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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION LEBANON



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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) for Lebanon, the first country-level assessment conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the country. This evaluation covers the programme period from 2017 to mid-2019.

The ICPE was conducted as the protracted Syrian refugee crisis entered its tenth year, at an economically and politically challenging time for Lebanon. UNDP support was aligned with national development goals to address the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding challenges faced by Lebanon. UNDP played a visible role in the Syrian refugee response and has been responsive to service delivery needs at local level. Jointly with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNDP has mobilized resources and coordinated support for Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. Strengthening municipal services critical to Lebanon's stabilization and refugee response was addressed as a priority.

The evaluation points out that UNDP is yet to build on its comparative strengths and organizational expertise, particularly in policy engagement in key areas. While the Government did move forward






with its Capital Investment Plan and related international commitments, policy deadlock posed challenges. This implies that UNDP programme strategies should be responsive and adaptive to political economy factors. With programme initiatives of different scales in over 200 municipalities, UNDP is well positioned to enable sustainable local development solutions and can better leverage this advantage to provide viable models and enabling processes for strengthening service delivery capacity.

I would like to thank the Government of Lebanon and the various national stakeholders and colleagues at the UNDP Lebanon country office and Regional Bureau for the Arab States for their assistance throughout the evaluation. I hope that the evaluation will strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy and UNDP support to a more inclusive and sustainable development pathway in Lebanon.



Oscar A. Garcia
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Independent Evaluation Office

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
CAS	Central Agency for Statistics
CEDRE	Conférence économique pour le développement, par les réformes et avec les entreprises
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil society organization
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IDAL	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
INDC	Intended nationally-determined contributions
ISF	Internal Security Forces
LCRP	Lebanese Crisis Response Plan
LHSP	Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme
LPDC	Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoE	Ministry of the Environment
MoIM	Ministry of Interior and Municipalities
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
MRR	Maps of Risks and Resources
MSR	Mechanism for Stability and Resilience
NDC	Nationally-determined contributions
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OMSAR	Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
OMSWA	Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs
PV	Photovoltaic
SCE	Supervisory Commission for Elections
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM	Sustainable land management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSF	United Nations Strategic Framework

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Lebanon

Context

Lebanon is an upper-middle income country with a high level of human development. However, political disruption has hindered the full implementation of economic and public administration reforms, and widespread corruption and patronage remain huge challenges. Governance problems spurred spontaneous protests in 2019, which cut across social and geographical divisions in Lebanese society. Factors including challenging economic conditions, unemployment, crumbling infrastructure and huge gaps in public services such as solid waste management contributed to rising discontent, particularly among young people.

Lebanon has demonstrated exceptional commitment and solidarity to people displaced by the war in Syria, and has been a major recipient of displaced Syrian people since 2011. The country has received around 1.5 million displaced Syrians,¹ equal to about a quarter of the Lebanese population, in addition to the existing population of Palestinian refugees.

The refugee situation has exacerbated pre-existing political and sectarian divisions and put considerable pressure on Lebanon's public services, impacting social and economic growth. Already overstretched and weak municipal institutions are not able to effectively address the increased demand for services and resources. Deteriorating infrastructure, particularly for water, electricity and solid waste management, has become a significant burden on public resources. In addition, Lebanon has faced serious environmental challenges since the civil war, which placed the country's natural resources under severe stress.

The UNDP Programme

The 2017-2020 UNDP programme in Lebanon is guided by the United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF), which is itself aligned to priorities identified by the Government in the 2017-2020 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). UNDP aimed to bridge

the humanitarian-development divide by adopting a multi-pronged strategy, centred on supporting resilience-based development programming and direct support to the most affected populations. The key areas of the UNDP country programme are:

- **Conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives**, including support to enhance the engagement of youth and women in public life, foster dialogue for peace, and strengthen community policing and national-level security for improved conflict risk analysis, monitoring and response.
- **Democratic governance and institutional development**, focusing on improving institutional effectiveness, transparency and accountability for enhanced governance. UNDP emphasises inclusiveness and participation through support to elections, the refugee response, promoting access to justice, and policy advice.
- **Social and local development**, supporting stronger resilience of vulnerable communities affected by the Syrian crisis by building institutional capacity to respond to employment, basic service delivery and environmental management needs.
- **Environmental governance**, including natural resource management, biodiversity, renewable energy, and actions to promote a climate-resilient and green economy.

For 2017-2018, expenditure of the Lebanon country programme was US\$124.3 million. Of this, 44 percent (\$4.2 million) was spent in the inclusive growth and development area, 21 percent (\$26.7 million) on environmental programmes, 19 percent (\$24 million) in the governance area and 15 percent (\$19.1 million) on peace and conflict mitigation.

