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## UNDP IN GUYANA

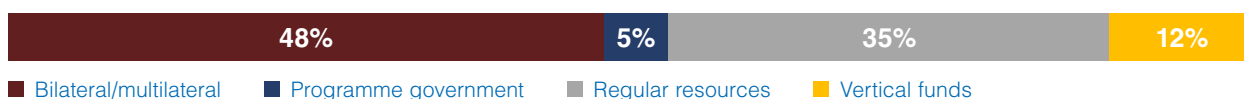
Guyana has graduated from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries status and has now become a lower-middle-income country. Despite progress, it continues to face challenges of out-migration of educated people, poverty and uneven levels of human development. Other pressing needs rose from the devastating floods of 2005 and the 2006 elections. Environmental issues are of particular importance due to the country's key role in global

forestry conservation.

UNDP interventions have contributed to poverty reduction, democratic governance, environment and energy, and disaster recovery and risk reduction. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2010.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2001-2008: \$23.7 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008



#### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2001-2008 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP contributed to Guyana's overall development priorities including through positive synergies among all programme areas. The main challenges entailed finding the appropriate mix of policy-oriented and community-based interventions, ensuring that useful links were forged between the two levels, and choosing the right combination of short-term initiatives so that longer-term programme outcomes could be achieved.

In poverty reduction, UNDP helped strengthen national capacities in line with the main poverty reduction strategy paper objectives, but most stakeholders still see UNDP as a source of funds for small-scale, community-based work. Efforts are now being made to shift the focus towards broader, upstream initiatives in line with corporate priorities. UNDP will need to realistically consider what it can contribute at the grass-roots level due to its limited resources and the need to focus on underlying policy and structural issues.

In democratic governance, UNDP assisted with achieving a peaceful election in 2006. It was also successful in promoting new paradigms of social inclusion, although it was very difficult to judge whether any of this work produced deeper changes in terms of breaking down ethnic tensions. So far, very little has been done in public administration reform to enhance institutional or policy frameworks related to accountability and transparency.

New initiatives to strengthen aid coordination and poverty monitoring may address these gaps to some extent.

The environment and energy thematic area has gradually expanded support for emerging priorities and needs in renewable energy, with an increasing focus on access to alternative energy sources in underserved rural areas. Commendable progress was made in strengthening the management and protection of natural resources as well as in the economic and social empowerment of Amerindian communities in the hinterlands. UNDP could play a highly strategic role on these issues in the future.

UNDP had a prominent position in coordinating the immediate response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the 2005 floods. It helped to strengthen institutional capacities for more sustained disaster prevention and risk management, and deepened prospects for better long-term enforcement of existing standards/codes that govern coastal development and land use planning, as well as community involvement in disaster planning and response.

Support for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to improved government commitment and stronger systems for tracking the country's progress on global development indicators. UNDP also maintained consistent engagement with vulnerable groups such as Amerindians and the rural poor; this could be further

strengthened with clear action plans or strategies. Weaknesses in gender mainstreaming demonstrated the need to ensure that gender is thoroughly integrated into the future programme.

Despite a generally adequate balance between short-term responsiveness and longer-term development objective, high demands placed on the country office during 2005 and 2006 due to floods and elections did create some challenges in maintaining focus on longer term work. Continuous emphasis on partnership-building included reaching out to involve civil society and the private sector. These partnerships need to deepen, however, as do those with donors outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Efficiency and sustainability varied. Many examples of good managerial efficiencies included the strong synergies among thematic areas, the leveraging of resources, and acceptable financial disbursement rates and administrative expense ratios. But many projects had to be extended due to implementation delays.

Some small-scale investments may not have been adequate to assure lasting change. Positive examples of sustainability were mainly at the individual or organizational levels; fewer examples were found at the policy and institutional levels. On-going challenges with small-scale or 'pilot' economic development initiatives arose in

terms of their financial or organizational viability, and their ability to produce lasting development benefits. Lessons learned from pilot initiatives were not always extracted and applied.

Programme management was strong, but with room for continued improvements in some areas. Some difficulties included weaknesses in results formulation and outcome level evaluation and reporting as well as delays in project planning, approval and implementation. There were also challenges with follow-up, monitoring and quality assurance to identify problems and take corrective action in a timely fashion. These issues were being addressed but will continue to require sustained effort.

Overall, UNDP's comparative advantage corresponded not just to the amount of funding it provided, which was relatively modest compared to major international donors, but also the degree to which its strategic inputs in capacity development, small-scale demonstration projects and peacebuilding, as well as its flexibility and adaptability, were highly valued by partners at all levels. Its future, strategic relevance is likely to rely mainly on the quality and precision of upstream policy work as well as technical or capacity development inputs. A strategic focus on key institutional reforms could help strengthen the country's future as an emerging middle-income country.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should continue to reorient its programming towards higher-level policy change and strategic upstream work in support of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper-II and Low Carbon Development Strategy.
- Consistent with the overall UNDP human development approach, UNDP Guyana should continue to strengthen its strategic approach to working with vulnerable groups and communities.
- UNDP should develop a detailed strategy for capacity development that is focused on deep institutional change rather than on individual training or one-off knowledge transfer.
- UNDP should improve sustainability by working with implementing partners and beneficiaries to create realistic exit strategies for projects, extract and apply lessons, and replicate project effects.
- UNDP should improve its partnership approach with non-state actors, as well as help strengthen the level of dialogue between these groups and the Government.
- UNDP should continue to facilitate strong dialogue and relationships between lead development partners including the Government and the UN system when requested and appropriate.
- UNDP should develop a strategy and action plan for fostering South-South cooperation in-country, regionally and internationally on a range of key development issues.
- UNDP should develop a strategy and action plan for mainstreaming gender equality issues.
- UNDP headquarters should improve its corporate support for the Resident Representative role in Guyana.
- UNDP should continue to improve its mechanisms and systems to manage for development results.

## 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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