

Evaluation Brief: Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is a lower-middle-income country. It experienced a long socio-political crisis between 1999 and 2011, which tore at the country's social fabric and undermined development gains. Following post-election upheaval in 2011, the new government implemented the 2012-2015 National Development Plan, followed by the 2016-2020 National Development Plan. These aimed to transform Côte d'Ivoire into a middle-income economy by 2020 and further reduce social inequality. Since 2012, Côte d'Ivoire has experienced remarkable economic success, however poverty remains high and is more pronounced in rural areas. In terms of governance, security has improved and since 2011 the country has established a peaceful social climate. However, sporadic, potentially destabilizing incidents persist, justifying continued peacebuilding and security sector reform efforts. Significant progress has been made in consolidating the rule of law, although the capacity of various governance institutions and civil society organizations remains low, limiting their ability to fully exercise their oversight functions. With regard to sustainable development and resilience, climate change is a major concern for Côte d'Ivoire.

Given the country's progress towards lasting peace, stability, economic prosperity and the successful October 2015 presidential elections, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, originally deployed in 2004, was given a final extension to June 2017. The UN Joint Programming Framework 2017-2020, to which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme aligns, includes uptake of residual matters such as security sector reform, reintegration of ex-combatants, social cohesion and national reconciliation. UNDP's country programme is structured around two pillars, the first focusing on governance, the rule of law and social cohesion, and the second on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Findings and conclusions

The evaluation found that UNDP is perceived as a credible development partner, appreciated for its proven expertise in the area of governance, and its flexibility and ability to adapt to changes in demand. The country programme appropriately sought to respond to interlinked priorities of inclusive sustainable development, prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts and social cohesion, and democratic governance. However, progress in the three areas was uneven, with important outputs in the area of security, governance and peacebuilding but slower progress in the area of sustainable development and the strengthening of democratic institutions. It is unlikely that the programme will achieve its intended objectives in the latter components by 2020. The perception that UNDP programming is dispersed across a multitude of thematic areas could tarnish its good reputation. The absence of theories of change made it difficult to assess the expected pathways to change and the contribution of myriad outputs to linked outcomes. Even in the context of the peacebuilding and security governance portfolio, where numerous outputs have been produced, in the absence of an overall vision and direction for the programme it is difficult to assess the strategic relevance of their contribution to overall intended outcomes. UNDP made some important contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment, including some potentially transformative results in the fight against gender-based violence, in a context where gender inequalities remain significant and where much remains to be done.

The imbalance in the implementation of the country programme, with multiple results in the area of governance and particularly the consolidation and

management of peace, and relatively little progress in other areas, notably inclusive sustainable development, is closely linked to financial resources. The recommendations of the 2013 Assessment of Development Results, that UNDP should rethink

its resource mobilization strategy and better communicate its role in order to change the perception that UNDP is a donor, remain relevant and unaddressed.

Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1.** UNDP should revisit its theory(s) of change for the current programme in order to render them more explicit and visible. This would give its partners a greater understanding of UNDP contributions aimed at achieving sustainable change.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2.** To reinforce effectiveness and learning, UNDP should immediately undertake a mapping of its projects to regroup and systematically categorize data and results achieved or underway. This would feed into updated theories of change and analysis of lessons learned to improve effectiveness for the development of the new country programme. UNDP should also pursue dialogue with its partners to ensure the sustainability of results obtained thus far.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3.** Addressing the triple linkage between peacebuilding, security and democratic governance and sustainable inclusive development remains relevant in the context of Côte d'Ivoire and can form the basis of the next country programme and its theories of change. At the same time, the design of the next country programme must also take into account UNDP's structural and organizational capacities and resources, and focus on a select number of thematic areas.
- **RECOMMENDATION 4.** UNDP should maintain and reinforce its emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment, not only ensuring the participation of women in its activities but also ensuring that interventions respond to women's needs and pursue transformation (changing norms, values, power structures and the roots of gender inequality and discrimination).
- **RECOMMENDATION 5.** UNDP should reinforce its focus on youth, particularly those at risk.
- **RECOMMENDATION 6.** UNDP should reinforce its mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluation, risk management and communication.
- **RECOMMENDATION 7.** Reiterating the Assessment of Development Results 2013 recommendation, UNDP should rethink and accelerate the implementation of its strategy for resource mobilization, adapting it to the new orientations of official development assistance for Côte d'Ivoire and identifying potential new partners.
- **RECOMMENDATION 8.** UNDP should play a role in mobilizing resources for sectors key to veritable inclusive and sustainable development in Côte d'Ivoire.