



IEO | INDEPENDENT
Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme

EVALUATION

OF UNDP SUPPORT TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES



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Full Report can be accessed at:

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/poverty-ldc.shtml>

Illustrated Summary: Evaluation of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries

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FOREWORD



It is my pleasure to present this comprehensive assessment of UNDP support to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (LDCs), covering the period 2014 to 2017. The evaluation assessed UNDP's contribution to reducing poverty across five streams of UNDP support: inclusive growth and employment, local economic development, sustainable livelihoods, early economic revitalization, and Millennium Development Goal (MDG)/Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) integration.



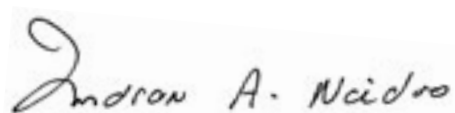
The evaluation comes at a time when countries are in the process of imbedding the SDGs into their national development strategies. Several challenges must be addressed if LDCs are to achieve their SDG targets. Dealing with growth-poverty-inequality dynamics requires not only sound fiscal measures, sustained redistributive policies, and addressing institutional and infrastructure deficits, but also interventions that lead to job-creating growth and productive capacities. Simultaneously, LDCs need to address climate-related vulnerabilities that are impeding growth and hindering poverty reduction. If disparities across a country's regions and segments of the population are not dealt with, this will inhibit poverty reduction. LDCs have sizeable financing needs and therefore international support, through concessional finance, remains extremely important.

The systemic and macroeconomic challenges faced by LDCs are taken into account in much of UNDP's programme support, and UNDP has allocated a significant proportion of its regular resources to LDCs. Given the dynamics of country-level programme support, UNDP rightly considers graduation from the LDC category as one of numerous milestones in the trajectory of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Institutional capacity building and policy support provided by UNDP has contributed to LDCs' national development efforts to reduce poverty. Globally, UNDP's approach to addressing poverty has evolved, and new tools were introduced during the Strategic Plan period 2014-2017. Inclusive growth initiatives combined with environment and climate resilience support provided greater opportunities for demonstrating income-generation and sustainable livelihood models. Recent efforts to partner with the private sector to harness market forces for positive social impact offer UNDP a potentially transformative way of working in the future. In conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, UNDP's role and contribution to economic revitalization have been important.



The evaluation recognizes these achievements and calls for greater attention to inclusive growth and employment support to generate scalable and transformative solutions for enhancing productive capacities. The enabling environment in LDCs for private investment is evolving and needs a more catalytic thrust to de-risk, as well as troubleshoot, efforts to blend local and international private capital with concessional funds. In conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, economic revitalization efforts need a phased approach linked to longer-term efforts to address structural challenges of employment and income-generation capacities and investments. In addition, further efforts are warranted to ensure that community-level sustainable livelihood activities are integrated into environment and climate change adaptation programmes.

The evaluation acknowledges the major role that UNDP plays in support of poverty reduction in LDCs and lays out a number of recommendations for further strengthening this support, consistent with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021. I hope this evaluation will serve to inform the organization as it further enhances its contribution to inclusive growth, sustainable livelihoods and employment.



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BACKGROUND

The UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) carried out an evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction in the least developed countries (LDCs). The evaluation, will contribute to the development of corporate programme strategies on poverty reduction and sustainable development and strengthen the accountability of UNDP to global and national development partners, including the UNDP Executive Board.

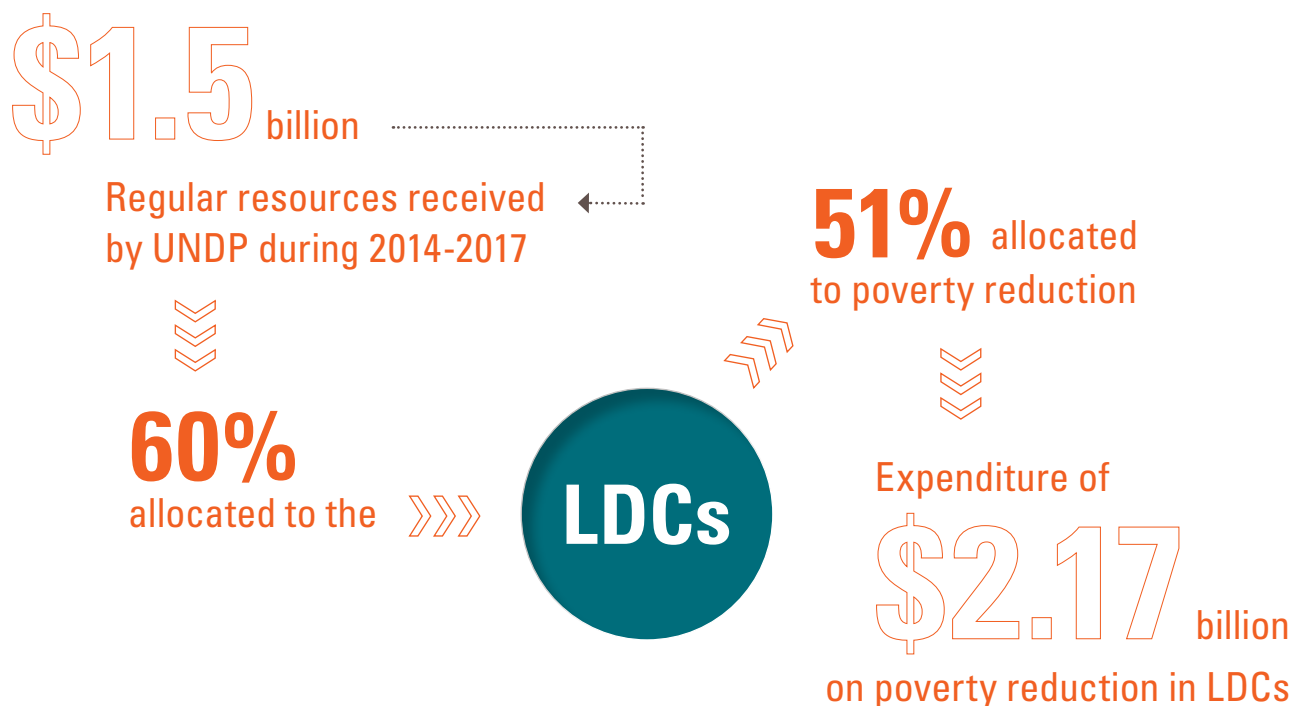
This evaluation is a follow-up to the 2013 IEO evaluation on UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction ([DP/2013/3](#)). It also examines UNDP's programmatic response to subsequent Executive Board deliberations and decisions that followed the 2013 evaluation. This evaluation, however, focuses on the LDCs, a key area of UNDP support, to allow for a deeper analysis of countries in similar economic situations where UNDP is a major provider of support and to consider factors related to the

graduation of countries from LDC status. The IEO will be assessing UNDP programming in middle-income countries in 2019.

