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UNDP IN SUDAN

Sudan has experienced longstanding civil conflict and widespread poverty. Development, particularly in the South, has been negatively affected by prolonged conflict, now entering its sixth decade. It has been the principal cause of the displacement of an estimated 4 million people. War and the Government's efforts to preserve internal stability have diverted resources away

from development and social sectors.

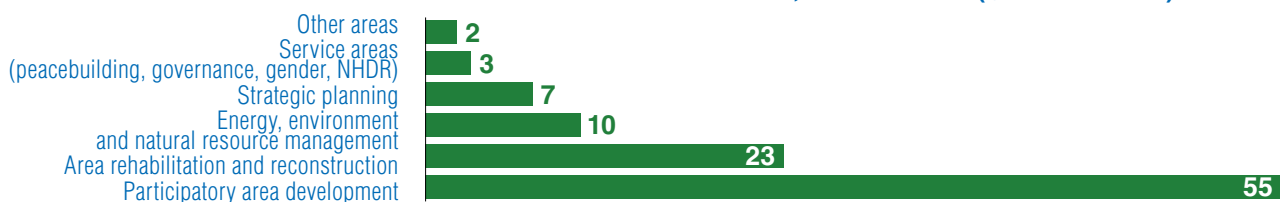
UNDP programmes comprised area-based strategies, peacebuilding, rehabilitation, and energy and the environment, among other issues. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1997 to 2001.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 1997-2001: \$44 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1997-2001



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 1997-2001 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Area-based programmes were a major focus of UNDP support in Sudan. Directly addressing some of the most fundamental issues associated with poverty alleviation, gender and participatory development, they represented a viable development model that could be used in peacebuilding, although sustainability and cost effectiveness remain concerns. The programmes established mechanisms centred on community-based organizations—a groundbreaking advance in Sudan that has translated into real improvements in people's lives. The Government has not replicated the approach, however, and the absence of recurrent government budgets, wages and essential infrastructure investments at the local level have diverted finances away from village revolving funds to cover basic social services. This weakened the viability of the funds, which were already poorly resourced.

UNDP's nascent peacebuilding activities showed considerable potential in terms of strategic positioning and relevance as well as resource mobilization. They focused on the creation of mechanisms and processes for information-sharing and coordination. But UNDP did not yet appear to have a clear strategy to guide its work in this area, which could potentially involve assistance on a range of conflicts. Increasing collaboration with the World Bank to introduce some of the policy founda-

tions for a possible future participation of Sudan in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative could create opportunities for future dialogue on the peace process.

The energy and environment programme produced significant results, despite being for the most part focused on international conventions. Achievements such as increased access to safe water, increased vegetation cover and production of seedlings have had a positive effect on people's lives. Raised awareness of environmental issues, locally and nationally, may have laid the groundwork for eventual policy change, although activities were treated in relative isolation. Potential linkages with other programmes were not exploited.

UNDP initiated preparatory activities in civil service reform and support to the National Assembly that are unlikely to be strategic at the present time, but could be reconsidered in the future if circumstances permit. New initiatives in the area of local governance hold some promise in terms of an enabling environment and linkages to UNDP's prior assistance.

A number of management issues greatly impacted programme performance and UNDP's reputation in Sudan. Insufficient substantive and financial monitoring by the NEX Management Support Unit and UNDP resulted in a serious financial crisis. Annual audits by the

Sudanese Auditor General warned repeatedly of serious shortcomings, but neither the unit nor the UNDP country office followed up on the findings and recommendations. The UNDP Senior Management Team took measures to improve UNDP's image among donors and national partners, but the office will need to build internal capacities to deliver programmes and account for resources. UNDP headquarters will have to provide extensive support and resources aimed at strengthening the office. If UNDP is unable to effectively address its resource and capacity constraints in Sudan, it should consider closing down its office and reallocating its resources to other priority offices.

Development assistance in Sudan is dwarfed by humanitarian assistance, and inter-agency rivalries are strong. Both issues affected UNDP's ability to take the lead in coordination within and beyond the UN system. Based on previous experience and on emerging development opportunities, the new Resident Coordinator should have a UNDP background to bolster both the country office and the development agenda. UNDP also needs to create greater general awareness of its programmes among potential development partners. The

failure to do so, at least prior to 2000, negatively affected its profile and credibility.

UNDP's key partners in Sudan have been the Government and local beneficiaries in the area-based programmes. UNDP was restricted somewhat in developing partnerships with non-governmental organizations due to their relative scarcity after restrictions were placed on them, and to their reorientation towards humanitarian assistance. These factors have undermined areas of potential collaboration as originally envisaged in the areas of advocacy and rural development.

Although the UNDP office has managed to mobilize \$4 million in cost sharing, resource mobilization has been negatively affected by sanctions leading to an exclusive emphasis on humanitarian assistance and the use of the Consolidated Appeals Process as the sole mechanism for pledging assistance to Sudan.

On balance, UNDP's activities were often ad hoc. It needs to develop a more coherent and relevant country programme. Specifically, with a window of opportunity for peace opening in Sudan's civil war, UNDP is uniquely placed to bridge the gap from humanitarian assistance to development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should refocus its programme on conflict resolution and peacebuilding, building on and adapting the approaches and models of community-based development applied during the past several cycles.
- The refocused programme should support the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Framework as well as other viable ongoing initiatives.
- UNDP should explore ways to operate in rebel-held territories and work across Regional Bureaux.
- UNDP should further cultivate linkages with the World Bank, particularly with a view to creating conditions that would be conducive to the continuation of the peace process and to more effective resource management.
- UNDP should urgently make a realistic assessment of the preparatory projects in its current portfolio with a view to weeding out those that are unlikely to be politically viable or worthwhile at the present time.
- UNDP should apply a variation of direct execution as the central modality for programme delivery.
- UNDP should link its area-based peacebuilding with programmes to help strengthen local governance.
- The UNDP programme should focus even more heavily on the achievement of sustainability in all dimensions.
- Innovative mechanisms and partnerships will be needed to ensure sustainability.
- If UNDP is to adequately reposition itself, the country office needs sufficient resources of its own.
- Programmes funded from central resources such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) should be contingent upon the allocation of sufficient national resources to ensure follow-up and implementation.
- Peacebuilding activities should graduate from the current focus on mechanisms and processes for collaboration and dialogue to an increased focus on concrete programmes addressing developmental dimensions.
- While programme build-up needs to enable the UNDP office to exploit opportunities as they arise as a result of the political process, it should be gradualist with a view to enabling the office to build its capacity sufficiently.
- UNDP should appoint a Resident Coordinator with sufficient development experience to place the international response to peacebuilding needs on an appropriate footing beyond a humanitarian emphasis.

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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