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## UNDP IN EGYPT

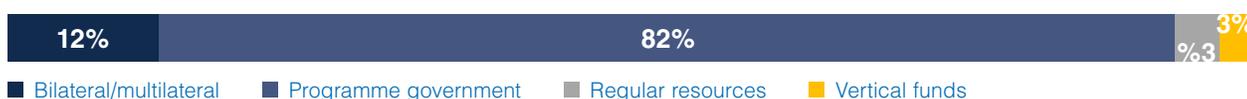
Egypt has made substantial economic, social and development gains, but significant challenges remain, from the inequitable distribution of wealth to inadequate opportunities for youth. While the political and social upheavals of 2011 to 2012 raised hope for reform and justice, the long transition period has intensified existing problems.

UNDP has focused its support on reducing human

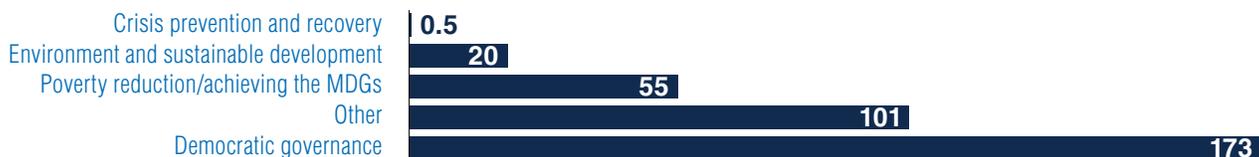
poverty, fostering democratic governance, and managing energy and the environment for sustainable development. In 2011, in the wake of a popular uprising, it adopted an interim plan, “Supporting Egypt’s Transition to Democracy, 2011-2012.” The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2011, with a focus on the planning cycle that began in 2007.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2011: \$349.9 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2011



#### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2011 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contributed to Egypt’s key development priorities. Country engagement was strong, with 82 per cent of UNDP’s 2011 budget coming from government cost-sharing. The prevailing government view was that partnership with UNDP enhanced opportunities to secure international funding and obtain high-quality technical support informed by international best practices. In its broad portfolio, UNDP has demonstrated that it can provide both strategic upstream advice and effective downstream programme management.

A broad array of stakeholders cited UNDP-assisted national human development reports as influencing national policy. The 2005 report, with its focus on ‘a new social contract,’ was considered a breakthrough in opening public discourse on tackling regional economic disparities and pockets of poverty, especially in Upper Egypt. UNDP’s work on Millennium Development Goals monitoring has been highly relevant, generating five updates widely recognized for their thorough analysis of progress on the goals.

UNDP has served the Government as an incubator and strategic adviser for new institutions and initiatives. The Social Fund for Development, for instance, started in 1991 as a UNDP project to provide a social safety net for vulnerable groups. It has since evolved into a large, quasigovernmental fund focused on micro-, small and

medium-size enterprise development and job creation, garnering more than a billion dollars from donors. The Economic Research Forum, initiated as a UNDP project 15 years ago, is now a leading research institute in the region, influencing policymaking not only in Egypt, but in other Arab countries, Iran and Turkey.

A highlight of UNDP’s work on poverty reduction has been its support for strategies to fight poverty through information and communication technology. Five interrelated projects on illiteracy eradication, community knowledge/e-library, community portals, smart schools and a mobile Internet unit sought to stimulate awareness of the benefits of ICT, and to make ICT more accessible and affordable for all citizens. Results included expanding access to education through e-learning for over 1 million citizens. A close partnership with the Ministry for Communications and Information Technology engaged diverse other government entities, including the Ministry of Health and the Postal Authority, as well as the private sector.

Efforts to promote a culture of human rights in Egypt were highly relevant but had little impact. UNDP established partnerships with government and government-sponsored human rights organizations to enhance their operational, administrative and technical capacities. These efforts were carried out in a generally satisfactory

manner; nevertheless, they were insignificant in countering the simmering public dismay and frustration over a perceived lack of appreciation for human rights. One capacity-building initiative expanded awareness and respect for human rights among the judiciary, police and prison wardens, although with no follow-up assessments, it was unclear if this had any subsequent impact on the views and actions of participants.

UNDP actively promoted women's empowerment and gender issues across its portfolio of programmes, and through its own hiring and human resources. But progress on women's empowerment has stalled and is in danger of regressing. Efforts to boost women's participation in political systems, for example, have run up against obstacles such as the setting aside of electoral quotas.

UNDP has helped to better articulate a national decentralization strategy and develop capabilities to implement it. A collaborative effort triggered a constructive national policy dialogue—involving national government officials, local authorities (especially governors), academia and the donor community—on how best to empower local governments. Ongoing capacity-building assistance for the Ministry of Local Development and local councils focused on increasing their capabilities to implement the decentralization process. A Coordination and Decentralization Support Unit was in place, overseeing project implementation and donor funding. By 2009–2010, nearly LE 4 billion for service delivery implementation had been delegated to governorates, predominately in the local development, housing and education sectors.

UNDP also showed that it can provide effective technical assistance to local governments on capacity-building, planning support and progress monitoring for improved service delivery. It was less successful in

helping to scale up and replicate piloted decentralization approaches, with missed opportunities, for example, to learn from a pilot on fiscal decentralization. Efforts were constrained by a lack of systematic attention to resource mobilization, and the dominant position of national political actors in setting project strategies and direction. Another gap related to limitations on direct citizen engagement, imposed in part by the fact that local popular councils are elected, but governors govern at the discretion of the President.

UNDP did not play a significant role in disaster or conflict prevention and recovery, even during the 2011 uprisings. Discrete conflict prevention and recovery interventions included landmine clearing in the North West region, and support to the Cairo Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa.

By contrast, a large and varied environmental project portfolio built on the successful mobilization of substantial resources, especially from the Global Environment Facility and bilateral donors. UNDP has had a measure of success in prompting the Government to better address critical environmental issues, such as by assisting in the development and implementation of a National Strategy for Improving Energy Efficiency. Among many other results, this led to the adoption of standards for compact fluorescent bulbs and their introduction to the Egyptian market.

The UNDP transition strategy noted the opportunities and challenges presented by the political transition, and identified priorities in response to national circumstances. These include supporting expanded and effective political participation, supporting greater transparency and accountability, promoting a culture of human rights and enhancing access to justice, and supporting local development, poverty reduction and social justice.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should expand its support to local governments and urban communities, emphasizing integrated planning and community participation, and focusing on economically disadvantaged communities.
- UNDP should engage with the Government of Egypt in a renewed effort towards civil service reform, especially in support of government efforts to tackle corruption and promote transparency and integrity.
- UNDP, together with its UN and national partners, should continue to promote the empowerment and participation of women in Egypt, and should focus special attention on opportunities for technical training.
- UNDP should enhance its support in the area of environmental protection by helping the Government of Egypt to replicate and upscale successful pilot projects. In particular, UNDP should focus increased attention on energy efficiency and land degradation issues.

## 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.

See the full reports at the Evaluation Resource Centre, [erc.undp.org](http://erc.undp.org)