\$65,551 that had not been used in 2013 to activities to promote the culture of democracy implemented in 2015.

Regarding poverty reduction projects, the resources allocated generally enabled satisfactory results to be achieved. For example, the construction and refurbishment of classrooms and integrated health centres were delivered on time and are used. These interventions were generally carried out in partnerships with the State, with other United Nations System agencies, with privately-owned companies or with NGOs. These partnerships helped to mobilize significant funds from the World Bank to leverage results. Furthermore, 78 per cent of UNDP interventions were implemented in a single locality, which shows a positive tendency towards geographical concentration and greater programmatic efficiency.

In the area of the environment, resources were mostly allocated to production of diagnostic analyses and strategic planning tools and implementation of the associated action plans. However, these objectives appeared too ambitious in relation to the financial resources available and many of the action plans developed have not yet been implemented. The project portfolio for the 2009-2013 programming cycle included a multitude of scattered projects of different sizes. The programme was refocused for the following cycle, with greater emphasis on more structured projects which included both environment and poverty reduction elements. However, many projects started in the first cycle are still ongoing and require continued management, not always for reasons of capitalising on the gains of a first phase, but most often due to implementation delays related to budgetary constraints.

Overall, for the entire period, UNDP continues to be the main contributor through its own resources, which are on a downward trend since the Congo was classified as a 'middle-income country'. In 2016, the ratio of UNDP own resources to mobilized resources (resources that are not UNDP own funds) was around 52 per cent, that is, one dollar of own resources to

two dollars mobilized, all sources taken together. After UNDP, the Congolese Government has been by far the largest contributor over the period (2009-2015) (see Figure 4). On average, national counterpart funds represent 33 per cent of all resources, but this percentage masks significant fluctuations: these funds peaked in 2012 and 2013, reaching respectively 56 per cent and 72 per cent of mobilized resources, but then fell to 24 per cent in 2016. "Other" resources show a downward trend for the period under review.

The country office has clearly adapted its resource mobilization strategy to suit the level of national contributions. This approach has reached its limit, however, due to the great uncertainty that now hangs over the actual payment of contributions, which affects the smooth running of ongoing and planned projects. The decline in the country office's resources rightly constitutes a major concern, to which it has responded by developing a portfolio of GEF-funded projects and positioning itself as an accredited agency of the Green Climate Fund.

The country office has also established partnerships with other United Nations agencies to help ensure the effectiveness of its interven-

Figure 4. Evolution of country office spending by resource, 2009 to 2015

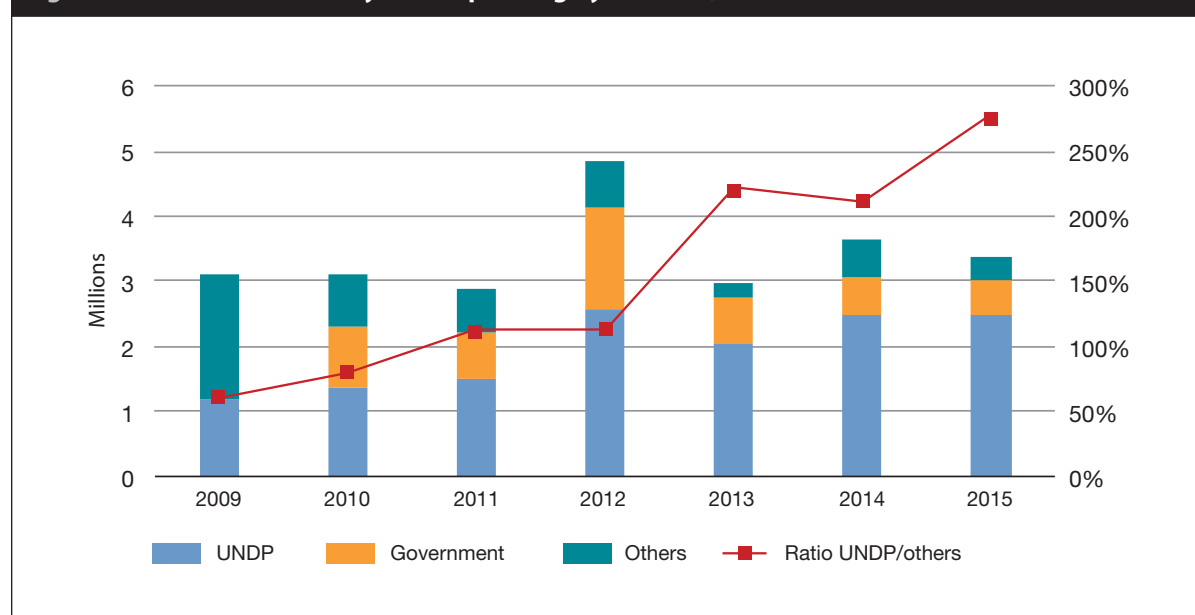
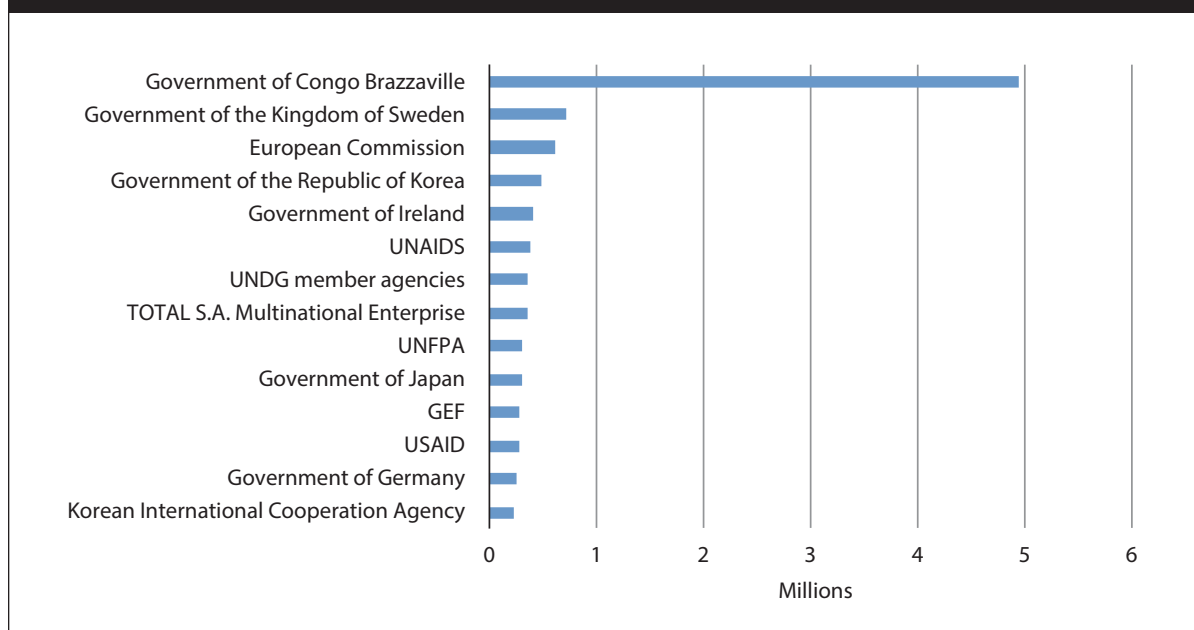


Figure 5. Programme spending by main contributor (except UNDP), 2009-2015



tions, at lower cost, in areas that are not directly within its competence. This has included collaboration with UNESCO to develop community radio stations, especially those directed at young people; with UNFPA to develop a diagnostic analysis as a basis for the next National Gender Policy; and with FAO to support IGAs in the agricultural sector. The establishment of the Congolese Youth Volunteer Corps is the result of a joint approach to the Ministry of Youth by UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV).

