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UNDP IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

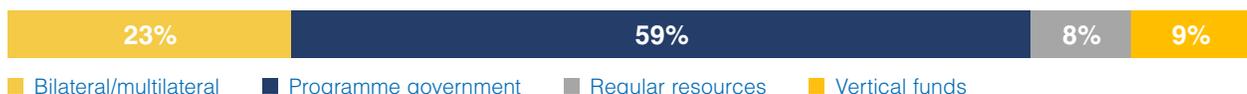
The Dominican Republic has emerged as an upper-middle-income country with a high ranking on the Human Development Index. But it still struggles with deep-rooted challenges, such as wide inequalities, and is highly vulnerable to natural disasters.

UNDP has supported democratic governance, social

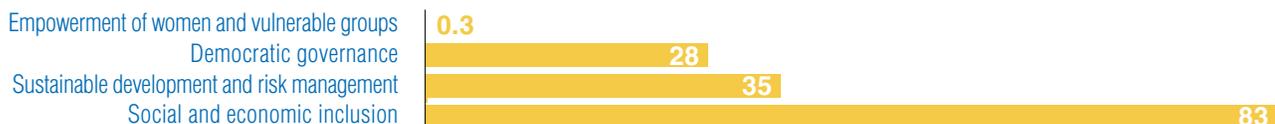
and economic inclusion, empowerment of women and vulnerable groups, and sustainable development and risk management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2015.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2014: \$145 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2014



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2014 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation chronicled a broad recognition of UNDP's contributions to the Dominican Republic, including to political dialogue, and to the design and implementation of public policies and national, institutional and legal frameworks, with a focus on human rights and sustainable human development. Performance was generally very good. Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency rated high in most cases, and sustainability as medium to high.

With UNDP assistance, the country made progress in modernizing its State structure, ensuring greater transparency and better performance. An increase in budget items for the Chamber of Accounts of the Republic recognized the growing relevance of this institution. New decrees promoted accountability, decentralization and efficiency in spending, such as through a Code of Ethical Guidelines and the creation of the Directorate of Government Ethics and Integrity. A situational analysis on the financial management of municipalities and municipal districts became an important input for strategies to build capacity and increase transparency.

A number of projects helped improved the scope, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the social protection system, and the access of the target population to quality education and health services. UNDP assisted with developing instruments for monetary transfers, such as an integrated social protection monitoring and evaluation system, as well as audits for verifying compliance with transfer requirements. SIUBEN, a consolidated

system to increase the efficiency of social protection spending, expanded its scope of measurement, including through a Vulnerability to Climate Shocks Index that makes it possible to focus social interventions in homes most vulnerable to hydrometeorological effects. Sex-disaggregated information about household living conditions informed more accurate gender analyses.

UNDP made a significant contribution to institutional strengthening and gender and human rights mainstreaming, although outcomes in these areas can be improved. It provided well-received assistance in monitoring compliance with international commitments made by the country, such as the Rio+20 outcome and the Millennium Development Goals, as well as in supporting public-private dialogues in the lead-up to the global agreement on the Sustainable Development Goals. The last also entailed conducting the My World survey, which captured 65,000 responses and involved more than 50 institutions in 20 provinces.

Significant progress was recognized in the work of United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, which assumed leadership for humanitarian aid after the 2010 Haiti earthquake. The support of the Dominican Republic to Haiti in crisis management and recovery has been and will remain crucial for both countries. Post-earthquake, there was an evident shift in national interest in comprehensive risk management.

South-South cooperation initiatives encompassed several activities to promote efforts with Haiti and other

Caribbean nations to advance environmental management, such as through the Binational Artibonite River Basin project on the border river basin and forest areas. The binational Green Border project received a regional UNDP prize for South-South cooperation, awarded to the Dominican Republic and Haiti for sharing experiences and strategies, and transferring environmental methodologies and capacities. South-South cooperation, however, is still not a widespread practice. Further efforts are required to take advantage of the UNDP knowledge network at the international level, and, in particular, in the Latin American and Caribbean region, which is considered one of the main added values of UNDP.

For the Dominican Republic, designation as an upper-middle-income country has meant a draw-down

in international cooperation and a need to optimize resources that remain. The evaluation suggested that UNDP work on identifying the main development gaps and assist national partners in establishing a dialogue at the international level with proposals for innovative development mechanisms.

Major efforts are still required in poverty and human development, as well as public policies that target vulnerable groups through the life cycle—children; youth, especially young job seekers; women and the elderly. This is an important challenge for UNDP, since it suggests maintaining the same lines of past and current programmes while exploring new opportunities and strategic directions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify new, innovative ways to ensure ownership and sustainability in the implementation of plans, programmes and projects under the paradigm of sustainable human development (SHD) and the SDGs, as well as initiatives supported by UNDP, with the Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations.
- Keep the focus on SHD, an area in which UNDP has national leadership and brings added value.
- Define a strategy for gender mainstreaming in the country office that is aligned with the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy (2014-2017), defining the office's gender priorities, and design instruments for its implementation in all programme areas, in line with corporate strategy.
- Develop a conceptual framework that unifies the criteria to address institutional strengthening, for all UNDP programme areas, and defines clear guidelines for action (standards, rules, procedures, values, etc.) in the implementation of institutional strengthening efforts with a focus on human rights and gender.
- Maintain the strategic alliances in multiple working areas developed by UNDP with the Government, donors and other partners, and at the same time strengthen their relationship with the direct beneficiaries. The level of UNDP collaboration with the Government is high and is estimated at about three-quarters of the UNDP programme. Equally relevant is the contribution of UNDP to the administration of the resources provided to the country by other donors. It is important that UNDP continue its efforts to mobilize resources to cope with the reduction of UNDP core funding, especially now that the country is classified as upper-middle-income.
- UNDP needs a better strategy to take advantage of its potential country networks. It is important to promote South-South cooperation in both directions, so that Dominican projects can benefit from the experiences of other countries and for UNDP to identify good practices that can be replicated in other countries.
- Continue to institutionalize the resident coordination role of the UN country team to optimize the coordination of agencies, funds and programmes, project a comprehensive vision of the UN system before the Dominican Government and facilitate dialogue with the UN country team in Haiti so that efforts continue to include the binational issue in UN programming in general and UNDP programming in particular, in order to improve the analysis of the development problems and challenges common to the two countries, in support of binational initiatives led by the Dominican Republic to address the Haiti challenge.
- Define the main national development gaps to identify innovative mechanisms to address them.
- Continue to optimize the organizational and functional structure of the country office to provide a qualitative response to new corporate challenges facing UNDP and the Dominican Republic as an upper middle-income country, to think as One United Nations and become its technical and operational expression in implementing the paradigm of SHD.

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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