UNDP has allocated a significant proportion of its regular resources to the LDCs. Of the \$1.5 billion in regular resources received by UNDP during 2014-2017, 60 percent was assigned to the LDCs, of which 51 percent was allocated to poverty reduction.

During this period UNDP programme expenditure averaged \$4.3 billion a year with an increase to \$4.5 billion in 2017.

Expenditure on poverty reduction in LDCs in the same period was \$2.17 billion, which accounted for 41 percent of the overall LDC portfolio (\$474 million in regular resources and \$1,698 million in other resources). In terms of regional distribution, Africa had the highest expenditure (62 percent of the \$2.17 billion), followed by Asia and the Pacific (24 percent) and the Arab States (12 percent).



WHAT WE EVALUATED

The evaluation assessed the contribution of country programmes and of global and regional programmes to reducing poverty across five streams of UNDP support: inclusive growth and employment; local economic development; sustainable livelihoods; early economic revitalization; and Millennium Development Goal(MDG)/ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) integration. The evaluation covered all LDCs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States and Haiti in the Caribbean. For a comparative analysis, programmes in the countries that have transitioned to middle-income status since 2010 were also included.

UNDP country programmes and global and regional programmes and projects for the period 2014 to 2017 were evaluated. The assessment included the positioning of UNDP support to LDCs; the contribution of UNDP to national poverty reduction capacity development; its convening role vis-à-vis international cooperation and United Nations efforts for sustainable development outcomes; and the progress made by UNDP on its commitments to expand cooperation with the private sector.

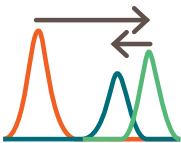
The main objectives of the evaluation are to



Assess the role and contribution of UNDP to support national efforts aimed at poverty reduction in the LDCs.



Examine the extent to which UNDP leveraged its programmes in the areas of environment, local development and crisis prevention to promote sustainable poverty reduction approaches.



Identify factors that have affected UNDP's contribution.



METHODS USED

Drawing on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 Theory of Change (ToC) for each programme area, this evaluation has established an aggregated ToC for assessing UNDP's contribution to poverty reduction in the LDCs. The ToC provides a framework for assessing five streams of poverty reduction support spread across seven programme outcomes outlined in the Strategic Plan. The ToC outlines the contributory pathways of poverty reduction programmes in order to understand the extent of UNDP programme support given a particular LDC context (What did UNDP do?), the approach of the contribution (Were UNDP programmes appropriate for achieving national results?), the process of the contribution (How did the contribution occur?), and the significance of the contribution (What is the contribution, and did UNDP accomplish its intended objectives?).

The ToC distinguishes between immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes, recognizing that some of the components are iterative. Immediate outcomes are outputs of UNDP initiatives that are likely to contribute to programme outcomes. The line of accountability of UNDP programmes was considered to be at the intermediary outcome level. The evaluation recognizes that poverty reduction and sustainable development outcomes are long term and nationally driven, and the extent and pace with which they are addressed significantly determines programme outcomes. Due to the ways in which UNDP works closely with national governments and other actors in support of their national development priorities, it was not practical in all instances to separate UNDP programme contributions from other ongoing efforts or to look at UNDP's contribution in isolation.

Key areas of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Outputs of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Intermediary outcomes

Outcomes

Impact

Inclusive growth, employment and social protection



Transformation of productive capacities that are sustainable and livelihood-intensive; advance women's economic empowerment; provide inclusive and sustainable protection; national capacity building for planning; national development plans on poverty (outputs 1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 7.3)

Local economic development and basic services



Enabling capacity of subnational-level institutions for delivering services leading to job-creation; subnational transformation of productive capacities (outputs 1.1, 3.2)

Sustainable livelihoods



Sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, biodiversity; scaling up action on climate change adaptation and management; disaster risk reduction; increased energy efficiency and universal modern energy access (outputs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.5, 5.2, 5.3)

Early economic revitalization



Early economic revitalization from the humanitarian phase after crisis (output 6.1)

MDGs/SDGs, results-based management and aid effectiveness



Consensus on completion of the MDG and SDG agenda; strengthening monitoring of progress; access and management of official development assistance and other global financing (outputs 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.8)

Strengthen inclusive national development policies, processes and programmes to reduce poverty, inequality and vulnerability

Enable measures to improve the quality of growth (reduce jobless growth)

Strengthen capacities to improve human assets and to reduce economic vulnerability

Enable structural transformation processes

Enhance processes for the adoption of integrated policy solutions

Accelerate processes to address intersecting inequalities (including gender)

Enable private sector engagement

Strengthen policy environment for graduation

Reduce multi-dimensional poverty




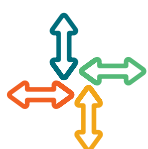

Reduce inequality (including gender inequality)

Reduce vulnerability to poverty

Eradiation of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion

Data collection methods and sources

The evaluation included multiple methods and took an iterative approach to gather multiple perspectives to measure UNDP performance.

Methods	Sources	Coverage
Country case studies 	15 country case studies, including ongoing independent country programme evaluations	Africa: Angola,* Comoros,* Ethiopia, Madagascar,* Malawi, Mali,* Senegal, Uganda Arab States: Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen* Asia-Pacific: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Samoa+ Latin America and the Caribbean: Haiti
Desk studies 	8 countries	Africa: Equatorial Guinea,+ Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Togo Arab States: Somalia Asia-Pacific: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives+
Regional studies 	2 regional hubs	Africa: Regional Service Centre, Addis Ababa Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok Regional Hub; Global Shared Service Centre, Malaysia
Meta-synthesis of evaluations 	38 countries, 158 decentralized evaluations	Africa: Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia Arab States: Somalia, Sudan, Yemen Asia-Pacific: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives,+ Myanmar, Nepal and Samoa+
Interviews 	475 development actors	UNDP headquarters, regional hubs and country office management and staff; representatives of relevant UN programmes, funds and agencies; representatives of permanent missions to the UN; multilateral and bilateral agencies and other development organizations; representatives of civil society organizations; partner national governments; multilateral and bilateral representatives based in programme countries; private sector

*Independent country programme evaluations under way in 2018.

+ Countries that recently graduated from the LDC category were also included in the assessment.

WHAT WE FOUND

This section presents a summary of the evaluation's findings across the programme themes assessed.



Support to LDC graduation

Although UNDP does not have a dedicated strategy around the Istanbul Programme of Action, the thematic areas of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 collectively seek to address the key drivers of poverty and inequality and are relevant across programme countries, including LDCs. UNDP has programmes in all 47 LDCs (31 in Africa, 12 in Asia and the Pacific, 3 in the Arab States and 1 in the Caribbean). UNDP country programmes demonstrate contributions to the deliverables of the Programme of Action, such as crisis mitigation and resilience-building strategies, climate change adaptation, resource mobilization for the GCF, good governance, and gender equality and the empowerment of women.