To compensate for loss of regular staff, the country office has turned to UNV, which has made five specialists available. These have been assigned to the areas of the environment, youth, communication and gender, while a volunteer doctor provides a medical presence. Two of the volunteers, one of whom is the UNV programme coordinator, carry out the roles of two posts that were abolished in the country office, the gender focal point and the communications officer. The United Nations volunteer responsible for youth is assisting the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education to establish a national volunteering programme.

In respect of South-South cooperation, the team noted the existence of decentralized cooperation initiatives with Mali and Burkina Faso in 2011, and Burkina Faso also contributed to the development and implementation of local development plans. In 2015, a sub-regional cooperation project with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Rwanda was launched to share experiences over land issues. Also, 18 young people received training in a Songhai in Benin dedicated to the management of agroindustrial productive activities. Also noteworthy is the active role of UNDP in regional cooperation for the promotion of cross-border participatory management and conservation of the natural resources of wetland areas (Lake Télé-Tumba) resulting in exchange of experiences between the countries involved and the establishment of management mechanisms and structures on both sides of the borders.

In the interests of effectiveness, the country office reduced the number of expected impacts from eight in the 2009-2013 programme, to four in the current cycle, while refocusing interventions on fewer themes. Nonetheless, the evaluation team found that monitoring of progress towards impacts could be improved. In the CPD 2014-

2018 results framework, some impacts have not been formulated in a realistic and pragmatic manner, and nor have the indicators. Efforts to reformulate these were made in the 2014–2018 CPAP which, with the annual work plans (AWPs), constitutes the programme road map. However, the quality of the indicators used is uneven. Most of them are difficult to measure, because they need significant resources such as national surveys to do so, or cannot be used to estimate the UNDP contribution to the expected change.

3.2.2 MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

This section analyses the internal organization and management of UNDP, in order to understand the level of efficiency of the UNDP organization to produce results.

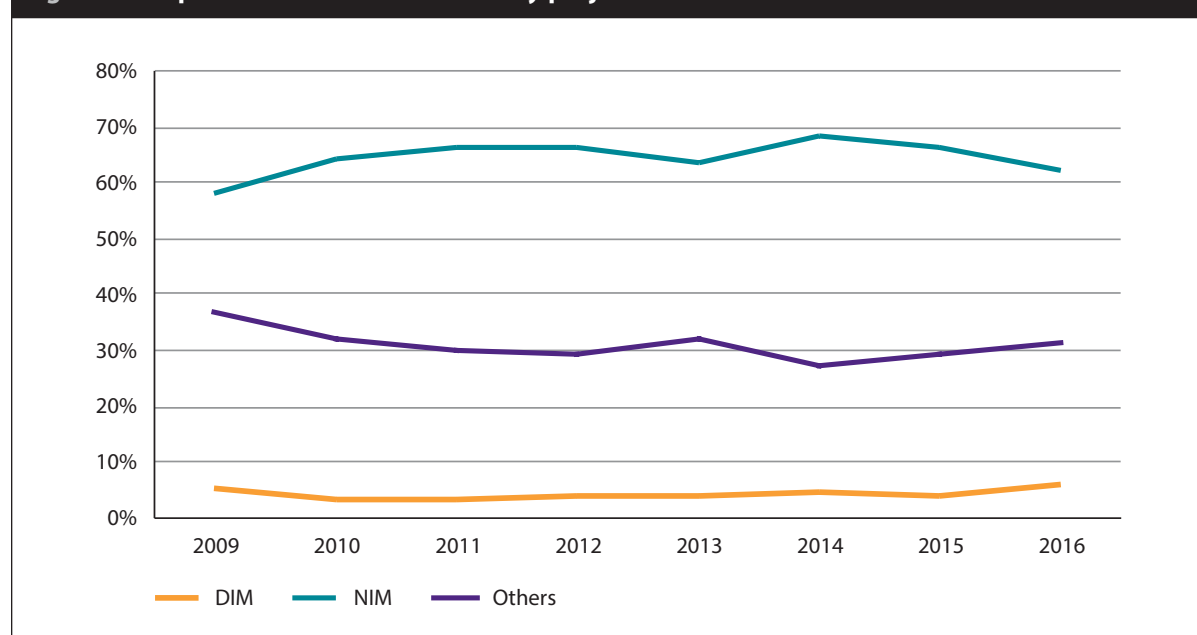
From 2009, the country office increasingly used the modality of national execution, and then, from 2015, the trend seemed to reverse. National partners appreciate this empowerment in the management of projects, which strengthens own-

ership. However, given the limited capacities of national institutions, in both human resources and procedures, the country office continued to invest very significantly in supporting the implementation of projects. In addition to delays and bureaucracy, this created an excessive workload for managers to validate and oversee compliance with procedures, to the detriment of more substantial contributions oriented towards consultancy and advocacy activities.

The ratio of management costs to total programme costs,⁶⁷ which was 11 per cent in 2011, rose sharply over the following years. It has now been reduced back down to 24 per cent, thanks to an improved level of disbursements, but still requires urgent attention and action.