Findings and Conclusions

Over the period under review, UNDP continued its support to address the most intractable development, humanitarian and peacebuilding challenges

¹ The 1.5 million estimate includes both registered and unregistered refugees. Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2018 Update).

faced by Lebanon. Well established partnerships with Lebanese institutions at national and municipal levels, built over years, have strategically positioned UNDP to support the country's efforts to address institutional and structural challenges in its development and humanitarian responses.

UNDP played a key coordination role in the LCRP, together with the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The LCRP approach is relevant, with an emphasis on resilience in the Syrian refugee response, but implementation has been fraught with challenges. LCRP cannot achieve its objectives of humanitarian assistance and the integration of Syrian refugees unless it also addresses underlying development challenges.

The extent to which UNDP used its comparative advantage has varied across areas of support. UNDP is a key actor in the resource-challenged energy sector, with the potential to support policy processes. However, there remain limitations in providing livelihood and employment models that combine short- and medium-to-long-term interventions, and comprehensive service delivery approaches. Given the tensions due to development challenges and overemphasis on

the humanitarian response, conflict sensitivity is yet to inform programme interventions.

UNDP is yet to engage in a concerted manner in the core governance areas critical for Lebanon's development. While support to advisory and assistance staff in government institutions contributed to timely technical and policy support, it has been counterproductive to civil service reforms and is controversial, carrying a significant reputational risk for UNDP.

UNDP support to data management for Palestinian Gatherings, as well as research and needs mapping at the municipal level, has been important in a data-challenged context. These efforts should form the basis for an institutionalized approach to development data and analysis as Lebanon moves forward with the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its national development strategies.

While there are examples of private sector partnerships across UNDP programmes, a more structured approach is yet to be strategically pursued. This reduces the ability of UNDP to promote sustainable approaches to development.

Recommendations

1. Building on the global mandate of UNDP, the country programme should further emphasise its core development support. The Capital Investment Plan and National Development Plan provide opportunities for engaging in key development issues.
2. Municipal-level initiatives should be consolidated to provide viable, long-term programme models. Consider promoting integrated municipal development solutions to strengthen services, improve sustainable livelihoods and bridge refugee responses and local development initiatives. There should be substantive efforts to link successful municipal models to national policy and implementation.
3. UNDP should consider long-term support to sustainable waste management solutions, beyond temporary fixes, to avert recurring crises.
4. Leverage the standing and partnership of UNDP with government institutions to engage in core governance initiatives.
5. Considering the reputational risk for UNDP and its mandate, it is important to clarify UNDP assistance to human resources and facilitation of technical staff.
6. Prioritize work on SDG sector integration, data collection and monitoring. UNDP should improve conflict sensitivity in humanitarian and development efforts and institutionalize municipal-level assessments.
7. Given the importance of financing for progress on the SDGs, UNDP should increase the pace and momentum of its private sector engagement.
8. Ongoing efforts to promote gender equality in UNDP programmes should be pursued across interventions.
9. UNDP should address constraints in pursuing a humanitarian-development nexus approach in the Syrian refugee response. As the lead agency for enabling a resilience approach, UNDP should be proactive in building momentum for long-term approaches, revisiting its programme positioning in the LCRP and reviewing its strategy based on its strengths.



CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Objectives of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) carried out an Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of the UNDP programme in Lebanon in 2019. UNDP Lebanon was selected for an ICPE since its country programme was set to end in 2020, though subsequently extended to 2021. The ICPE will inform the development of the new country programme for 2022–2024. The ICPE was conducted in June 2019, in close collaboration with the Government of Lebanon, UNDP country office, and UNDP Regional Bureau for the Arab States.

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out under the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.² They demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. The purpose of an ICPE is to contribute to learning at corporate and country levels, support the development of the next UNDP country programme, and strengthen UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and its Executive Board.

1.2 Programming context

An upper-middle-income country, Lebanon is predominantly urban, with over 85 percent of the population living in cities.³ In the past two decades, Lebanon has faced periods of political instability, with an impact on the outcomes of government development policies and programmes and international support for reconstruction and development. In addition, the influx of Syrian refugees

has put pressure on the economy and development in Lebanon.

The Government of Lebanon has remained fully committed to reform, despite the constant humanitarian crisis, including the development of a comprehensive vision for the Lebanese economy and public sector reforms. Several political disruptions, as well as corruption,⁴ hindered the full implementation of economic and public administration reforms.

