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UNDP IN BRAZIL

A federal republic with a population close to 194 million, Brazil is an average-income country that in recent years has consolidated its macroeconomic and political stability. It has promoted economic reforms aimed at greater integration with the globalized market, and introduced social reforms towards alleviating poverty and inequities, and ensuring universal access to basic education and primary health care.

Areas of UNDP support to Brazil have comprised social and inclusion policies, security and human rights, modernizing of the State, the environment and South-South cooperation. Gender, race/ethnicity and governance are issues cutting across different programmes. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2002 to 2010.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2002-2010: \$1.34 BILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2010



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2002-2010 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP's strategic relevance was high with regard to Brazilian development topics. It positioned itself as a governmental partner in the areas of social development, state modernization and the environment. Programmes supported national strategies to reduce poverty (e.g., *Bolsa Familia*), the establishment of a national public security programme, the institutionalization of environmental policies and a foundation for government action on South-South cooperation.

State modernization results included implementation of a tax adjustment with extensive impacts on tax collection and macroeconomic stabilization. Consolidated bureaucracies are currently in place in areas most supported by state modernization projects—the Ministries of Finance and Planning and State Finance Secretariats.

Changes in the national context, however, have reduced UNDP's participation as a development partner. Initially, the Brazilian Government was facing difficulties in implementing the priorities of its agenda due to the scarcity of human resources, the reorganization of the public administration after the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, and the need to promote a rigorous tax adjustment. UNDP focused on promoting human development and offering operational support. With the election of a new Government in 2003, deep and rapid changes began to take place in social policies and

in regulations for international technical cooperation. As a result, government demands for projects traditionally supported by UNDP fell.

Starting in 2003, decisions by the Brazilian Government to scale up its capacity were an indicator that it was gaining ownership of the UNDP agenda. The Brazilian state became more effective. Having overcome its macroeconomic restrictions, it structured a professionalized bureaucracy in certain sectors of the federal Government and became more active in social matters. UNDP began managing many of the federal Government loans from multilateral agencies. It also became responsible for procurement activities previously exercised by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, but without cost recovery.

A great effort to adapt to the new context included reducing operating costs, reinforcing operational support to projects and structuring new areas of action, especially public security and South-South cooperation, both topics starting to appear on the government agenda. UNDP also prospected new areas of activity, such as civil defence and consumer rights. A pilot project was launched aimed at developing the capacity of smaller municipalities, seeking private-sector funding and adopting a capacity development model more accessible to smaller municipalities than the traditional model.

To some extent, UNDP remained important in

advancing the implementation of Brazilian public policies. By December 2010, it still managed over 100 projects, some of them extremely relevant and highly aligned to the values and objectives of the organization and the Government.

As the Brazilian Government incorporated various human development topics into its policies and institutions, however, the advocacy role of UNDP also declined. The Government gave ministerial status to the areas of human rights, women's rights and racial equality. New public policies were introduced, like the quota policy for black students in federal universities. This in the end is a positive result of the dialogue process established over time with the Government and society. UNDP has been working on some innovative products focused on advocacy, such as localizing the Millennium Development Goals.

UNDP's credibility and expertise in international competitive bidding processes were regarded as highly positive by its partners. The organization underutilized its international knowledge network, however. Support for South-South exchange was restricted to operational aspects and cooperation offered to other countries.

In general, project participants perceived the organization as contributing little substantive knowledge, except in the public security and environment areas. This may stem from the funding model, based on com-

missions for managing projects. The organization was forced to take on a large number of projects while leaving strategic action and the technical knowledge of its staff in the background.

UNDP used tools and joint programming space together with the other agencies of the UN system in Brazil. A common argument that international technical cooperation still has a role to play in a country with a high degree of inequality and heterogeneous capacities is consistent with the assessments made by different analysts and institutions. But there remains the challenge of achieving a better distribution of public resources among the many UN agencies that operate in Brazil.

In spite of the difficulties of the last decade, there is still space for more purposeful action by UNDP in Brazil. This may have to be more selective and less diversified than in the past. There are new topics in the human development agenda that have not been fully incorporated into the governmental agenda, for example, and that might be addressed in second-generation advocacy.

New funding and action alternatives are being considered, although they have so far proved limited and cannot be interpreted as proof of actual change. But if the current situation is maintained, UNDP's possibilities for producing substantive contributions and powerful advocacy will continue to be constrained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should improve the quality and format of dialogue with the Brazilian Government.
- A new thematic agenda should be identified in coordination with the Brazilian Government.
- Together with the Brazilian Government, UNDP should explore new forms of funding for its cooperation programme in Brazil.
- The profile of the UNDP technical team should be gradually changed. Re-qualifying dialogue with the Government based on thematic groups and identifying new demands in the development agenda will require boosting the team's technical capacity and investing in better strategic planning.
- Dialogue should be established with national oversight institutions.
- UNDP should offer operational support more selectively, directing it to areas with less institutional capacity, and resume the function of contributing technically to selected projects.
- Advocacy, dialogue and knowledge generation should be strengthened.
- UNDP should optimize its functional mix (advocacy, technical assistance, knowledge generation, policy dialogue and operational support) by taking advantage of the expertise that exists within.
- UNDP should adjust its operational rules to optimize administrative processes and reduce the degree of uncertainty, allowing partners to feel more secure in using UNDP management and to reduce response times.
- UNDP should acquire more knowledge and confer greater visibility on the global network associated with the UNDP system. Some changes at headquarters could facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences.

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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