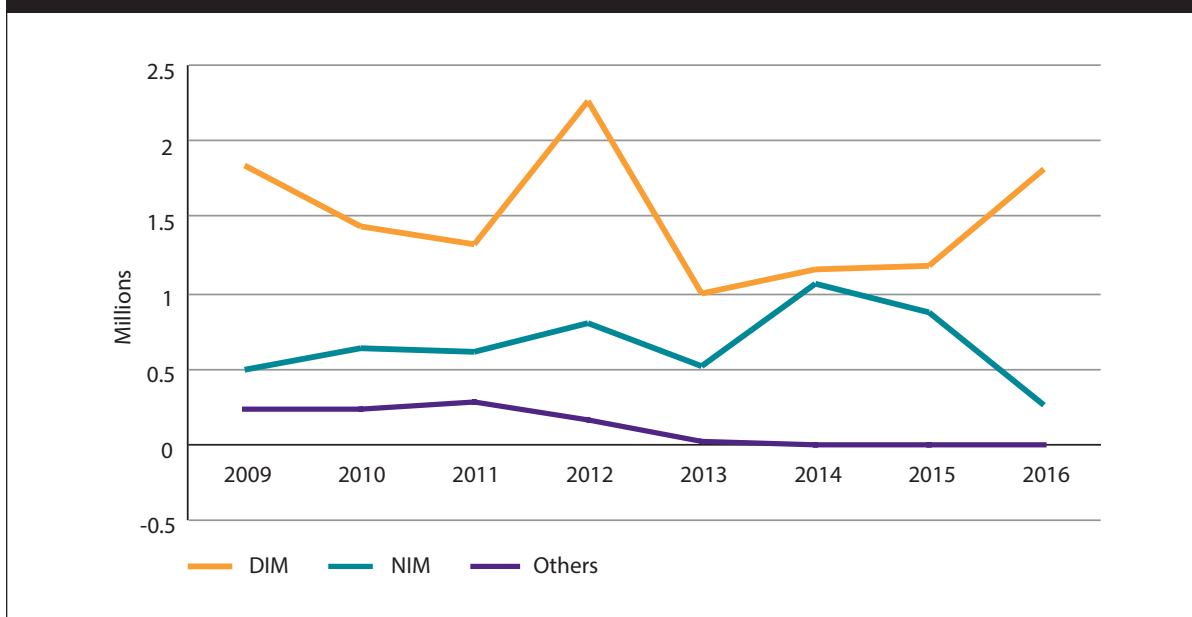
Significant delays were found in the implementation of most projects. Some AWP were signed late, but it was mainly budget constraints (the Government stopped paying its full financial contribution from 2014 onwards) that seriously affected project implementation and led to delays in planned activities.

Figure 6. Proportion of annual NIM/DIM by project



⁶⁷ A ratio measuring operational efficiency. (A ratio of >15% calls for urgent attention/action; if it is from 12% to 15%, action is required, and if it is <12% the situation is well under control.)

Figure 7. Proportion of annual NIM/DIM by quantity of funds



3.3 SUSTAINABILITY

This section examines the sustainability, actual or potential, of the results to which UNDP contributed.

Overall, the sustainability of UNDP interventions is problematic due to weak ownership of results by national institutional actors and by beneficiaries on the ground.

Sustainability is one of the key objectives pursued by UNDP. It requires strong involvement by national actors and a transfer of knowledge and skills to national institutions so that they take ownership of actions and integrate them within their own objectives and planning systems. Sustainability requires UNDP to influence national actors to adopt international standard administrative procedures based on rigour, transparency, results-based management and prior research, as well as accountability and the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

In the area of democratic governance, the evidence clearly shows that the various elections held during the period from 2009 to 2017 did not lead to the same results in terms of security and

peace in the country. The good results achieved in 2009 and 2012 did not last and were replaced by conflict and violence in 2016. Thus, there was no capitalization on these results and no sustainability over time. This situation is a concern and requires a thorough analysis of the factors underlying this lack of sustainability.

Regarding the fight against poverty and follow-up to the MDGs, UNDP interventions have produced mixed results. Some have led to beneficiaries taking ownership of projects while others have not. Institutions that received UNDP support for developing strategy documents and other sectoral reports acquired skills that enabled them to pursue projects without ongoing UNDP support. Public institutions that received UNDP support to build their capacities for results-based management and medium-term expenditure framework budgeting are now conducting monitoring and budgeting activities without continued support from UNDP. It should be noted, however, that the sustainability of these achievements is open to question due to high staff turnover in these public institutions.

There are areas where ownership is inadequate, mainly community and local develop-

ment projects. For example, in the Millennium Villages the involvement of central, devolved and decentralized institutions is inadequate. This low involvement leads to a limited or non-existent transformational effect in the target areas, as beneficiaries do not adopt a productive attitude, but rather see the project as a social safety net. The impacts of interventions supported by UNDP in rural areas, where the incidence of poverty is high, have not lasted. Pilot income-generating activities, such as those attached to the schools in Madingo-Kayes, failed because the produce of the manioc plantations and farms, which were intended to be under community management, were ultimately privatized. The beneficiaries were not able to continue activities after UNDP disengaged. In Etoro and Obaba, funds from sales of produce grown in the community fields were kept by local leaders, demonstrating the weakness of producer control over the activity as a whole and the authoritarianism of village chiefs. This highlighted an absence of analysis of the social reality and structures on the ground.

In the area of environmental protection, the state bodies responsible for this sector are generally poorly endowed with expert human resources and materials and remain heavily dependent on UNDP support. Despite strenuous efforts by UNDP to build capacity, including delivering training and sharing expertise, the transfer and appropriation of knowledge at the institutional level was impeded by major staff changes (further to Cabinet reshuffles) and retirements that were not replaced.

On the ground, there have been weaknesses in approach which have failed to ensure the sustainability of the benefits produced. Risk analyses were not always thorough enough, especially regarding social dynamics and cultural practices, and most projects did not adopt a holistic approach to income-generation activities and exit strategies. For example, the improved cookstove promotion project did not adopt a value chain approach, and as such was not able to move on to a product marketing phase, even though there was a market with strong demand.

Chapter 4

THE STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP

This chapter presents a brief analysis of some cross-cutting aspects of the UNDP country programme in the Republic of the Congo, to assess its strategic positioning in the national context and its capacity to leverage its comparative advantages.

UNDP is considered an important partner and interlocutor whose brand is widely regarded as an international guarantor. It is appreciated for its presence in the country, especially in the regions, where it is often the only organization present, as well as for its timely ability to meet national needs and priorities, and for the mobilizing effect it has on many partner institutions.⁶⁸

UNDP, which hosts the Resident Coordinator role, is often seen as the gateway to the United Nations System and the coordinator for all the UN agencies. Its intrinsic technical contribution is, therefore, not always very visible, especially since it acts in complex areas such as governance. Sometimes the UNDP Deputy Representative is seen as the Deputy Coordinator of the United Nations System.

On the other hand, its ability to mobilize the expertise of specialized agencies (such as FAO, UNWTO, UNESCO or UNFPA) has been effective and appreciated, even if this was only at specific moments and if some considered it inadequate. The most obvious example is the decisive role UNDP played in the coordination of the United Nations System response to the human-

itarian disaster of the explosion of the Mpila ammunition depot on 4 March 2012.⁶⁹

Since 2013, UNDAF has been a joint programme, and UN agencies have been trying to develop more joint projects. There are still few joint projects, these being essentially on the three priority themes of gender, youth and indigenous peoples. This partnership process is still being built and, according to the relevant agencies, further efforts are needed to find synergies, coordination and cost-sharing, especially for coordination activities.

UNDP is still regarded by some as a donor, especially by populations benefiting from its operations, who expect it to mitigate the failures of the State. In many cases, beneficiary populations do not know that UNDP support is one-off and time-limited, mainly for demonstration purposes, or they have insufficient information in this regard.