Lebanon remains one of the key recipients of displaced Syrian people, and has demonstrated exceptional commitment and solidarity to people displaced by the war. Eight years into the Syrian conflict, Lebanon faces extensive humanitarian and development needs which have exacerbated existing development challenges. The country has received around 1.5 million displaced Syrians,⁵ constituting about a quarter of the Lebanese population, and 34,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria,⁶ in addition to a pre-existing population of around 175,000 Palestinian refugees.⁷ This has put considerable pressure on the country's economy, infrastructure, public services and environmental management. It has also impacted Lebanon's social and economic growth and exacerbated pre-existing political and sectarian divisions. Nearly half of Syrian refugees are children and adolescents, and at least 1.4 million children under 18, including Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, are growing up at risk, deprived, and with acute needs for basic services and protection.⁸

The Lebanese economy is driven by services, trade, transport, communications, the banking sector and tourism, and is highly import-dependent.

² See UNDP Evaluation Policy: www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf. The ICPE is conducted in adherence to the Norms and Standards and the ethical Code of Conduct established by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision.

⁴ Lebanon ranks 143rd of 180 countries and 14th among 18 Arab States in the 2017 Corruption Perceptions Index. Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2017.

⁵ The 1.5 million estimate includes both registered and unregistered refugees. UNHCR data as of 30 November 2018 calculates 950,334 registered Syrian refugees. The 2019–2020 3RP strategic overview estimates 28,800 Palestinian refugees from Syria and 180,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 – 2018 Update.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/statements/key-findings-of-the-national-population-and-housin/398/en>.

⁸ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 – 2018 Update.

With considerable fluctuation, GDP growth, which averaged 4 percent per year prior to 2011, declined to 1.7 percent from 2012 to 2014, 1 percent in 2015 and 2016, 0.6 percent in 2017, and 0.2 percent in 2018.⁹ In 2018, the fiscal deficit deteriorated by 4.5 percent to reach 11.5 percent of GDP. Investment in social services is challenged by the heavily indebted Government, with debt exceeding GDP by 141–155 percent since 2015.¹⁰

The volatile geopolitical and security context, alongside public debt and inflation, have constrained growth. Low competitiveness, macroeconomic imbalances and underdeveloped trade facilitation have impacted private sector development and growth. Finance, real estate and construction, important sectors for growth and job creation for the burgeoning young and lower-skilled labour force, have been stalled by the Syrian crisis. Indicators point to an outright shrinkage of the real estate sector, for example cement deliveries decreased by 5.3 percent year-on-year in the first eleven months of 2018. Policy reforms are needed in the area of telecommunications, as an accelerator for growth. Lebanon's information communication technology sector is characterized by weak infrastructure, expensive mobile services, and a significant urban-rural digital divide. A lack of obvious sources for an economic boost suggests that medium-term economic prospects remain sluggish.¹¹

As of 2017, 51.2 percent of the total population of Lebanon was employed,¹² and overall unemployment is estimated at 18–22 percent.¹³ The influx of Syrian refugees has aggravated the situation by increasing the availability of informal labour in some areas of the country, skewing the labour market. Increased informal and low-wage labour supply has had negative impacts on the employment

prospects of youth and women in particular (about 73 percent of working-age Syrian men are in the labour force).¹⁴

The sectors with more potential to create jobs, such as tourism and trade, have been impacted by low growth and the refugee crisis. Several factors negatively affected tourism-related business, including tense relations with Gulf countries who banned their nationals from visiting Lebanon for extended periods, the liquidity crisis and unrest in the country which discouraged expatriates and tourists from visiting. The impact has been more severe in the lagging regions in the North and Bekaa, areas with a high refugee influx, and those with an already poor labour market.

Syrian refugee employment stood at 40 percent in 2018, approximately 35 percent for men and 61 percent for women.¹⁵ Syrian refugees are legally permitted to work in agriculture, construction and the environment sectors, although mostly on an informal and temporary basis, with only 1,317 receiving formal work permits to date.¹⁶ There remain challenges to addressing growing local tensions due to the mismatch between the huge labour supply and limited demand. The lack of enabling environment has slowed private sector development and investment, with a significant impact on job creation. The Government seeks to address these issues through initiatives such as the Capital Investment Plan, National Jobs Programme and the Vision for Stabilization and Development.

In October and November 2019 spontaneous protests broke out in Lebanon, triggered by the Government's announcement of a new tax on free internet calls. However, wider governance issues were central to the protests, which cut across social and geographical divisions in Lebanese society,

⁹ World Bank, Lebanon Economic Outlook – October 2018.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ World Bank, Lebanon Economic update – April 2019.