Policy formulation and institutional capacity development

UNDP support for policy analysis in several LDCs enabled formulation of appropriate strategies underpinned by people and an inclusive livelihood-centred approach. Policy engagement covered a broad span of policies, plans and strategies directed towards pro-poor enhancement of productive capacities and structural transformation. The UNDP contribution is more evident in creating apex institutions and strengthening institutional capacities to bridge critical functional gaps. Government counterparts valued the ability of UNDP to respond effectively to a wide array of institutional capacity support needs, sourcing

specialist international expertise to augment staff capacities, mobilizing multi-year donor funding for operations and commissioning analytical studies. There are several examples where UNDP contributed to the capacity development of key institutions having direct roles in shaping pro-poor policies and actions.

The UNDP contribution is more evident in creating apex institutions and strengthening institutional capacities to
BRIDGE CRITICAL FUNCTIONAL GAPS.

The results from policy support are difficult to establish in isolation, since their success depended on complementary sector action plans and resource allocations to give effect to policies, which were often beyond the scope of UNDP support. While UNDP policy engagement was demand-driven and often determined by the absorption capacity of national institutions, there are areas where UNDP could have been more proactive in informing national policies by drawing from its community projects.



Millennium Development Goals/ Sustainable Development Goals

UNDP led the conceptualization of the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) framework and its promotion as a United Nations system-wide tool.



UNDP facilitated multi-agency MAPS missions in 26 countries, of which 11 are LDCs. The mainstreaming exercises focused on analysing the alignment of national development plans and sector strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals, integrating the Goals into national development planning frameworks and examining policy areas and sectors with the greatest multiplier effects. Diagnostics were carried out to inform policy options on the national response to the Goals, with renewed poverty eradication commitments and targets. An issue that needs to be addressed in the conduct of the MAPS is providing context-specific expert solutions, rather than an array of options. Plans in which the Goals have been mainstreamed have led to improved financial assessments and budgetary allocations indexed to national targets for the Goals. Sufficient thrust on MAPS will be critical to maintain the momentum of integrating the Goals. Adequate technical composition, engagement of relevant United Nations agencies and other development actors will be critical in providing solutions that can be adopted by countries.

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CONTEXT-SPECIFIC
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Over the years, the development and promotion of indices highlighting human development and multidimensional poverty at the global and country levels have

contributed to policy processes. UNDP has played an important role in advocating a multidimensional approach to poverty at the country level, facilitating discussions on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Decreasing UNDP engagement in the computation of national MPIs contrasts with its continued assistance to governments and the compilation of national and subnational human development indices. A key issue is UNDP's engagement in national MPIs, which is critical for ensuring the credibility of the MPI and follow-up with the government. UNDP positioning on indices at the country level is also critical for its support related to the Goals. UNDP has not consolidated its efforts on global indices, which it has built up over the years, at times conceding its work in this area. These indices assume further importance in the Sustainable Development Goal programming context. Adequate efforts are needed for consolidating UNDP work on indices.

Inclusive growth and employment generation

Inclusive business and markets

UNDP has shown a strong commitment to fostering transformative partnerships with the private sector. UNDP engagement has evolved from providing ad hoc support to the private sector (small- and medium-sized enterprises) in value chains and supplier development, to a more systematic partnership strategy to harness the private sector's potential for inclusive and sustainable growth initiatives. UNDP engagement in policy support, programme implementation, institutional entry points, country presence, networks and convening power have been key elements and a formidable value proposition in attracting the private sector into inclusive market development

initiatives. UNDP not only facilitated public-private connections but also brought in complementary resources to address policy and institutional bottlenecks to value enhancement for private actors while ensuring inclusion and the beneficial participation of poorer sections of the society. These are investments that private sector actors would not undertake on their own and represented significant and tangible benefits of partnering with UNDP.

Inclusive business and markets were prioritized to integrate bottom-of-pyramid segments of the population as consumers, suppliers, employees and business holders in value chains and markets. However, UNDP has yet to use its comparative advantage of country presence and credibility to scale up work in this area. UNDP value chain interventions that are scattered and small in scale face challenges in balancing micro, meso and macro aspects and achieve limited results. Inclusive market development initiatives need to operate at the micro (small-scale producers), meso (value chain linkages) and macro (policy, infrastructure and incentives) levels. Also, micro, meso and macro interventions cannot be pursued in isolation or in parallel and need to be sequenced properly to have results. These are best addressed under well-formulated and resourced sector-level strategies and action plans. Linking its interventions to a well-coordinated strategy spanning the full range of the value chain has been difficult for UNDP, in large measure due to a space crowded with multiple donors and numerous implementation arrangements.

Although trade support is not a major aspect of its service offering to LDCs, UNDP has contributed to LDC efforts to build and sustain external market access.

UNDP has channelled its trade-related support primarily through the Enhanced Integrated Framework, the principal multilateral mechanism for trade-related technical assistance exclusively for LDCs, as one of the six core implementing partner agencies. De-prioritization of trade-related support in UNDP since 2013 and the absence of joint approaches and insufficient efforts to build partnerships reduced the UNDP contribution to trade-related efforts in LDCs. Lack of engagement in trade-related issues is a missed opportunity, since LDCs are seeking assistance to become more competitive and further integrated into regional and global markets. Governments want more hands-on support, which is not possible for non-resident agencies, although they may be supporting countries in some areas.

Although trade support is not a major aspect of its service offering to LDCs, UNDP has contributed to LDC efforts to build and sustain

EXTERNAL MARKET ACCESS.

UNDP piloted several initiatives on financial inclusion and access to finance, with some degree of success in integrating them into national programmes. Access to financial services is one of the keys to alleviating poverty and achieving sustainable economic growth, and a powerful instrument for self-empowerment by enabling the poor, especially women, to become economic agents of change.



The UNDP livelihood portfolio includes several interventions related to financial inclusion and access in diverse LDC settings. The main interventions have been in the establishment and strengthening of micro-finance sectors and institutional mechanisms. Establishing linkages with ongoing government programmes and policies is not only key to the success of community-level access to finance initiatives, but also a requirement. UNDP was less successful in this regard in several other countries, and even initiatives with good project-level outputs were not scaled up, partly due to poor programme design or lack of government willingness.

Private finance and impact investments

UNDP is developing impact investment instruments and modalities with the private sector but requires a faster pace of expansion of this area. In the LDCs, alternative and impact financing from the private sector, although conceptually relevant, is still on the fringe and nascent in its prospects. While there are some ongoing initiatives in the LDCs, private sector financing successes are mostly in non-LDCs given their more mature financial sectors and capital markets. Unlike traditional development finance, especially grant finance, private sector-led impact investment (also termed blended finance, as it involves a combination of debt, equity, collateral guarantees and other forms of financial support) seeks triple-bottom-line returns and is predicated on commercial viability besides social and environmental outcomes. While blended finance models have found traction in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and in Central Asia and Latin America, with their well-developed financial sectors and

capital markets, they are evolving slowly in other regions, especially LDCs. The trend is changing in Asia, but more so in middle-income countries. UNDP is pursuing a self-sustaining model more appropriate to LDCs, especially the use of challenge funds as incentives to de-risk private sector investment. Despite such initiatives, at present UNDP neither has appropriate mechanisms to manage such instruments nor is ready to embark on new and potentially risky terrain. Nevertheless, impact investment remains a key area to address development finance constraints in LDCs and needs further engagement, and UNDP organizational investment in this area is important.