Strategically, UNDP has considerable capacity for advocacy on various topics, such as governance, the promotion of peace, the SDGs, human rights and gender. During the two programme cycles reviewed, UNDP in the Congo has positioned itself on a sensitive issue (support for the electoral process) for which the conditions⁷⁰ for effective intervention were not met, particularly during the current cycle.

Many people attribute to UNDP a great capacity for facilitating political dialogue and expect it to

68 Numerous respondents told us that they had achieved results thanks to UNDP or that UNDP had helped them achieve results more easily and quickly.

69 Note the decisive role that UNDP played in the disaster linked to the explosion of a munitions depot in 2012, when it mobilised all the agencies (SLAM, UNMAG, OCHA, United Nations structures specialising in emergencies and clearing mined or contaminated areas), each of which lent their support to the Government.

70 A political context that is not open to advice on electoral governance in line with international standards.

take a stronger position, especially after the success of the dialogue and consultation organized in 2015 between the various parties in order to end the national crisis, and after its relief interventions in response to the humanitarian and security crisis in the Pool region. However, the perceptions of representatives of civil society, especially those from associations not considered traditional partners of UNDP,⁷¹ is that they are not called on enough or sufficiently associated with its activities.

Operationally, UNDP is recognized for its transparent and rigorous management and for having procedures that are more flexible and effective than those of the national partners who entrust it to manage their funds.

The contribution made by UNDP is recognized and appreciated for building capacity at national

and local levels to conduct in-depth diagnostics and develop strategic planning frameworks, and for the introduction of innovative approaches and tools. UNDP is particularly acknowledged for introducing the culture of results-based monitoring and evaluation, decentralized planning and income-generating activities, in response to the needs of communities. In the area of the environment, UNDP is well positioned in debates, but is mainly seen as an arm of the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund.

In terms of visibility, UNDP interventions are, for the most part, regularly covered by national media and presented on its own website. However, insufficient communication of the results achieved means that its contributions to the country's development are not always perceived at their true value.

71 Such as militant political associations in the field of human rights and democratic governance.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. During the two cycles from 2009 to 2013 and 2014 to 2018, all components of the UNDP country programme in the Congo were aligned with national priorities as stated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and then the National Development Plan (NDP). They partially met the needs of communities, and were consistent with the UNDP mandate. However, the country office strategy set itself very ambitious targets, especially for the area of governance, given the actual constraints of the country context.

In the areas of democratic governance, the reduction of inequalities and achieving the MDGs, preservation of the environment and gender, interventions (in the form of projects or advocacy initiatives) were aligned with the priorities of the Congolese Government and responded to its requests. On the ground, actions have responded to communities' needs, but quantitatively only partially due to their demonstrative character and to the enormous needs and expectations of the population. Interventions have promoted United Nations values and fit with the UNDP strategic plan for the period 2014 to 2017. However, the strategy adopted by UNDP was based on ambitious goals, and it has been difficult to adapt it to the constraints faced. This mismatch is especially noticeable in democratic governance, and particularly for the themes of electoral processes and decentralization. The formulation of objectives was unrealistic, and the proposed indicators give little information on the achievement of results.

Conclusion 2. Results in terms of strategic planning, local planning, results-based management, gender mainstreaming, project man-

agement and compliance with international environmental conventions are encouraging but have not yet led to significant changes in the behaviours and practices of the country's institutions.

Significant results were achieved in the areas of strategic planning, local planning, results-based management, gender mainstreaming, project management and compliance with international environmental conventions. Some had an innovative nature: in local development, such as the participatory approach to departmental planning; and in the fight against inequality as with the Millennium Villages. However, interviews with beneficiaries and field visits by the evaluation team suggested that these results have not yet generated significant changes in the behaviours and practices of the country's institutions. Effectiveness was short-lived, and many results have not stood the test of time.

Conclusion 3. Programme efficiency is satisfactory in view of the partnerships established and an emerging refocus of interventions. Overall operational efficiency is moderately satisfactory due to delays in availability of resources, in implementation, and in choosing service providers in the field.

Partnerships enabled UNDP to capture significant external resources and diversify sources of funding. Similarly, the mobilization of other United Nations System agencies with relevant expertise enabled UNDP to improve the efficiency of its interventions. The number of small projects under US\$100,000 fell gradually between the first and second cycles, giving way to projects with higher budgets, thus consolidating programme efficiency by reducing dispersion.

On the other hand, overall operational efficiency is considered only moderately satisfactory due to delays in making resources available, in the implementation of projects, and in choosing service providers in the field. During the second programming cycle, UNDP suffered from the Government's budget crisis and the restriction or non-disbursement of funding planned in joint AWP's signed with ministries. From 2014, UNDP received no funds from the Government and this situation had a negative impact on the implementation of projects and activities, several of which had to be abandoned. Operational efficiency was also limited by the execution of some project activities that did not align with UNDP expertise, such as the construction of buildings or the execution of agricultural and pastoral activities.

Conclusion 4. Sustainability is very unlikely as national ownership is unsatisfactory overall, due to the high turnover of administrative managers, a lack of skills transfer and a low-level of accountability in institutions, and, in the field, the lack of prior risk analyses, monitoring and exit strategies.

In most cases, institutional ownership of achievements was non-existent, with rare exceptions where it was partial. This can be explained by the high turnover of senior managers during ministerial reshuffles or by departures or retirements that were not replaced, as in the case of the General Directorate of the Environment. Overall, individual capacities were strengthened, but this only translated to institutional level to a limited extent.

In the areas of electoral governance, institutional governance, local government and the reduction of inequalities, project gains are low. The sustainability of achievements was temporary, vanishing two or three years after the completion of projects, either because resources had dried up or because the opportunities for beneficiaries to sustain capacities were very limited. State institutions and civil society organizations were not able to take over and continue projects in an independent, responsible manner. The sustainability of

gains is a major problem in UNDP cooperation with the Government and local communities.

Conclusion 5. UNDP has assiduously advocated gender issues with encouraging results, especially in governance, which are likely to lead to noticeable changes in the medium term. However, these changes remain modest due to insufficient ownership and cultural resistance.

Continuous advocacy by UNDP has enabled advances towards equality to be made in the areas of governance and gender mainstreaming, which is now a cross-cutting issue. However, national ownership remains limited and significant action has not resulted. Moreover, given the limited resources available, the ministry responsible for women struggles to prevail in the face of more autonomous ministries.

Conclusion 6. In terms of strategic positioning, UNDP brings United Nations branding, guaranteeing its neutrality and the promotion of UN values, as well as its capacity for dialogue and coordination. UNDP is often seen as interchangeable with the UN or is associated with United Nations coordination.

Interviews with representatives of public administrations, civil society and the private sector clearly highlighted this general perception of UNDP, which gives it one of its most important comparative advantages.

