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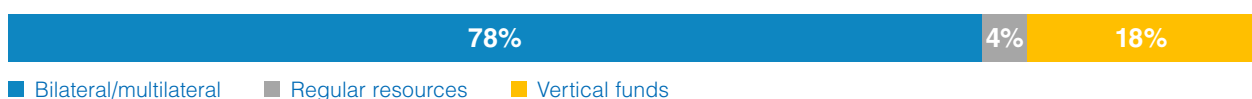
## UNDP IN SEYCHELLES

Seychelles has made remarkable social and economic progress, with advances on all social and economic indicators. Significant individual, institutional, financial and technical capacity has been established. But maintaining social achievements has put increasing strain on national finances, and economic growth has been based on unsustainable borrowing. The country has faced growing environmental and governance challenges.

UNDP programmes have supported environmental protection and sustainable energy development, governance, disaster response and preparedness, and, as a cross-cutting issue, poverty reduction and the Millennium Development Goals. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2009.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2009: \$9 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2009



#### TOTAL APPROVED RESOURCES BY SECTOR, 2003-2010 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

With a relatively high standard of living and high capacity, Seychelles has a reduced need for international cooperation, yet this remains important to a country that is a small island developing state. It is far from markets, highly dependent on imports and cannot appropriately diversify its economy. Like all international partners, UNDP faces challenges from working in such a context, including high overhead. But it built a large programme where a key strength was its continuous presence, unlike most bilateral and multilateral development partners.

UNDP support has generally been well aligned to national policies and priorities in the environment and governance sectors, and closely aligned with globally agreed priorities for development. In work on the environment, there were achievements in raising awareness, increasing understanding, and developing capacity through training, new tools and on-the-job learning. Major delays in the approval of funds and the start-up of interventions limited contributions, however.

The Government and UNDP set up a single project coordination unit for all UNDP-implemented Global Environment Facility projects. But many stakeholders felt that overall management capacity in government agencies and the Department of Environment declined, for a variety of reasons that could have included the inadequate anchoring of UNDP support in national

institutions and plans. Project designs were based on substantive issues but missed proper assessments, partly because international forces drove the design.

In democratic governance, support to the Parliament and the judiciary was strategic, designed to respond to well-defined needs and well institutionalized. Through a series of catalytic and well-planned interventions, UNDP contributed to making human rights issues visible and more recognized as legitimate concerns. Sustainability and impact would probably have been strengthened by better coordination and institutionalization of activities with, for example, the Gender and Population Unit in the Social Development Department.

Other assistance sought to build civil society capacities to support vulnerable populations. But support was not based on an adequate assessment of the existing institutional context, since the Ministry of Health and Social Development already had a mechanism for supporting vulnerable populations via civil society that seemed to be functioning well.

UNDP helped build capacity to respond to disasters and manage risk reduction, working with the Department of Risk and Disaster Management. It responded effectively to the Asian tsunami, playing a key role in the coordination of resource mobilization and making a difference at a critical moment.

Certain cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality and human rights, were addressed through project interventions, but not well mainstreamed throughout assistance. Support to parliamentarians and the judiciary did not address gender issues. UNDP also missed opportunities to build links across programme areas. Assistance to the National Human Resource Development Council could have helped develop capacity on the environment.

A general weakness was an incomplete understanding of capacity development. Notably, ongoing public-sector reform presented unique capacity challenges and opportunities that were not fully understood or exploited. In several cases, UNDP provided capacity development solutions that may have been more appropriate to other countries. Much of the capacity built was ad hoc or incomplete; training sessions often became general awareness-raising exercises.

Programme management was adequate for the size and complexity of the programme, but had certain weaknesses. The office did not seem to have the time or people to play a strategic advocacy role or provide substantive guidance on institutional or capacity development. The system of setting targets and indicators, monitoring performance, reporting on performance, and using moni-

toring reports to guide management decisions was very incomplete. Country programme documents bore little resemblance to the activities subsequently implemented.

A major focus of UNDP's work was resource mobilization. It was very successful, but aligning to the strategic thinking of the concerned donor made it difficult for UNDP to be as strategic and influential as it might have been had it used its own funds. With the European Union, UNDP came on board as the implementer of activities already designed. In some cases, it added substantive value, particularly with regard to human rights, but was not in a position to make major changes.

Seychelles is now entering a new phase of development and renewed relations with the Bretton Woods institutions. As they support macroeconomic reform, financial management and overall public sector reform, it seems unlikely that UNDP can add value by directly intervening in these areas. But it can act in complementary areas, notably, in social sectors likely to be negatively affected and with vulnerable communities. UNDP can support its long-term partners to develop skills and tools to implement the reforms and make the best use of any opportunities emerging through them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should develop a new approach to country programming in Seychelles. The country programme should respond more directly to national targets, should be fully embedded and owned, and should balance more equitably the forces driving UNDP interventions. As part of an overhaul of planning and programming, UNDP should also strengthen project planning and management.
- With respect to the ongoing public-sector reform process, UNDP has a role to play in the forthcoming country programme. UNDP should clearly define this role. This includes determining gaps and weaknesses in the reform process and then strategically positioning UNDP based on its comparative strengths.
- UNDP should support an institutional analysis and capacity assessment of the Department of Environment. This can be done as an integral part of the process of developing the third Environmental Management Plan of Seychelles, with finances from ongoing projects. This would include establishing indicators of capacity and capacity development.
- As part of the forthcoming country programme, UNDP should develop a clear strategy to guide its work with and its support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This may be based on a transparent analysis of the justification of supporting/creating NGOs to implement government policy or to address national priorities.
- In order to effectively implement the forthcoming country programme, UNDP should determine ways of strengthening its Seychelles office. If UNDP is to be more effective in socioeconomics and public-sector development and institutional strengthening in the country, it requires stronger capacity related to these issues as well as in advocacy.
- As part of the preparation of the next country programme, UNDP should explore a broader range of international development partnerships.

## 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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