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**INVESTMENT
INSTRUMENTS** and
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Social protection

Inconsistencies remain between aspirations versus resource investments in social protection programming, reducing the role and contribution of UNDP in this area. For LDCs, the key challenge lies in the design and implementation of national social protection systems that can be financed sustainably through an enabling fiscal space, besides highly targeted external capital. The UNDP comparative advantage in social protection support, as perceived by development actors at the country

level, is its ability to address social protection at a cross-sectoral level compared to the sectoral focus of other United Nations agencies, such as the International Labour Organization, which has the lead mandate in this area. With well-established institutional networks in multiple ministries and its convening role in post-crisis and conflict settings, UNDP is well positioned to engage in this area. Such cross-sectoral social protection efforts are not evident in the LDCs where they are most needed.

Youth economic empowerment

Youth-related support at the country level consisted largely of stand-alone initiatives and was not well integrated with the diverse employment and livelihood initiatives of UNDP. Barring a few exceptions, most youth-focused interventions remained fragmented without sufficient integration with sectoral strategies and plans. Lack of post-programme follow-up and feedback mechanisms led to the ineffective tracking of programme outcomes and constraints.

UNDP work in youth economic empowerment is predominantly at the national level through upstream support to national policy formulation, strategies promoting youth employment, and strengthening of information and networking platforms for youth engagement. UNDP has piloted youth-led social enterprises funded by impact investments such as the Youth Leadership, Innovation and Entrepreneurship project (Youth Co:Lab). However, downstream engagements were often small in scale and lacked integrated interventions combining policy aspects and downstream demand-supply interventions in specific sectors or value chains. Linking youth to short-term income-generating activities has

been easier in economic recovery and rehabilitation contexts given the availability of humanitarian funding.

A large share of the youth economic empowerment portfolio consists of skills development initiatives that delivered livelihood skills training to hundreds of youth beneficiaries. Going beyond the scale of such initiatives, the approach that was followed needs to be revisited, particularly in terms of enabling linkages with sectoral initiatives. The absence of collateral, a crucial gap in bankability and financing of youth enterprise initiatives, has not been systematically addressed. There is scope for exploring collaboration with large regional youth-based programmes of the international financial institutions.

Women's economic empowerment

UNDP interventions included a mix of policy support for gender-responsive frameworks and women-targeted interventions to address the expansion of income opportunities and access to finance. The inclusion of women beneficiaries is ensured in all income-generation, employment and sustainable livelihood programmes, in line with UNDP gender equality policies and practices. It is hard to discern if joint United Nations initiatives in which UNDP participated improved the capacities of government staff in carrying out sound gender analysis, or to use gender-disaggregated data to develop or implement gender-sensitive policies and budgeting processes.

There is minimal impact from one-off, small-scale initiatives targeted at women, especially when carried out in a disconnected fashion, without linkages to upstream policy processes or government scaling up, and apart from other



development assistance programmes. In the absence of enabling policy processes, even successful projects targeting women had limited outcomes.

Local development

UNDP has contributed to a more holistic strategic framework for local governance and local development (LGLD) support that addresses poverty reduction and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overall impact at national and local levels cannot yet be assessed. The UNDP role in urban poverty reduction support still needs to be clarified. In recent years, UNDP has launched several new joint strategic frameworks and global partnerships with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and United Nations Volunteers programme, which established a combined, updated framework for support to local development facilitated by local government.

UNDP role in urban poverty reduction support still **NEEDS TO BE CLARIFIED.**

The integrated framework to support LGLD is one such long-term endeavour that is expected to evolve according to national contexts and the scaling up of local pilots. This and other new global strategies build on national-level engagement in local development and poverty reduction and are relevant for generating joint responses with partner United Nations agencies and other key actors. The new framework will take time to inform country-level responses, and

it is too early to see strategic footprints at the national and subnational levels. Most of the outcomes from these global LGLD initiatives are focused on localizing the Sustainable Development Goals at the subnational level, as significant international support has been promised for translating the 2030 Agenda into national and local objectives and activities.

Instead of pursuing comprehensive engagement, UNDP often gravitates to one-off engagements that are readily funded. This issue needs to be addressed, since it potentially diverts attention away from more strategic urban LGLD engagement in the LDCs.

Where LGLD support achieved the most impact, mutual partnerships enhanced intervention models and efforts for scaling up. Further partnership engagements can improve the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of LGLD support and strengthen the UNDP strategic role in local government reforms and poverty reduction. UNDP played a key role in the implementation of national projects contributing to local economic development and the capacities of local government institutions.

Sustainable livelihoods

Integrated livelihood approaches as part of the environment, energy, and climate change adaptation initiatives at the community level had tangible outcomes. Community-level livelihood initiatives have been an effective tool for mainstreaming environment within community systems, demonstrating linkages to reducing poverty; creating awareness and empowering communities; and providing models that can be replicated. UNDP community-level interventions had concrete outcomes in

enabling adoption of sustainable agriculture and livestock practices, integrated water resources management, improved biodiversity and climate-resilient livelihoods and risk management. Addressing the unsustainable use of natural resources causing widespread degradation of ecosystems, which is primarily linked to rural poverty, has been central to most interventions. Rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructure such as tertiary canals, other watersheds and small dams, enabled farmers to produce two, and in a few cases, even three crops (for example, in Cambodia).

Improvements in livelihoods and resource bases and capacities to manage climate-related risks are factors that retained the interest of participating communities. Integrated interventions by UNDP also contributed to local administrative capacities in land and forest management and biodiversity and ecosystems management. Mechanisms to improve common resources and governance at the community level, along with an enabling policy environment, were key to maintaining the momentum in LDCs where such initiatives are taking root.

UNDP assisted several LDCs to mobilize domestic finance for biodiversity conservation, which underpins rural economic development and livelihoods and proved to be transformative at the ecosystem level. Payments for ecosystem services under biodiversity initiatives contributed to tourism and economic development, positively impacting livelihoods at the household and community levels.

UNDP has yet to effectively leverage its community-level programmes to inform national approaches and policies on sustainable livelihoods. Fragmentation of

projects with significant livelihoods components under the vertical funds has undermined the ability of UNDP to play a greater policy role. Fragmentation of UNDP initiatives in the environment and adaptation portfolio, implemented individually instead of pursuing a more programmatic approach to sustainable environment and livelihoods, undermined the potential of the UNDP contribution to government strategies. While individual environment and adaptation projects are part of the sustainable development framework, there is limited interface among various projects. While the requirements of the vertical funds need a more project-based approach, UNDP did not walk the extra mile to build on these initiatives to engage in public policy processes on sustainable livelihoods.