Neutrality is an asset that enables UNDP to play an active role in facilitating dialogue between political parties, especially the incumbent and opposition parties, and to intervene in the resolution of conflicts. The added value of UNDP also lies in its capacity to listen to and maintain dialogue with all stakeholders and to enable them to share their knowledge and experiences and join forces, thus multiplying action. In inviting stakeholders to come together and discuss, UNDP strengthens their complementarity.

UNDP is often perceived as *being* the United Nations or is associated with the UN System

coordination. Many people can't tell the difference between the United Nations System – which comprises several unique agencies – and UNDP, which has a specific mandate and role. At times the Deputy Representative of UNDP has been confused with the Deputy Coordinator of the United Nations System, like the Resident Representative who plays both roles. However, this confusion can be an advantage when it comes to mobilizing the complementary expertise of different agencies or uniting to present a common cause to Government decision makers.

Conclusion 7. UNDP results are often not very visible due in part to the nature of its interventions, which can be demonstrative (pilot projects) or not very tangible (such as advocacy and advisory support), and in part to a low communications profile. Moreover, it is still often perceived as a donor, which raises unrealistic expectations and frustrations.

The achievements and innovations of UNDP in cooperation with stakeholders in the Congo are not given sufficient publicity and are consequently little known to the public, beyond direct beneficiaries, or even to other development partners. While the media may talk in general about project activities, such as workshops and conferences, information on the subsequent successes garnered and changes made is practically non-existent. Representatives of ministries, civil society and grassroots communities see UNDP as an institution that supplies financial resources, like other international funding institutions. This image, contrary to reality, raises high expectations that UNDP cannot satisfy, which can create disappointment.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. UNDP should, in its next country programme, retain the promotion and consolidation of peace as a central axis of its intervention. This can be achieved by using its comparative advantages, with the support of a peace and development advisor (PDA). UNDP has recognized assets in institutional capacity-building and is a neutral actor with good capac-

ity for dialogue and coordination, which allows it to work at different levels of government and with diverse national actors. Currently, the Congo's major challenge is to strengthen democratic processes and the rule of law. To do this, it is essential to maintain the recently-established climate of peace. Initiatives in support of peace should underpin all UNDP governance interventions (political, economic and environmental) and those relating to reduction of inequalities (between urban and rural areas, to the detriment of indigenous peoples, gender inequalities and unequal access to natural resources). Citizen security initiatives must continue, including community-based initiatives aimed at reducing the circulation of illicit arms, and security reform (of the police and army) must be promoted.

Recommendation 2. During its next programme, UNDP could concentrate its interventions on just two strategic axes – 'Democratic governance and consolidation of peace' and 'Inclusive sustainable development'. These two areas, which complement and reinforce each other at every level, would aim to support the resilience of populations to political, economic, social and environmental shocks and challenges. UNDP could 'do less, but better', focusing on its areas of expertise while aligning itself with the new NDP currently being written. It needs to avoid dispersing interventions and direct its resources to activities in priority areas and for the most vulnerable populations. This will require an integrated approach based on the coherence, complementarity and coordination of interventions. Such a concentration of efforts will lead to significant changes and provide an example for national actors and other partners to follow. For example, UNDP could, as part of the first axis, strengthen its interventions in improving the rule of law, transparency and the accountability of public institutions, focusing on the fight against corruption in accordance with relevant UN conventions, as well as on decentralization and local government. As part of the second axis, it could strengthen the population's capacity for resilience to and recovery from climate change and other natural disasters and develop opportunities for

job creation and IGA using an approach based on the value chain or 'Cash for Work'.

Recommendation 3. With regard to electoral governance, a major challenge in the Congo, UNDP should, alongside other international agencies, contribute to efforts to bolster the electoral system with interventions to establish an environment favourable to citizen participation and free, transparent elections. UNDP could play a mediation role to facilitate the process of national dialogue between the parties and offer innovative ways of supporting non-traditional actors through mediation and support activities. It could do more to train and guide the media covering elections and encourage them to adopt and adhere to a code of conduct, to develop the capacities of CSO observers and provide technical support to associations that encourage participation, particularly of women, young people and indigenous populations or support conflict-prevention strategies.

Recommendation 4. The country office should develop the next country programme underpinned by a theory of change that makes clear its intervention strategy: in relation to perceived constraints of the context (assumptions); and as a function of the factors (drivers) relating to the comparative advantages it can rely on to bring about change. Based on a situation analysis, UNDP can determine for each axis and intervention or group of interventions, the necessary inputs (resources) and required outputs or products. To obtain these outputs, UNDP will seek the participation of the State, identify other national or local capacity, and mobilize stakeholder participation. The outputs will help to bring about immediate, medium-term and interim effects and, finally, impact. This approach will help to identify interventions with rapid and visible results (immediate effects), and the actions needed to make their outcomes sustainable. The formulation of SMART indicators will enable simple, useful monitoring to measure progress.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should further encourage and engage in joint activities with

other United Nations agencies and, failing that, continue its collaboration with agencies specialising in priority areas that fall outside its own area of expertise. UNDP should further promote joint action with other United Nations agencies so as to increase the impact of its interventions, giving priority to cross-cutting issues such as gender, the fight against the HIV/AIDS or youth. This will allow it to act from its mandate, without substituting for agencies qualified in other areas. UNDP should also ensure that other United Nations System agencies benefit from its privileged access to senior decision makers in the Government, to give full meaning to the Delivering as One approach which it has followed since 2015.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should continue to encourage national ownership in order to secure sustainability and help leverage outcomes, thus instigating a dynamic of transformation and change on a larger scale. To this effect, UNDP should expand its grassroots consultations when designing and implementing programmes and projects, linking its traditional partners such as government and associations with representatives of non-traditional associations, the private sector and local communities. The latter particularly should be involved in the identification of locally specific social and cultural factors, as well as post-project exit strategies. The identification of impeding and enabling factors, and the provision of support interventions (e.g. capacity-building), will help to build the sustainability of projects and programmes. Civil society should be more involved in project implementation, and the role of UNDP limited to management, monitoring and quality control. To promote national ownership, UNDP could accommodate senior officials from the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Regional Integration and other sectoral ministries into its structures, to help them to master approaches, procedures, techniques and methods of project and programme management. It could also promote the transfer of knowledge and skills by linking experts with staff and beneficiary institutions. Finally, in addition to those directly responsible, capacity-building should benefit liai-

son and technical staff who are likely to change post less frequently.

Recommendation 7. During the next programme, UNDP should adopt a communications strategy based on the results of its interventions, not just the launch of activities.

The communications plan will have three purposes: improving the visibility of UNDP in terms of results achieved; recalling its mandate; and distinguishing its activities from those of the United Nations System coordination, with which it is often equated.

Recommendation 8. In terms of resource mobilization, UNDP should intensify its advocacy for the Government to make national counterpart funds available and seek new opportunities to diversify its sources of funding.