¹² World Bank data, December 2018.

¹³ The last official unemployment estimates were 22.1 percent in 2007; ILO models (May 2018) estimate 17.9 percent unemployment in 2018.

¹⁴ UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP (2018) Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020.

and brought to the fore people's discontent with governance processes and the lack of accountability of the ruling elite and the Government. Factors contributing to the discontent behind the protests, especially amongst young people, included challenging economic conditions, unemployment, crumbling infrastructure, and huge gaps in public services including solid waste management. The protests called for administrative and political reforms, to usher in a change from the system of patronage and entrenched corruption.

The 2017–2020 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) was developed to align international support for the Syrian refugee response with government strategies and programmes. The LCRP recognised that the vulnerabilities of Syrian refugees and host communities required an overall strategy for a multifaceted response, from emergency to development assistance.

The Government of Lebanon has made several specific efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through legislation and institutional measures. The Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA) was created in December 2016, and replaced in 2019 by the Office of the Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth. The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2018–2022 is under implementation, though gaps remain in civil laws to address gender-based violence, early marriage and marital and property rights for women.¹⁷

Displacement, instability and poverty have been linked to increased rates of domestic violence and negative coping strategies such as child labour and early, forced and child marriage. While women have achieved higher educational attainment than men (26 percent of women have completed

higher education compared to 8 percent of men),¹⁸ Lebanon has one of the lowest rates of women's workforce participation (23.2 percent of women compared to 71.1 percent of men).¹⁹ Women's low participation in economic and political arenas remains a barrier to overall economic growth and household incomes. In 2017, the human development index for women in Lebanon was 0.701, compared to 0.788 for men, resulting in a Gender Development Index value of 0.889. This places Lebanon in Group 5, those countries with furthest to go to achieve gender parity. Lebanon has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.381, ranking 85 out of 160 countries in the 2017 index.²⁰

Over the past decade, development has been uneven and inequalities and socioeconomic disparities have deepened in Lebanon. Before the Syrian crisis, the lowest quintile of the population accounted for 7 percent of all consumption, and the richest quintile six times more at 43 percent.²¹ The latest official data, from 2012, noted that about one million people, or 27.4 percent of the total population, were living below the national poverty line.²² A recent rapid poverty assessment by UNDP estimated that 30 percent of Lebanon's population is poor (living on less than \$4 per day). Extremely poor Lebanese households live mainly in the North (45 percent), Bekaa (21 percent), and Mount Lebanon (19 percent) regions.²³ Regional disparities remain high and have deepened with the geographical distribution of the displaced refugee population. Approximately 69 percent of Syrian refugees live below the poverty line.²⁴

Combating widespread corruption and patronage in public service remains a huge challenge for Lebanon. According to the Transparency International Index, Lebanon ranked 137 out of 180 countries in 2019.

¹⁷ UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA (2018) Gender Justice and the Law: Lebanon.

¹⁸ Lebanon Central Administration of Statistics (2011) Statistics in Focus: The labour market in Lebanon.

¹⁹ UNDP (2018) Human Development Indices and Indicators: Briefing note for countries on the 2018 Statistical Update, Lebanon.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ CAS and World Bank Group, Snapshot of Poverty and Labor Market Outcomes in Lebanon Based on Household Budget Survey 2011/2012.

²² Ibid.

²³ Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020.

²⁴ UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP (2018) Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon and Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020.

Lebanon's confessional power-sharing arrangements fuel patronage networks and clientelism, further undermining the country's governance system.²⁵ Anti-corruption and transparency laws are either weak or inefficiently implemented. Corruption and the dire economic situation faced by the country were underlying causes of the October 2019 anti-government demonstrations.

Overstretched and weak municipal institutions were not in a position to effectively address the increased demand for services and resources. Deteriorating infrastructure, particularly water, electricity and solid waste management, has become a significant burden on public resources. Only 37 percent of the Lebanese population has access to safe drinking water.²⁶ The energy system is inefficient and insufficient to respond to increased demand.

Lebanon has faced serious environmental challenges since the civil war which placed the country's natural resources under severe stress. Conflict, reconstruction and refugee situations have contributed to the degradation of air quality, water, coastal and marine resources, protected areas, forests and agricultural land. Environmental governance remains weak and the Ministry of Environment (MoE) only represented 0.04 percent of planned government budget allocations in 2017.²⁷ In 2012, total greenhouse gas emissions amounted to 26.3 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent, an 89 percent increase from 1994 and a 39 percent increase from 2000, averaging a 4.67 percent annual increase.²⁸ The country identified specific mitigation actions, which include proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve institutional readiness for the implementation, measurement, reporting and verification of nationally-appropriate mitigation actions.