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While there are organizational policies conducive to promoting resilience, intersecting elements of crises and their linkages have yet to be prioritized in implementation. The LDCs have experienced natural and climate-related disasters (both rapid-onset disasters and droughts), health pandemics and conflict. At any given point



in 10 to 12 LDCs, UNDP programmes are implemented in the context of multiple fragilities. UNDP has programmes in the areas of climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods, inclusive growth and income-generation initiatives, economic revitalization and peacebuilding; it is also progressively adopting ways to improve resilient development. Given this range of support, opportunities were not used to enable an integrated approach to address intersecting linkages between drought and poverty, or drought, conflict and poverty. The project-driven approach reduced the opportunities to advocate for recognizing and addressing such linkages in government efforts as well as in international support.

Economic recovery and revitalization

Community-driven programmes have played a significant role in providing employment and quick economic recovery in post-conflict contexts. However, short-term income-generation support, in the absence of continuity and linkages to long-term employment initiatives, had limited poverty reduction dividends. With exceptions, UNDP programmes have yet to transcend the humanitarian-development divide.

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Economic recovery and revitalization initiatives in conflict settings were often short-term, quick-impact programmes meant to address widespread unemployment, and not designed for long-term sustainable employment creation. Cash for work, microfinance and small-scale enterprise support are among the most common elements in UNDP economic revitalization efforts. While such initiatives serve to boost community-level stability and restoration of peace conditions, they are not designed with long-term sustainable employment or enterprise creation in mind. In post-conflict situations characterized by a collapse or exit of financial services and market service providers, these ecosystems need to be revitalized as well. These issues, however, did not receive adequate attention or consideration for funding in humanitarian assistance contexts, leading to sustainability challenges of even successful short-term interventions.

In most post-conflict contexts, development support modalities are not possible until the country transitions to normal development assistance mode. However, as support in post-conflict contexts shows, there is increasingly a need to break the humanitarian-development divide since a combined approach is essential for longer-term development transition. Despite its organizational expertise, UNDP contributions to economic recovery often failed to take a long-term development perspective. While the 3x6 approach and New Way of Working addressed this limitation, the common challenge is that, in most cases, implementation of the 3x6 approach did not go beyond the first phase of stabilization. Whether it is the New Way of Working or 3x6 approach, partnerships

and collective outcomes will be critical and the way forward. Programmes with a longer duration that address multiple intersecting areas and build on the comparative advantages of a diverse range of actors are critical.

Absence of medium- and
longer-term programming,
economic revitalization
programmes in conflict-affected
LDCs have paid only
limited **POVERTY**
REDUCTION dividends.

An evolving area of UNDP support is private sector engagement in post-conflict countries. While there have been some successes, the extent of private sector engagement does not correspond to the extensive UNDP presence and engagement in post-conflict contexts. UNDP, as well as other agencies, have been cautious about the opportunities and challenges engagement of the private sector can pose in post-conflict reconstruction, employment generation and local economic development. While there is a rationale for such caution, particularly for safeguarding local markets, the private sector is extensively present in conflict and post-conflict contexts, and agencies such as UNDP need well thought out programme models for engaging it in peacebuilding and economic revitalization with long-term development linkages.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

UNDP supported improvements in economic opportunities for women by assisting upstream policy reforms and promoting downstream microcredit schemes and employment opportunities. UNDP had more success when it worked on women-specific initiatives promoting access to finance, enterprise skills and markets. Opportunities for gender mainstreaming in programme design and implementation remain underutilized.

The evaluation finds that most of the results reported on gender pertain to gender mainstreaming rather than the impacts of mainstreaming on reducing gender inequality. UNDP has included women in various poverty reduction initiatives promoting the integration of gender-responsive approaches to income generation and natural resources management in local planning processes. While there are stronger efforts to better mainstream gender considerations, gender-specific development support within interventions is not yet systematic and varies among projects, mainly because gender analysis at the formulation stage is overlooked.

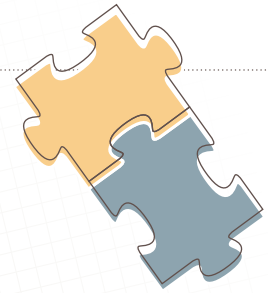


OUR CONCLUSIONS

1 Poverty reduction programme approaches and **AREAS PRIORITIZED BY UNDP** are highly relevant for the LDCs.



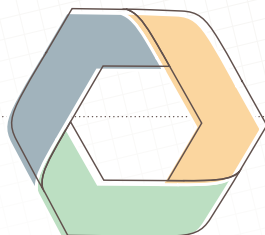
2



UNDP's **LOW SCALE OF ENGAGEMENT** in private sector related work and the **SLOW PACE OF ACTION** is undermining its contribution to poverty reduction.

3

In conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, UNDP's role and contribution to **ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION** have been important. For **SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM POVERTY REDUCTION** medium- and longer-term income-generation efforts are needed earlier in the **CRISIS RECOVERY CYCLE**.



4

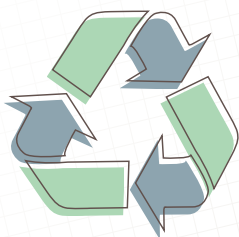


Inclusive growth and employment projects in LDCs could not generate scalable and transformative solutions for **ENHANCING PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES**.

5

UNDP's contribution to **SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS** is often insufficient

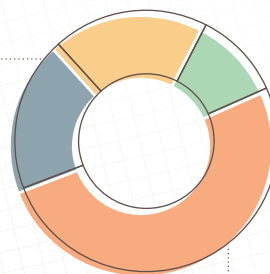
to make a visible difference in many LDCs, due to the small scale of its work in relation to the magnitude of the problem.



6

LACK OF SELECTIVITY IN PROGRAMME CHOICES with regard to

regular resources, inadequate resource mobilization to close programme funding gaps, and insufficient strategic programmatic partnerships have undermined UNDP's contribution.