Considering that UNDP resources should be used as a catalyst, national counterpart funds should be at least twice that of UNDP funds. UNDP should continue to extend its partnership with other technical and financial partners (TFPs), such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, which would like to benefit from the UNDP capacity for dialogue and its proximity to Congolese decision makers. AfDB would like to build on the capacity of UNDP to manage funds for civil society organizations and the major oil and forestry corporations, particularly those that have embarked on a process of corporate social responsibility. UNDP could seize other partnership opportunities to improve its ability to mobilize resources and diversify its funding sources.

Recommendation 9. UNDP should strengthen its results-based monitoring and evaluation activities at programme level and continue to support partners to produce reliable statistics.

The focus should be on the changes brought about by its activities, and progress made towards expected impacts. Indicators should be formulated more realistically, with reasonable costings, and be appropriate to constraints on the ground. Qualitative indicators should be defined to reflect the nature of the support given by UNDP interventions, which is often qualitative. Project evaluations should be more regular and greater in number, as they are tools for decision-making. Capacity-building in RBM should be accompanied by the implementation of a monitoring system based on reliable statistics. Strengthening the national statistical system seems critical to make this operational.

Recommendation 10. UNDP should continue its support to national counterparts for effective gender mainstreaming, which must translate, as a minimum, into systematic reporting of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive budgeting.

The country office already classifies projects according to the gender equality marker, but it does not yet systematically integrate sex-disaggregated data into reports of activities. This is necessary to guide decision-making and gender-sensitive budgeting, and to implement effectively targeted interventions. The participation of (national or sectoral) officials responsible for gender issues in planning exercises would be an effective way of achieving the sectoral integration of this dimension.

5.3 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Recommendation 1. UNDP should, in its next country programme, retain the promotion and consolidation of peace as a central axis of its intervention. This can be achieved by using its comparative advantages, with the support of a peace and development advisor. UNDP has recognized assets in institutional capacity-building and is a neutral actor with good capacity for dialogue and coordination, which allows it to work at different levels of government and with diverse national actors. Currently, the Congo's major challenge is to strengthen democratic processes and the rule of law. To do this, it is essential to maintain the recently-established climate of peace. Initiatives in support of peace should underpin all UNDP governance interventions (political, economic and environmental) and those relating to reduction of inequalities (between urban and rural areas, to the detriment of indigenous peoples, gender inequalities and unequal access to natural resources). Citizen security initiatives must continue, including community-based initiatives aimed at reducing the circulation of illicit arms, and security reform (of the police and army) must be promoted.

Management response

The country office cannot accept this recommendation as is and wishes to state reservations for the following reasons:

1. The complexity of the recommendation, which touches on different aspects, hence the difficulty of accepting it or not in its entirety.
2. The Congo is not currently a country in a conflict or post-conflict situation; the current events in Pool are limited to some parts of this province and are not an armed conflict of the classic type requiring a peace-building process for their resolution.
3. Peace-building cannot justify a central axis of the programme, underlying every UNDP intervention over the next five years. Of course, the Congolese political context denotes recurrent antagonism between political forces. To respond to this concern, UNDP has, since 2015, been engaged in a mediation initiative with the support of UNOCA between the Government and some political parties with the aim of furthering social cohesion and deepening inclusive pluralistic democracy able to reduce violent political antagonisms.

By way of illustration:

- Following the events in Pool, UNDP, with UNOCA support, engaged in the development of two programmes (DDR and social cohesion);
 - The development of citizen guides, establishment of a citizen radio station and other outreach activities on matters related to democracy;
 - UNDP already has the support of one PDA;
 - Contact currently ongoing with national actors, including Parliament, with the aim of defining a partnership framework to strengthen the capacities of institutions, political parties and political actors, so that they are better equipped to establish a peaceful, inclusive and non-conflictual democracy in the Congo.
4. Engaging UNDP in reform of the security sector, in the fight against the flow of illicit arms, etc. could not be a pillar of the next programme, for the following reasons:
 - Lack of political will;
 - One-time nature of the crisis in Pool.

The future actions of UNDP should be aligned with national priorities as set out in the NDP, with implementation of the SDG agenda and with the new programmatic framework of the UN System to cover the period 2019-2023.

In a word, the recommendation could be relevant for the past programming cycle, in which UNDP was supporting a post-conflict phase country in aspects of peace building. As for the other aspects, the responses given above perfectly illustrate the actions of the office.

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue advocating to the Government the relevance and importance of the involvement of the UN System in issues of democratic governance. • Ensure that these aspects are based on the analyses that will be performed in the next Common Country Assessment. • Ensure that the priorities identified by UNDP for governance and in the field of inclusive and sustainable growth occupy a predominant position in the final version of the NDP and UNDAF that will be the keystones of our next country programme. • Continue efforts in resource mobilization for implementation of the priorities identified in both sectors. 	Programme	2018

(continued)

(continued)

Recommendation 2. During its next programme, UNDP could concentrate its interventions on just two strategic axes – ‘Democratic governance and consolidation of peace’ and ‘Inclusive sustainable development’. These two areas, which complement and reinforce each other at every level, would aim to support the resilience of populations to political, economic, social and environmental shocks and challenges. UNDP could ‘do less, but better’, focusing on its areas of expertise while aligning itself with the new NDP currently being written. It needs to avoid dispersing interventions and direct its resources to activities in priority areas and for the most vulnerable populations. This will require an integrated approach based on the coherence, complementarity and coordination of interventions. Such a concentration of efforts will lead to significant changes and provide an example for national actors and other partners to follow. For example, UNDP could, as part of the first axis, strengthen its interventions in improving the rule of law, transparency and the accountability of public institutions, focusing on the fight against corruption in accordance with relevant UN conventions, as well as on decentralization and local government. As part of the second axis, it could strengthen the population’s capacity for resilience to and recovery from climate change and other natural disasters and develop opportunities for job creation and IGA using an approach based on the value chain or ‘Cash for Work’.

Management response

The country office cannot accept this recommendation and wishes to express reservations. The two strategic axes proposed are too restrictive and do not take account of the Government’s priorities contained in the National Development Plan (NDP) currently being finalized. It is the NDP priorities that will underpin the programming of the next CPD.

For the first axis, on the consolidation of peace, the country office will continue its qualitative and normative activities as reflected in the response to recommendation No. 1.

Regarding electoral governance, the country office is supporting a process further to a request from the Government, who has taken a sovereign decision to organize the last elections without the support of the international community. Despite this, UNDP has continued to provide qualitative and normative support, as illustrated in the response to recommendation No. 3.

With respect to the other aspects of governance, the recommendation is related to actions that are currently underway and will be continued in the next programming cycle if they are retained in the next UN System programmatic framework:

- Development of a national decentralization policy underpinned by an implementation action plan for the next five years;
- The fight against corruption, and financial investigations;
- Development of a national policy for justice and human rights.