The sudden demographic change caused by the Syrian crisis has had significant environmental impacts in terms of: contamination of soil, land and air from increased solid waste; water exhaustion and pollution; ecosystem degradation; and a 20 percent growth in air pollution.²⁹ Unplanned urban expansion, with unsustainable solid waste and water management and energy systems, contribute further to environmental problems. An estimated 683 tonnes per day of municipal solid waste is generated, of which 52 percent is sent to approximately 750 open dumpsites.³⁰ The country experienced a solid waste crisis in 2015, and the Government has made some progress in developing a national solid waste management strategy to avert a second crisis. However, tensions over solid waste are still rising, due to significant implementation gaps.

Lebanon has institutional mechanisms in place to oversee the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national development strategies and programmes. A legislative institutional mechanism, the SDG parliamentary body, was established to track and advance progress towards the SDGs, and started mapping existing legislation related to Agenda 2030³¹ under the guidance of the Deputy Prime Minister. The 2018 Voluntary National Review shows that Lebanon achieved targets in health, primary education and gender equality in education, though poverty reduction and environmental sustainability targets were not expected to be achieved on time.³² Lebanon identifies poverty, peace, governance, and environmental challenges as areas of focus in the implementation of the SDGs, including through the LCRP. However, a lack of statistical data and robust tracking systems present a major constraint to monitoring progress on the SDGs.

²⁵ Wickburg, S. (2012) Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Lebanon. Transparency International.

²⁶ 2016 estimate by the UN Statistics Division and WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme. Republic of Lebanon (2018) Lebanon Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals.

²⁷ Foreword by Minister of Environment in Support to Reforms – Environmental Governance Programme Layman Report, Dec. 2017.

²⁸ Republic of Lebanon MoE (2016) Lebanon's Third National Communication to the UNFCCC.

²⁹ UNDP (2014) Lebanon Environmental Assessment of the Syrian Conflict and Priority Interventions.

³⁰ Republic of Lebanon MoE and UNDP (2017) Updated Master Plan for the Closure and Rehabilitation of Uncontrolled Dumpsites throughout the Country of Lebanon.

³¹ Republic of Lebanon (2018) Lebanon Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals.

³² Ibid.

1.3 The UNDP programme in Lebanon

The UNDP programme in Lebanon for 2017–2020 was guided by the United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF), which is aligned to priorities identified by the Government and the 2017–2020 LCRP. The UNSF was based on a ‘Whole-of-Lebanon’ approach, focused on internal and external security, governance and sustainable development, and emphasised meeting immediate needs arising from the Syrian crisis. The LCRP is the national version of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), with over 130 partners, a strategy to respond to the protection and humanitarian needs of refugees, and strengthen the resilience of individuals, households, communities, and institutions to cope with the impact of the refugee crisis.

Adapting and scaling up the existing country programme, UNDP intended to bridge the humanitarian-development divide with a multi-pronged strategy centred on supporting resilience-based development programming; and provide direct support to the most affected populations. The key country programme areas are as follows:

- **Conflict prevention and peacebuilding**, including transformative national dialogue that enhances the engagement of women and youth in public life, and social innovations that strengthen local and national capacities to maintain peace. UNDP supported dialogues for peace to reduce conflict and create space for decision-making, implementing sensitive community policing systems and strengthening the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and municipal security cells for improved conflict risk analysis, monitoring and response.
- **Democratic governance and institutional development**, focusing on enhancing the governance and legitimacy of institutions by improving institutional effectiveness, transparency and accountability. It also emphasises inclusiveness and participation, policy advice and reform. Specifically, the country programme outlined support to electoral reform, providing technical support to the 2018 parliamentary elections, strengthening frontline agencies to respond to the Syrian crisis, and supporting the effective administration of, and increased access to, justice.
- **Social and local development**, supporting the resilience of vulnerable communities affected by the Syrian crisis by strengthening national and subnational institutions to respond to employment, basic service delivery and environmental management needs in heavily affected areas. This includes support to the development and implementation of integrated local development plans that respond to priority community needs, including within the Palestinian Gatherings.
- **Environmental governance**, emphasising improvements including low-emission, climate-resilient actions, and environmental management programmes that protect national resources and steer the country towards a green economy. This outlines support to biodiversity, forest and land management, water ecosystems and renewable energy.