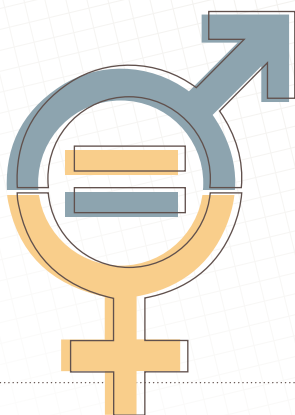


7

Inadequate resource

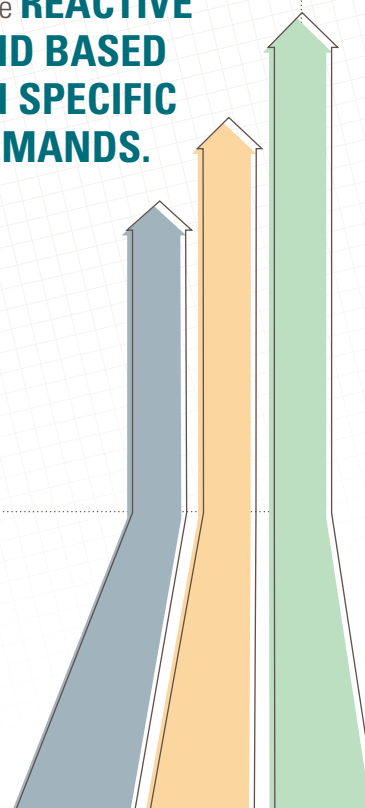
INVESTMENT TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY and

women's empowerment (GEWE) can undermine the effectiveness of UNDP's contributions, particularly in Africa.



8

UNDP support to LDC graduation issues tends to be **REACTIVE AND BASED ON SPECIFIC DEMANDS.**



The conclusions focus on strategic issues and key dimensions of the UNDP role and contribution.



Conclusion 1.

Poverty reduction programme approaches and areas prioritized by UNDP are highly relevant for the LDCs. Globally, UNDP's approach to addressing poverty has evolved, and new tools were introduced during the Strategic Plan period 2014-2017. Inclusive growth initiatives combined with environment and climate resilience support provided greater opportunities for demonstrating income-generation and sustainable livelihood models. In some LDCs, UNDP has been an organization of choice both in policy and implementation support.

UNDP has responded and adapted to changing contexts in its poverty reduction programmes, which has brought about a progressive evolution of conceptual understanding and approaches, especially those espousing multidimensional poverty reduction strategies and implementation of inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods approaches. There was a strong focus on rural poverty reduction and livelihoods. Support for integrated planning and macroeconomic frameworks, green growth, expansion in productive capacities and value chains, and local development have positively contributed to policy improvements. Community approaches to sustainable livelihoods, natural resource management, and enhancing resilience to climate change are areas where UNDP engagement has helped generate tangible local-level impacts. Women's economic

empowerment received sufficient attention across programmes with contributions at the project level. Urban poverty is an evolving area of UNDP programme support that merits greater attention.

Institutional capacity building and policy support provided by UNDP has contributed to LDCs' national development efforts to reduce poverty. UNDP was successful in providing policy support on a range of issues of importance for LDCs, including inclusive growth and livelihoods. UNDP has built a solid track record in raising financial resources for policy and institutional capacity development initiatives, and sourcing specialist expertise from its wide network.

UNDP was consistent in its support for the implementation of the MDGs until the adoption of the SDGs. With the adoption of the SDGs, UNDP has championed the UN Development Group's MAPS approach, designed to assist countries in incorporating the SDGs into national planning and processes. There is momentum and rising demand for tools and technical assistance to formulate and implement SDG plans. UNDP, using its integrated approach and the multidimensional concept of poverty and inequality, is well positioned to support countries in their efforts to implement the SDGs. UNDP can better leverage the indices work of the organization, which complements SDG-related advocacy.

Despite SDG plans prepared by the LDCs, an issue in most countries is their slow implementation and alignment with national policies. SDG integration has remained at a technocratic level and the operationalization of the transformative programming principles and interlinkages among SDGs is evolving slowly. MAPS created opportunities for governments to take stock of existing policies and resources and to identify processes to address development gaps. The value addition of MAPS as a tool for facilitating planning at the national level and applying integrated solutions to poverty reduction depends largely on its ability to provide context-specific and implementable solutions, as opposed to generalized assessments. Also, the success of MAPS, like its predecessor – the MDG Acceleration Framework – will depend on establishing effective partnerships beyond UN agencies.

Efforts to consolidate UNDP's global policy space in poverty reduction is underemphasized. UNDP pioneered several indices on human development, inequality, and multidimensional poverty, which have salience for measuring and reporting progress on the SDGs and for advocating transformative principles of equality and inclusiveness in development processes. This work lacked necessary attention at the global and country level in UNDP programme and advocacy work.



Conclusion 2.

Recent efforts to partner with the private sector to harness market forces for positive social impact offer UNDP a potentially transformative way of working in the future. Some areas of private sector engagement (such as impact finance) are at a formative stage, but hold potential to expand productive capacities and reduce poverty. UNDP's low scale of engagement in this area and the slow pace of action is undermining its contribution to poverty reduction.

UNDP has played an important role in supporting resource mobilization in LDCs. Useful contributions have been made in areas such as sustainable livelihoods, while potential in areas such as employment and private sector contributions remains to be further explored. Successful partnerships with the private sector are an essential part of UNDP's resource mobilization support for SDG fulfilment in LDCs.

UNDP has a dedicated strategy for private sector engagement that recognizes the role and transformative potential of the private sector as partners for development impact. Private sector engagement has broadened beyond small- and medium-sized enterprises and extended to conglomerates, impact finance providers and philanthropic foundations. UNDP's commitment to an inclusive business and markets approach is demonstrated by the large share of core resources invested to catalyze an inclusive



private sector ecosystem for transformative effects on livelihoods improvement and poverty reduction. But the scale of UNDP's engagement continues to be low when compared to private sector engagement in the development sector. UNDP has the potential to bring to private sector partnerships its comparative advantage in policy development, programme implementation and on-the-ground convening power to complement private sector strengths. UNDP has yet to leverage its country support to scale up efforts to engage the private sector, particularly in the LDCs.

The enabling environment in LDCs for private investment is evolving and needs a more catalytic thrust to de-risk and troubleshoot efforts to blend local and foreign private capital with concessional funds. UNDP recognizes the importance of new and alternative financial instruments for facilitating development financing. But such instruments need to be fully supported by LDC governments in order to be successful. UNDP is well suited to facilitate greater private sector participation and galvanize key actors. It is critical that UNDP develops robust and appropriate tools to enable private sector engagement in the LDCs.



Conclusion 3.

In conflict-affected and post-conflict countries, UNDP's role and contribution to economic revitalization have been important. Community-level income-generation initiatives played a vital role in enabling temporary benefits to affected populations. But while early

conflict recovery contexts are conducive to stop-gap job-creation activities, sustainable long-term poverty reduction required medium- and longer-term income-generation efforts earlier in the crisis recovery cycle. In addition, the lack of adequate attention to addressing the interlinking dimensions of multiple fragilities and the challenges of income-generation capacities and investments reduced the contribution to poverty reduction processes in fragile contexts.

For poverty reduction outcomes, economic revitalization efforts need a phased approach linked to longer-term efforts to address structural challenges of employment and income-generation capacities and investments. In the absence of such efforts, UNDP's economic revitalization programmes in the conflict-affected LDCs have paid only limited poverty reduction dividends.