In respect of inclusive, sustainable development, UNDP is supporting:

- The local and community development programme founded on the model of the PUDC, that could target the very isolated Likouala region;
- Sustainable management of the environment that also benefits local people;
- Support for young people and the empowerment of women.

These examples show that the country office is trying to be as strategic as possible with the limited resources it has, by concentrating on vulnerable populations (indigenous peoples, women, young people, PLWHA).

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue advocating to the Government the relevance and importance of the involvement of the UN System in issues of democratic governance. • Ensure that these aspects are based on the analyses that will be performed in the next CCA. • Ensure that the priorities identified by UNDP as part of governance and in the field of inclusive and sustainable growth occupy a predominant position in the final version of the NDP and UNDAF that will be the keystones of our next country programme. • Continue efforts to mobilize resources for implementation of the priorities identified in both sectors. • Considering the current financial context, continue to focus on improved prioritization and targeting. 	Management/ Programme	2018

(continued)

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<p>Recommendation 3. With regard to electoral governance, a major challenge in the Congo, UNDP should, alongside other international agencies, contribute to efforts to bolster the electoral system with interventions to establish an environment favourable to citizen participation and free, transparent elections. UNDP could play a mediation role to facilitate the process of national dialogue between the parties and offer innovative ways of supporting non-traditional actors through mediation and support activities. It could do more to train and guide the media covering elections and encourage them to adopt and adhere to a code of conduct, to develop the capacities of CSO observers and provide technical support to associations that encourage participation, particularly of women, young people and indigenous populations or support conflict-prevention strategies.</p>		
<p>Management response</p> <p>The country office states its reservations, considering that this recommendation is poorly worded and does not reflect the reality of a sovereign country. Electoral governance is first and foremost a challenge for the Government.</p> <p>Secondly, the evaluation has obscured the efforts made by UNDP to secure a request from the Government for support for the electoral process. The country office also considers that it is incorrect to say that the UNDP approach “was too cautious in order to not jeopardize its relationships with the Government”. UNDP cannot go against the Government’s will and force the Government to associate itself with the UN System.</p> <p>It was proposed to include electoral assistance consistent with the United Nations model in this regard. This includes proposals on how to remedy the weaknesses revealed by electoral observers during the last election cycle, by building the capacities of electoral actors and training women candidates for the next elections, as part of the objective of improving women’s participation in decision-making spheres.</p> <p>Similarly, the country office will continue the advocacy initiative that it began during the previous programme cycle to improve the normative framework with the goal of promoting parity.</p>		
Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue advocating to the Government the relevance and importance of the involvement of the UN System in issues of electoral governance.• Continue the implementation of activities in which UNDP is already involved, such as training women candidates, journalists and leaders of political parties on electoral processes.• Continue efforts to mobilize resources for implementation of these activities.	Management/ Programme	2018

<p>Recommendation 4. The country office should develop the next country programme underpinned by a theory of change that makes clear its intervention strategy: in relation to perceived constraints of the context (assumptions); and as a function of the factors (drivers) relating to the comparative advantages it can rely on to bring about change. Based on a situation analysis, UNDP can determine for each axis and intervention or group of interventions, the necessary inputs (resources) and required outputs or products. To obtain these outputs, UNDP will seek the participation of the State, identify other national or local capacity, and mobilize stakeholder participation. The outputs will help to bring about immediate, medium-term and interim effects and, finally, impact. This approach will help to identify interventions with rapid and visible results (immediate effects), and the actions needed to make their outcomes sustainable. The formulation of SMART indicators will enable simple, useful monitoring to measure progress.</p>		
<p>Management response</p> <p>The country office takes note of this recommendation.</p> <p>The country office intends to use the current context (preparation of the 2018-2022 NDP and development of the 2019-2023 CCA) to strengthen analysis of the theory of change during preparation of its 2019-2023 country programme.</p> <p>UNDP has always involved stakeholders in the development and implementation of its programmes and projects. However, the country office plans to deepen its risk analysis and focus on interventions to achieve medium-term effect, with a well-defined monitoring framework.</p>		
Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal seminars for appropriation of the theory of change.• Strengthening the theory of change in the development of all programme documents.• Collaborating more systematically with partners to conduct specific studies and analyses for each intervention.	Programme	Ongoing

(continued)

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Recommendation 5. UNDP should further encourage and engage in joint activities with other United Nations agencies and, failing that, continue its collaboration with agencies specialising in priority areas that fall outside its own area of expertise. UNDP should further promote joint action with other United Nations agencies so as to increase the impact of its interventions, giving priority to cross-cutting issues such as gender, the fight against the HIV/AIDS or youth. This will allow it to act from its mandate, without substituting for agencies qualified in other areas. UNDP should also ensure that other United Nations System agencies benefit from its privileged access to senior decision makers in the Government, to give full meaning to the Delivering as One approach which it has followed since 2015.

Management response

The country office takes note of this recommendation. By way of reminder, a number of actions have already been taken in this direction, including the following:

- The development of joint projects in the areas of gender and youth. We are also working on the development of a joint project along the lines of the PUDC (Emergency Community Development Project) in the region of Likouala;
- We have already turned to other agencies for support in areas where UNDP does not have the necessary expertise: FAO for training women in agricultural techniques and UNESCO for citizen radio stations;
- Joint advocacy initiatives to Government and donors on common priorities;
- Collaboration within the Delivering as One framework and with interagency working groups, where we share our respective analyses and develop collaborative frameworks.

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of joint projects with UN Agencies. • Finalize the development and implementation of the BOS in the Congo. • Finalize our interagency operational cost reduction strategy. • Strengthen interagency collaboration through results groups. 	Management/ Programme	Early 2018

Recommendation 6. UNDP should continue to encourage national ownership in order to secure sustainability and help leverage outcomes, thus instigating a dynamic of transformation and change on a larger scale. To this effect, UNDP should expand its grassroots consultations when designing and implementing programmes and projects, linking its traditional partners such as Government and associations with representatives of non-traditional associations, the private sector and local communities. The latter particularly should be involved in the identification of locally specific social and cultural factors, as well as post-project exit strategies. The identification of impeding and enabling factors, and the provision of support interventions (e.g. capacity-building), will help to build the sustainability of projects and programmes. Civil society should be more involved in project implementation, and the role of UNDP limited to management, monitoring and quality control. To promote national ownership, UNDP could accommodate senior officials from the Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Regional Integration and other sectoral ministries into its structures, to help them to master approaches, procedures, techniques and methods of project and programme management. It could also promote the transfer of knowledge and skills by linking experts with staff and beneficiary institutions. Finally, in addition to those directly responsible, capacity-building should benefit liaison and technical staff who are likely to change post less frequently.