TABLE 1. Country programme outcomes and resources (million US\$)

Country programme outcomes	Country programme outputs	2017–2019 Budget	2017–2018 Expenditure
Outcome 1: Lebanon has institutionalized mechanisms to promote peace and prevent, mitigate and manage conflict at national, municipal and community levels.	1.1 Evidence-based dialogue on key national issues institutionalized at all levels 1.2 Systems and capacities in place to monitor tensions and maintain peace 1.3 Systems and capacities in place to govern municipal police roles	\$32.0 (15%)	\$19.1 (15%)
Outcome 2: Government ability to improve the performance of institutions and promote participation and accountability increased.	2.1 Increased capacity for inclusive and credible elections 2.2 Inclusive and participatory policies and decision-making processes enhanced 2.3 Government institutions core state functions and capacities strengthened for accountability and enhanced policy formulation and reform	\$40.1 (18%)	\$24.0 (19%)
Outcome 3: Productive sectors strengthened to promote inclusive growth and local development, especially in most disadvantaged areas.	3.1 Livelihood and economic opportunities increased 3.2 Improved capacity of national and local institutions to respond to local needs in an integrated and coordinated way	\$95.0 (44%)	\$54.2 (44%)
Outcome 4: Lebanon has adopted measures to improve environmental governance.	4.1 Low-emission, climate-resilient actions initiated 4.2 National environmental management strengthened	\$47.7 (22%)	\$26.7 (21%)
Other		\$0.3 (1%)	\$0.2 (1%)
Total (to date)		\$215.2	\$124.3

Source: Atlas/PowerBI as of April 2019

Table 1 presents the outcomes and finances of the UNDP Lebanon country programme. For the period 2017–2018, country programme expenditures were \$124.3 million. Of this, 44 percent (\$54.2 million) was on the inclusive growth and development area, 21 percent on environment programmes (\$26.7 million), 19 percent on governance programmes (\$24 million), and 15 percent on peace and conflict mitigation initiatives (\$19.1 million).

The execution rate (percentage of budget spent) averaged at 87 percent over the two years – 84 percent for outcomes one and two, and 92 percent for outcomes three and four. The expenditure trend for 2019 and 2020 remains constant, suggesting that the country programme will fulfil delivery as budgeted. Discrepancies from indicative budgets set during development of the country programme varied across outcome areas. Resources for inclusive

growth and local development remain the largest component of the country programme, though lower than anticipated. At the start of the country programme period, \$190 million was budgeted for inclusive growth and local development over the four years, and UNDP raised \$95 million over the first three years.

UNDP co-chairs the LCRP with UNHCR, and also co-chairs three of the ten LCRP intersectoral working groups (on livelihoods, social stability and energy). It also coordinates the resilience component of the LCRP, which aims to build the capacity of national and subnational service delivery systems, strengthen the ability of the Government to lead the crisis response, and provide strategic, technical and policy support to advance national responses.

1.4 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation assessed two and a half years of the country programme 2017–2020, including all UNDP programmes as well as non-project activities (such

as advocacy and convening) relevant to inform public policy and enhance development contributions. Given the programme's support to the Syrian refugee response and focus on the subnational level, the evaluation carried out field visits to Batroun, Bekaa and Tripoli. Considering the importance of private sector engagement in Lebanon, specific attention was paid to this area of UNDP support. The theory of change and methodology used to evaluate the UNDP contribution are presented in Annex 1.

The evaluation was structured around three main questions:

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives? and
3. What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and, eventually, the sustainability of results?



CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness
COORDINATION HUMAN effectiveness COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sustainability
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COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness NATIONAL OWNERSHIP sustainability PARTNERSHIP

The evaluation analysis presented in this chapter is structured according to the key programme themes of UNDP, both under the Lebanon Crisis Response Programme and other development interventions. Section 2.1 analyses UNDP positioning and prominent factors that impacted the programme's contribution to Lebanon's efforts to address the Syrian refugee crisis and issues related to development and host communities. This is followed by an analysis of UNDP support and contribution to LCRP coordination in Section 2.2; social and local development initiatives in Section 2.3; SDG-related support in Section 2.4; environmental governance (including energy efficiency initiatives within the inclusive and sustainable growth portfolio) in Section 2.5; democratic governance and institutional development programmes in Section 2.6; and conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Section 2.7. Data and measurement and gender equality are analysed in Sections 2.8 and 2.9. Private sector engagement and gender mainstreaming are analysed across the different programme areas.

The assessment and findings acknowledge contextual factors such as the slow policy environment, the long political impasse and the protracted Syrian refugee crisis (including the growing demand for responses oriented to host communities), including community-level tensions and the shrinking space for Syrian refugees.