There are strong linkages between multiple fragilities such as poverty, drought and conflict that exacerbate one another, calling for a more integrated response. UNDP supported each of these areas individually, but did not address intersecting linkages among multiple fragilities. Instead of bringing attention to linkages among different fragilities in increasing poverty and conflict, UNDP was often co-opted into the funding mechanisms and their focus.

Fragmentation of funding sources and donor priorities posed challenges to the promotion of integrated initiatives and longer-term focus. Donors recognize the benefits of supporting programme

strategies that are holistic and have a medium- to longer-term perspective in employment and livelihoods creation. However, funding in post-conflict contexts continues to be dominated by humanitarian assistance. To make a better contribution to addressing poverty drivers of conflict, UNDP needs larger, and more predictable, programme budgets within more balanced humanitarian-development initiatives.



Conclusion 4.

Inclusive growth and employment projects in LDCs could not generate scalable and transformative solutions for enhancing productive capacities. Interventions such as micro-enterprise and value chain development necessitate multi-pronged initiatives, spanning from support to community-level enterprise development to market linkages to integration and upscaling. Most initiatives did not combine and integrate these multiple aspects, resulting in limited country-level outcomes.

UNDP programmes addressed pro-poor inclusive growth issues and targeted the most backward development regions in its programme support. UNDP was more successful in enabling short-term employment generation at the community level. However, establishing linkages between successful community-level work and upstream policy and programme processes was more challenging, reducing the sustainability of the outcomes achieved. Initiatives that are a small component of a set of initiatives needed for promoting employment opportunities or productive capacities

have proved to have limited outcomes. UNDP has yet to utilize its cross-country experience, community-level insights and close partnership with government for a more strategic engagement in enabling sustainable income-generation solutions.

While UNDP resources are not sufficient to address the full range of issues, these were not supplemented by forging partnerships at the formative stage of programmes. UNDP was more successful when the appropriate programmatic partnerships were established to anchor the programme models in national or donor programmes. In the absence of this, even strong programme models remained one-off initiatives.



Conclusion 5.

UNDP's contribution to sustainable livelihoods is often insufficient to make a visible difference in many LDCs, due to the small scale of its work in relation to the magnitude of the problem. Also, UNDP did not pay sufficient attention to consolidating its community-level sustainable livelihoods activities in the environment and climate change adaptation areas. Although UNDP's integrated sustainable development approach, which brings together different elements of poverty reduction, is a well thought through strategy, it has to be fully translated into practice.

In UNDP, while there is greater recognition of the criticality of a programmatic approach addressing intersecting dimensions of sustainable development, this



has yet to manifest into programming in the LDCs, particularly specific efforts to leverage the synergies between complementary areas of poverty reduction. Three years into the SDG period, initiatives under various themes of the sustainable development pathways area remain fragmented. UNDP did not build on its comparative advantage of having simultaneous and complementary programmes in inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods to better position itself to inform national policies or other large donor initiatives. Siloed approaches are undermining UNDP's contribution and potential for greater policy influence. The emphasis on interlinking and transformative elements of the signature solutions in the ongoing Strategic Plan 2018-2021 seeks to address this limitation. However, country offices need practical programme models that would enable them to build on the synergies among different programmes areas.



Conclusion 6.

A huge gap is often found between UNDP's corporate policy intent and actual programming and resources. Lack of selectivity in programme choices with regard to regular resources, inadequate resource mobilization to close programme funding gaps, and insufficient strategic programmatic partnerships have undermined UNDP's contribution. Domain expertise is critical for attracting non-core resources for programming, but UNDP has yet to make choices of areas in which it needs to strengthen its technical depth.

Since UNDP's mandate is broad, the organization has programmes in a number of poverty reduction areas, a role dependent on the availability of adequate and consistent funding. UNDP's current regular resources do not support such a role. Although UNDP supported a range of areas, its efforts have had poor traction due to the fragmentation of its initiatives and its engagement in low-end activities rather than a comprehensive response to address structural poverty reduction issues.

To enable sustainable solutions, it is critical to identify emerging areas where UNDP can be well positioned to support national efforts. UNDP has yet to go beyond broad areas it has identified to develop well thought through income-generation and sustainable livelihood solutions that can be applied with necessary country-specific adaptation. By responding to national needs and priorities in an open-ended way, UNDP is inadvertently conveying its lack of focus and specialization. The generalist image is undermining UNDP's contribution and thought leadership. The repositioning of UNDP in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 to address structural challenges to poverty reduction and provide transformative solutions provides opportunities to further harness UNDP's country-level role and re-tool its technical capacities.



Conclusion 7.

Resource investment towards gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) has been significantly reduced. This can undermine the effectiveness of

UNDP's contributions to promote and enable gender equality in poverty reduction and sustainable development in the LDCs, particularly in Africa.

Over the years UNDP has made its intent stronger to GEWE in programme strategies and planning, but implementation is limited. UNDP's two-pronged strategy of targeted GEWE initiatives as well as mainstreaming GEWE across programme areas, while important, remains under-resourced. In LDCs, emphasis on mainstreaming gender equality across programme areas in practice did not translate into gender-informed programming. Women as beneficiaries in UNDP programmes often is considered a substitute for a contribution to gender equality. Given the severity of employment and income-generation challenges for women in the LDCs, there is more scope to inform gender-sensitive national programmes that address the barriers women face in engaging in productive activities and labour markets.



Conclusion 8.

UNDP support to LDC graduation issues tends to be reactive and based on specific demands. Given the uneven prioritization of graduation-related development issues, there is considerable need for policy support and advocacy, especially in addressing non-income dimensions of graduation.

UNDP has provided poverty-related support to LDCs, which has contributed to their graduation efforts, and technical support to UN Secretariat units tasked with assisting

LDCs in their transition to middle-income status. Nevertheless, UNDP has yet to play a more structured role in supporting graduating LDCs to transition smoothly and sustainably to middle-income status. It is not evident that UNDP was able to leverage its country programme presence to provide strategic support that accelerated graduation processes. As the LDC graduation process continues to accelerate, there is a need for policy support and advocacy, especially in addressing non-income dimensions of graduation.

Countries approaching graduation or in the post-graduation transition stages have special needs, which require further attention in country programmes. Loss of market access preferences calls for competitive progression and diversification of sectors and maintaining the growth trajectory without market preferences. Graduating LDCs need support for enhancing their productive capacities in employment and livelihoods creation and mobilizing adequate resources to compensate for the withdrawal of concessional finance.



WAY

Recommendation

1

UNDP should consider a more consistent engagement in a set of poverty reduction subthemes. While engaging different types of programme support, UNDP country programmes should make a distinction between demand-driven services and programmatic engagement, with adequate emphasis on the latter.

