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UNDP IN RWANDA

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a country programme evaluation in the Republic of Rwanda, a second country-level evaluation since 2008.

UNDP has been operating in Rwanda since 1997. The country has achieved significant development since the 1994 Genocide, particularly the last 10 years the evaluation examined, resulting from strong socioeconomic and governance reforms led by the Government. Rwanda is one of the fastest-growing and most-reforming economies in Africa, and there are clear national aspirations to graduate from the agriculture-based low-income country status to knowledge-based middle-income country by 2020 as defined in its Vision 2020 and two sets of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategies (EDPRS) I (2008) and II (2013). It achieved most of the Millennium Development Goals, except the poverty goal.

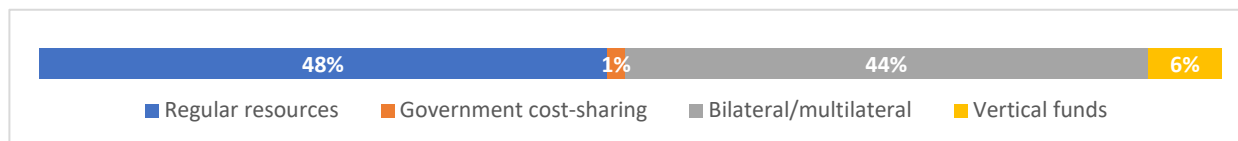
The United Nations Country Team is in its second terms with its Delivering as One (DaO) framework, currently operating under the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP) 2013-2018. There is a strong commitment by the Government towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Development challenges remain in how to accelerate its poverty reduction efforts, including youth employment; address environment and climate change; and further advancing human rights, rule of law and facilitating peace-building and national reconciliation.

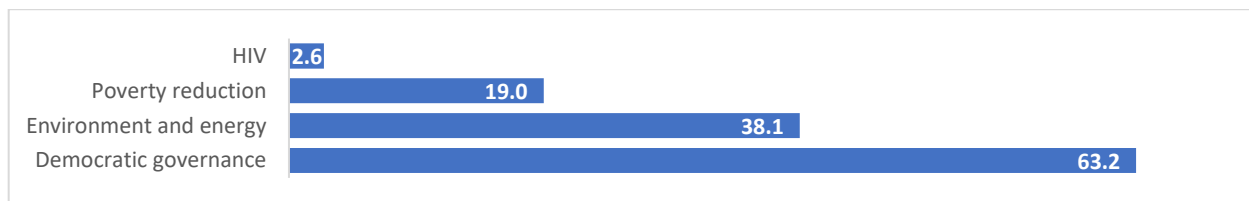
The evaluation examined the programme periods 2008-2012 and 2013-2018 with particular attention to the latter, which reflected changes stemming from the country office’s change management process carried out at the end of the previous cycle. UNDP was expected to contribute to two areas of the UNDAP, i.e. inclusive economic transformation and accountable governance. UNDP had five specific programme outcomes to address them, including pro-poor orientation of the growth; sustainable urbanization; sustainable management of environment, natural resources, renewable energy and climate change resilience; improved public accountability and citizen participation; and promotion of human rights, justice and gender equality.

UNDP’s programme budget was \$20 million at the start of the previous programme (2008) but declined to \$9 million by 2016. The UN Fund was supported by a single donor at the time of the evaluation, limiting joint programme activities.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2016: \$137.6 MILLION



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2008–2016 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The UNDP programmes were relevant to national development needs. They were also in alignment with UNDP’s organizational mandate, which stresses national ownership, capacity, and citizen’s voice in what it does while addressing sustainable human development.

In all programme areas, UNDP has achieved or is making progress in achieving their objectives as defined in its

Common Country Programme Document. In the areas of poverty and environment, UNDP has contributed to strengthening of national institutions’ capacity to implement the EDPRS (e.g. through support to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and National Institute of Statics of Rwanda to provide better poverty data and analyses); bringing youth and women employment and pro-poor agenda into the national

agenda (e.g. through programmes such as “Building an Inclusive Financial Sector in Rwanda,” which has enhanced financial access among the poor, and the YouthConnekt initiative, which has brought together the Government, private sector, social media and ICT for improved job creation and entrepreneurship skill building among youth and women); and mainstreaming of environment, climate change and disaster risk management into sector policies and district development plans (e.g. the Green Village initiative).

In the governance area, UNDP contributed to media reforms for strengthened oversight for government accountability (including support to the Media High Council and the Rwanda Media Barometer); strengthened capacity of the Parliament, National Forum on Political Parties, National Election Commission and other public institutions to fulfil their mandate; supported civil society organizations through the Rwanda Governance Board for improved citizen participation in monitoring performance of public services and decision-making processes. UNDP also contributed to the reduction in the backlog of court cases stemming from the 1994 Genocide through the use of *Gacaca* courts and *Abunzi*, community-based court system and mediation mechanisms, and free legal services for the poor; strengthening of the Rwanda National Police’s community policing capacity; the Government’s ability to implement international human rights obligations; and strengthening of the country’s reconciliation and peace building processes through support to institutions such as the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the Rwanda Peace Academy.

Key factors contributing to the results included UNDP’s programme design that met Rwanda’s post-genocide,

socioeconomic context, its issue-based approach to programming. The Government’s strong commitment to results and partnership with UNDP were critical, particularly for the governance related programmes. There was a full integration of Rwanda’s various “home-grown solutions” in UNDP’s projects, e.g. Umuganda (community work); Imihigo (performance contract); and Ubudehe (mutual support), which helped the results to take roots. At the same time, the reality that UNDP has to continue to rely on declining donor funds and a weak monitoring system (e.g. monitoring of volunteer-based mechanisms and the work of sub-national project activities) were among those factors preventing UNDP from maximizing its results.

Together with other UN agencies, e.g. UN Women, UNDP has strengthened Rwanda’s gender architecture through a series of concerted efforts (e.g. capacity support to the institutions comprising the National Gender Machinery and instituting the Gender Budget Statement in all ministries and sectors; establishment of a robust gender policy at the National Police addressing Gender-Based Violence). The country office obtained the gold status in UNDP’s corporate gender certification exercise, creating an environment promoting gender equality in its programme and operational activities.

UNDP’s ability to establish effective and strategic partnerships with relevant partners was mixed, e.g. its engagement with some UN agencies was successful, while with others there were challenges in inter-agency coordination under joint programmes. UNDP’s engagement with CSOs was limited and indirect, and some donors were not fully onboard with UNDP’s strategy, citing a difference in approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the country moves quickly from the post-genocide response phase towards becoming the middle-income country status, UNDP should

- Ensure close engagement in the formulation of the next UNDAF to develop a country programme strategy that is in full alignment with the new national strategy for transformation.
- Place a greater focus in its programme work on producing and contributing to evidence- and research-based work for policy advisory services, bringing options and tested-ideas to the table.
- Explore a partnership strategy that will include options for mobilizing both financial and staffing resources and will ensure UNDP’s more robust engagements with donors and its visibility.
- Continue to focus on human development centred-approach in its programmes, particularly for advancing on the implementation of the SDGs.
- Continue with the management-led, office-wide efforts to seek efficiency gains and promote programme effectiveness.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP’s Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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