Around 45 percent of UNDP programmes active during the evaluation period are new or ongoing and do not lend themselves to outcome assessment. Furthermore, the evaluation does not validate UNDP outcome indicators, as in several areas these are overstated and not commensurate with the level of inputs. Across programme interventions, linkages between specific UNDP interventions and outcomes outlined in the country programme are not realistic. For example, given the small scope of various governance initiatives, linkages to larger governance outcomes outlined in the country programme document (CPD) are inconsistent. UNDP support to advisory/policy staff may have contributed to the functionality of institutions, but the outcomes of their policies cannot be attributed to UNDP.

2.1 UNDP positioning

Finding 1: Decades of development and humanitarian support to Lebanon, including at municipal level, and the trust of national counterparts, places UNDP in an advantageous position. The UNDP contribution to LCRP coordination and resource mobilization has been significant.

UNDP programmes were responsive to key national and government priorities. UNDP has played a visible role in the Syrian refugee response, and in strengthening municipal services critical to Lebanon's stabilization and refugee response. UNDP is well regarded for its development support, with a reputation and reach that has enabled engagement with a range of government entities at national level. UNDP is widely perceived by the Government as a trusted, go-to agency, and its well-established working relationships with national entities, and facilitation of advisory and technical civil servants, have provided key entry points for its work in the country. This advantage has enabled several programmatic partnerships across the spectrum of development and crisis response agencies.

UNDP is particularly strongly positioned in data analysis, an area critical to the refugee response, peacebuilding and advocacy. Local-level data, analysis and knowledge sharing are key areas of the UNDP contribution to Lebanon's development, stabilization and refugee response. For example, UNDP supported the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee to carry out a census of Palestinian refugees, coordinating various inputs and mobilising resources. This was a significant and historic exercise with the potential for scale-up to other communities. UNDP is working with other United Nations agencies to reinforce the national statistics system, pool resources and collect common data. For example, with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP provided important technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Central Agency for Statistics (CAS) to carry out institutional and data capacity assessment, develop a three-year strategy and create a national SDG Committee.

However, the recent policy deadlock posed constraints, and indicated that programme strategies need to respond and adapt to political and economic factors. Given the middle-income status of Lebanon, donor contributions tend to focus on refugee responses and stabilization programmes. Some international support was available for governance through the Economic Conference for Development, Reform and Enterprise (CEDRE), which committed \$11 billion in infrastructure funds and loans³³ for political and economic reforms, particularly the reduction of fiscal deficit. However, this is modest in relation to the refugee response. Resilience programme models are slowly evolving in response to Lebanon's development needs and priorities.

Though well-positioned to function as a change actor, UNDP is locked into the status quo of routine programming, and is yet to build on its comparative strengths and expertise for stronger policy engagement. Long-standing work at municipal level has not been well used to forge a broader role at subnational level and strengthen local and national government linkages. While individual activities have achieved project-related objectives, programmes have not responded to the policy needs of the country or provided viable programme models for inclusive growth or local development.

Finding 2: UNDP has strong partnerships with national and subnational government entities, international organizations and United Nations agencies. It has demonstrated a proactive and flexible approach to programme partnerships, leveraging comparative strengths.

Strong collaboration with the Government has allowed UNDP to play an enabler role for those United Nations agencies considered to be more political, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) or UNHCR, and resolve practical constraints at field level.³⁴ UNDP has played an untypical role in its joint coordination of the crisis

response with UNHCR, which has been widely acknowledged as a successful and positive working relationship through which the two agencies have been able to leverage their different mandates.

Programme partnerships with United Nations agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs) have been productive, though there is scope for better cooperation in some areas. There are several examples of joint programmes where complementarities and comparative strengths were optimized. For example, collaboration with: UN-Habitat to strengthen local service delivery and governance; UNFPA on sexual and gender-based violence; the International Labour Organization (ILO) on a joint programme to support temporary employment of Syrian refugees and Lebanese; with ILO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to strengthen linkages between livelihoods and the reduction of community tensions; and with UN Women, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon around women's political participation, peace and security and human rights. UNDP and UNFPA conducted a joint capacity assessment of CAS as part of the Data/Statistics Working Group of the UNSF, which will serve as a framework for institutional strengthening.

Other initiatives are in the pipeline with ILO, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and UN Women, under the UNSF for productive sectors, and within the SDG Fund on social protection. The United Nations-World Bank Compact in the areas of anti-corruption, digital strategies, the environment and advocacy, while a promising partnership model, is yet to gather momentum. The World Bank and UNDP have common interests in the areas of anti-corruption and environmental governance and have identified opportunities to collaborate further.