Management Response



UNDP appreciates the complexity of developing a consolidated offer on poverty eradication that can meet the needs of a diverse set of countries such as the LDCs. For UNDP, programming and prioritization on the ground are primarily informed by countries' demands and directly guided by their national development plans, the 2030 Agenda and the principle of leaving no one behind. Regional and country programmes are always based on comprehensive context analysis, the comparative advantages of UNDP and robust theories of change and are in alignment with the Strategic Plan and the 2030 Agenda.

Recommendation

2

UNDP should better define for government counterparts the poverty reduction areas where it intends to stake out a strong technical support role and detail the substantive tools and solutions it can provide for sustainable income generation and livelihoods.

Management Response



Signature solution 1, keeping people out of poverty, addresses interconnected social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the poor and vulnerable by focusing on determinants of both exiting poverty and falling back into poverty. Sustainable development pathways, inclusive markets, aid for trade, extractive industries and building institutional and national capacities all contribute to these objectives. Chapter V of the management response highlights areas where UNDP expects to play a strong technical support role.

FORWARD



UNDP should demonstrate global leadership in the development and use of multidimensional poverty indices.

The Human Development Reports were first published in the late 1980s when it became clear that progress was not defined by income growth alone, but by the ability of people to live the lives they value. Going forward, UNDP will continue to forge closer collaboration with the United Nations system and other partners to strengthen the capacities of national statistical institutions to implement, monitor, track and report on Sustainable Development Goal achievement. For example, UNDP is working with UNICEF and the World Bank to jointly support monitoring and reporting of Goal indicator 1.2.2 on national multidimensional poverty. UNDP has also entered into a series of partnerships with leading institutions to address poverty and inequality.

UNDP should increase the pace and thrust of its support to private sector development and impact investment in LDCs. Given the structural constraints in harnessing market opportunities, innovative private sector finance tools should be improvised and promoted in LDC contexts.

The forthcoming UNDP private sector development and partnerships strategy will drive progress on three strategic priorities: unlocking private finance for the Sustainable Development Goals, aligning business strategies and operations with the Goals and developing policies that foster a green and inclusive economy. The strategy will deploy service offers in areas such as sustainable value chains and inclusive business, gender equality in markets, municipal finance and financial inclusion, and closing the energy gap, which will be tailored to country contexts and advanced in line with the UNDAF and country support platforms.

3

Recommendation



Management Response

4

Recommendation



Management Response



Recommendation

5

Further emphasis is needed to enable linkages between UNDP community-level sustainable livelihood programmes and rural poverty alleviation policies in LDCs. While fulfilling respective funding stream commitments, synergies between various sustainable livelihood interventions under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund in the country programmes need to be strengthened. UNDP should take measures to leverage this important area of its work to better inform government policies and programmes.

Management Response



UNDP recognizes the importance of strengthening its poverty and environmental approaches to sustainable livelihoods, as enshrined in the Strategic Plan. The linkages across the vertical funds and other aspects of the UNDP poverty portfolio will also benefit from the integrated thinking that underpins the Global Policy Network. UNDP acknowledges that the governing instrument of the vertical funds calls for resources to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, thus providing a foundation for better integration with the UNDP poverty eradication focus. UNDP will seek to leverage the support of the vertical funds for sustainable livelihoods and rural development to advance progress in poverty eradication, through the integration of programming results into development plans and strategies at the national and subnational levels.

Recommendation

6

Bridging the humanitarian and development divide for more sustainable poverty reduction should be systematically pursued in crisis and post-crisis contexts. UNDP should also pay sufficient attention to intersecting vulnerabilities that reverse poverty reduction outcomes.

Management Response



UNDP recognizes that the root causes of many crises lie in endemic acute poverty for which there needs to be a concurrent coordinated and multi-faceted response. UNDP works closely with humanitarian, peace and national partners to jointly identify medium-term collective outcomes that have an impact on protracted humanitarian challenges including poverty indicators. This important area of work is reflected in the creation of the new Global Policy Network, which brings together the organization's development and crisis capacities. UNDP, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, also provides joint secretariat support to the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and for which the Administrator and the Emergency Relief Coordinator serve as vice-chairs.

Partnerships for poverty reduction at the global and country levels should be pursued as a strategic programming option. UNDP should expand promising partnerships with United Nations and other development agencies that substantively and practically enhance its poverty-related programming in LDCs, especially to scale up pilot and community-level initiatives.

UNDP will capitalize on its existing partnerships at the country, regional and global levels to deliver an integrated package of poverty solutions which are country- relevant. Along with ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme, UNDP is a core founding member of the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda, an inter-agency pooled funding mechanism to support the acceleration of Sustainable Development Goal achievement at the country level. UNDP has been collaborating with UNEP in the Poverty-Environment Initiative and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy to provide an integrated approach to exploring the relationship between poverty and the environment, with an emphasis on LDCs. IFIs are also important partners for UNDP, which is currently working with 15 institutions. Following the launch of the new United Nations-World Bank Strategic Partnership Framework for the 2030 Agenda in May 2018, UNDP and the World Bank are partnering on several joint initiatives.

UNDP should pay further attention to strengthening gender-responsive poverty reduction policy processes. There is a need for more dedicated resources and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the LDCs.

The gender equality strategy, 2018–2021 will help UNDP to ensure that its support for eradicating poverty includes a focus on gender inequality. New programming guidance has been developed to support countries in crises to better integrate gender equality into their programming by focusing on how to prevent and respond to gender-based violence; promote participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in conflict prevention and recovery; promote transformative livelihoods and economic recovery to advance gender equality; ensure women's access to justice, security and human rights; keep gender equality at the core of disaster risk reduction and recovery; enhance women's agency in peace processes and political institutions; and transform Governments to deliver for women. This is complemented by regional initiatives, such as the

7

Recommendation



Management Response

8

Recommendation



Management Response

gender equality and women's empowerment regional project in Africa that supports countries facing humanitarian crises and natural disasters, and country-level initiatives like the Gender Equality Seal through which UNDP is building country office capacities in gender-sensitive programming and partnerships for poverty eradication.

Recommendation

9

Management Response



UNDP should take steps to improve its programming on youth employment and empowerment.

UNDP is committed to scaling up its programming on youth employment and empowerment. Its focus is to facilitate youth engagement in areas of economic, social and political activities, and to enhance institutional capacities (public and private) to interact with and create conditions for youth empowerment and employment for poverty reduction. UNDP is currently successfully implementing three regional programmes (Youth Co: Lab in Asia and the Pacific, Youth Connekt in Africa and the Arab States regional youth leadership programme), which it will continue to build on.



About the Independent Evaluation Office

At UNDP, evaluation is critical in helping countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. By generating objective evidence, evaluation helps UNDP achieve greater accountability and facilitates improved learning from past experience. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) promotes accountability and learning by conducting independent evaluations at the country, regional, and global levels, as well as on thematic topics of particular importance to the organization. It also promotes development of evaluation capacity at the national level, and provides critical support to the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).



United Nations Development Programme

EVALUATION

OF UNDP SUPPORT TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

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