Management response

The country office takes note of this recommendation. Indeed, a concern to encourage national appropriation is a constant in the implementation of programmes and projects to the benefit of national actors. Regarding project management, the representatives of implementing partners required to sign PTAs are closely involved in the formulation and implementation of projects, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of the ensuing products. This very close joint work is one of the keys to the success of a project. In addition, the country office opted for the national implementation modality (NIM) coupled with the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), which help strengthen the fiduciary accountability of national actors. In so doing, the transfer of competence is effective.

To further systematize this ambition, the country office plans to increase training in RBM, programme/ project management and HACT for partner ministries, local authorities and all responsible parties (NGOs, associations and civil society). More specifically, the country office needs to work through institutional implementing partners to focus on local relays (associations, NGOs, CBOs, etc.) to reach direct beneficiaries more effectively.

The country office has identified the problem posed by the high turnover of administrative managers and has oriented its capacity-building strategy towards Directors of Studies and Planning (the technicians in institutions), who are the real gateways to the sustainability of UNDP programme actions/ interventions.

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater numbers of participatory consultations. • Joint quarterly reviews. • Greater numbers of training opportunities for stakeholders on RBM, project management procedures and HACT. 	Programme	Ongoing

(continued)

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Recommendation 7. During the next programme, UNDP should adopt a communications strategy based on the results of its interventions, not just the launch of activities. The communications plan will have three purposes: improving the visibility of UNDP in terms of results achieved; recalling its mandate; and distinguishing its activities from those of the United Nations System coordination, with which it is often equated.		
Management response The country office takes note of this recommendation and will work to strengthen the focus of its communication towards RBM. The country office has already conducted a survey on its interventions in the Congo, the results of which will be used as a diagnostic tool for the development of a new communications plan and for facilitating better dissemination of UNDP actions at all levels, so as to better communicate its results. To move in the direction of the recommendation, the country office has already developed multimedia tools, such as brochures, films and documentaries, and is also very active on social media for the communication of its results.		
Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the country office's communications strategy by placing a greater focus on communicating results and making them available to donors. 	Management/ Communica- tions Unit PMSU	

Recommendation 8. In terms of resource mobilization, UNDP should intensify its advocacy for the Government to make national counterpart funds available and seek new opportunities to diversify its sources of funding. Considering that UNDP resources should be used as a catalyst, national counterpart funds should be at least twice that of UNDP funds. UNDP should continue to extend its partnership with other technical and financial partners (TFPs), such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, which would like to benefit from the UNDP capacity for dialogue and its proximity to Congolese decision makers. AfDB would like to build on the capacity of UNDP to manage funds for civil society organizations and the major oil and forestry corporations, particularly those that have embarked on a process of corporate social responsibility. UNDP could seize other partnership opportunities to improve its ability to mobilize resources and diversify its funding sources.		
Management response The country office takes note of this recommendation. However, the economic classification of the country (as a middle-income country) does not make it attractive to official development assistance. Due to the financial crisis that the country is currently experiencing, there are very limited possibilities of mobilizing Government resources over the next two years. The country office has already gone in the direction of diversification of its partners. Regarding the private sector, initiatives have already been implemented under social responsibility (TOTAL E&P, Maurel & Prom). There will be more of these. The uncertainties related to the current economic climate have already affected many companies, which will make fund mobilization difficult in the short term. But the current crisis is also creating opportunities and the country office will continue to work to introduce innovative ideas in such fields as young people and the digital economy. It is also important to note that there is low representation of TFPs in the Congo; even so, missions have been conducted in Kinshasa, the location of most TFPs. Foundations and sub-regional organizations are another alternative that the country office is currently reviewing. In time, UNDP headquarters will have to review its engagement strategy in middle-income countries to strengthen the competitiveness of country offices in new areas, including beyond government contributions.		
Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the resource mobilization strategy to take account of the current context and potential new partnerships. Organization of regular missions to meet with TFPs that are not represented in Brazzaville (in Kinshasa or other capitals). Development of advocacy towards the private sector in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Propose to the Government the organization of a donors' conference, not only for NDP funding, but also for sectoral policies, including those related to tourism and the environment. 	Management/ Programme Economist/ PMSU/Admin. and Finance Officer	2017- 2018

(continued)

(continued)

Recommendation 9. UNDP should strengthen its results-based monitoring and evaluation activities at programme level and continue to support partners to produce reliable statistics. The focus should be on the changes brought about by its activities, and progress made towards expected impacts. Indicators should be formulated more realistically, with reasonable costings, and be appropriate to constraints on the ground. Qualitative indicators should be defined to reflect the nature of the support given by UNDP interventions, which is often qualitative. Project evaluations should be more regular and greater in number, as they are tools for decision-making. Capacity-building in RBM should be accompanied by the implementation of a monitoring system based on reliable statistics. Strengthening the national statistical system seems critical to make this operational.

Management response

The country office takes note of this recommendation. Nevertheless, financial constraints and the absence of an office dedicated to monitoring and evaluation have been compensated for by attaching this activity to PMSU. Similarly, the country office is already working in perfect synergy with the UN System coordination monitoring and evaluation officer.

To monitor implementation of the SDGs in the Congo, the country office has entered into collaboration with the UN System Monitoring and Evaluation Results Group and the Government (Ministry of Planning, Statistics and Regional Integration) for the formulation of a common statistical framework.

To make statistical data reliable, the country office is planning to strengthen its collaboration with the National Statistics Institute.

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a plan for internal and partner training on results-based management.• Establish a robust partnership with the National Statistics Institute.	Programme/ PMSU	2018

Recommendation 10. UNDP should continue its support to national counterparts for effective gender mainstreaming, which must translate, as a minimum, into systematic reporting of sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive budgeting. The country office already classifies projects according to the gender equality marker, but it does not yet systematically integrate sex-disaggregated data into reports of activities. This is necessary to guide decision-making and gender-sensitive budgeting, and to implement effectively targeted interventions. The participation of (national or sectoral) officials responsible for gender issues in planning exercises would be an effective way of achieving the sectoral integration of this dimension.

Management response

The country office takes note of this recommendation and intends to strengthen the support it offers to national partners.

It will take steps to ensure that sex-disaggregated data feature in its reports. It will take action to systematize gender-sensitive budgeting in its programmes and projects. As part of building the capacity of partners (national and/or sectoral), the country office will, as a matter of priority, provide gender-sensitive planning. UNDP has already helped the Government to develop an action plan for implementation of the National Gender Policy, which includes gender-sensitive planning and budgeting.

Key actions	Responsibility	Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put measures in place to allocate at least 10% of the country office budget.• Develop programmes/ projects with gender-sensitive targets and indicators.	Management/ Programme	2018

ANNEXES (available online)

The annexes are available online at IEO's website at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9391>

ANNEX 1: Terms of reference

ANNEX 2: Country overview

ANNEX 3: Country office overview

ANNEX 4: List of projects

ANNEX 5: Results of the Country Programme Document and status of indicators

ANNEX 6: List of documents consulted



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