Partnerships with the private sector are evolving, but not at the pace which the context demands.

³³ CEDRE Joint Statement, 6 April 2018.

³⁴ Bugnion de Moreta (2019) Outcome Evaluation of UNDP's Crisis Prevention and Recovery Programme in Lebanon.

There are examples of private sector engagement, but the level remains small, and with a focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR) rather than a diversified strategy. Keen interest among a section of the private sector to collaborate with UNDP is yet to be pursued in a concerted way.

Despite strong partnerships, UNDP has lacked a strategic approach to support Lebanon in addressing some of its key challenges. In a couple of isolated instances, United Nations partnerships have suffered from implementation issues, substandard outputs or delays, areas for UNDP to address in its future engagements. Several evaluation respondents also noted the issue of willingness to give credit to programme partners.

Finding 3: UNDP has emphasised the strategic importance of a longer-term development perspective in the Syrian refugee response, but has faced difficulty putting this principle into practice.

Lebanon is tackling multiple socioeconomic challenges, including a struggling economy and high unemployment. Corruption has hindered the full implementation of economic and public administration reforms, prompting nationwide public protests. The Syrian refugee crisis is in its eighth year and tensions are rising between refugee and host populations. Public expectations have risen, after a new Government in 2018 and the adoption of the Capital Investment Plan, which is anticipated to usher in policy and institutional reviews.

UNDP initiatives provide important support to Lebanon to address priority development and humanitarian gaps, but its approach has limited the impact. The protracted Syrian crisis has urged a predominantly humanitarian focus in the country, and severely constrained the UNDP resilience approach. The country programme adopted a strategy aligning the response to the Syrian crisis with sustainable development practices to improve the long-term resilience of Lebanese systems. But UNDP is yet to play a catalytic role in enabling sustainable long-term development and peace through institutional development and policy.

During the programme period, the UNDP role has been reduced from policy actor to facilitator and gap-filler. UNDP efforts to prioritize longer-term solutions to address fundamental development issues through the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme (LHSP) were inadequate, and success was constrained for several reasons. These include the dominance of funding for short-term humanitarian activities, political stalemate and constraints in engaging with national entities on policy and institutional development. Given the high per capita international aid to the Syrian refugee response, opportunities for pursuing sustainable development solutions through the crisis response were missed. While UNDP took a pragmatic approach and looked for ways to link development to the humanitarian crisis response, for example in service delivery and environment interventions, in the absence of an overall humanitarian-development nexus framework these were not sufficient. The UNDP approach was also limited by over-reliance on traditional sources of programme funding, which typically have strictly separate allocations for development and humanitarian programming.

Finding 4: UNDP local-level support is highly relevant, and efforts to strengthen municipalities have been important, given their capacity and resource challenges.

LHSP, a significant UNDP initiative to support development, capacity and stability, is a departure from the predominantly humanitarian response in Lebanon. Although the scale of resources is low compared to those allocated to humanitarian activities, the LHSP has been significant in bringing a development dimension to the Syrian refugee response. It is delivered through public institutions and focuses on the Lebanese population in the municipalities most impacted by the Syrian crisis.

However, while important, LHSP has not been able to fully address concerns of imbalance, and gaps remain in applying a development perspective to the Syrian refugee response, with most initiatives focusing on short-term employment generation and quick fixes to service delivery. Linkages with

national-level policy processes are essential if lessons from the UNDP support to local-level initiatives are to inform central policies.

There is a strong perception that the refugee response has largely supported Syrians and not focused enough on vulnerable Lebanese and the long-term development of the country. A concrete development focus would be essential to allay such perceptions, and promote solutions to address both the long-term development challenges of host communities and refugee integration issues. LHSP initiatives, while important, were not able to address these concerns. The LHSP is narrow in scope, with a specific set of initiatives, and was not designed to enable a broader development approach to the Syrian refugee response. UNDP has lobbied donors to include longer-term development components in the refugee response, particularly in the context of the Capital Investment Plan. This would also require new partnerships, particularly with the private sector.

The LHSP has provided opportunities for greater synergy between UNDP interventions across portfolios, though these have not been sufficiently mobilized. For example, support to municipal action plans, basic services and livelihood interventions requires a holistic approach at municipal level, rather than a project-oriented approach. Linkages with national policy processes are also essential if lessons from UNDP support to local initiatives are to inform central policies.

2.2 Coordination of the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan

Finding 5: The Syrian refugee response demonstrates the commitment and flexibility of the Lebanese Government and people to share responsibility for hosting 1.5 million Syrian refugees.

UNDP and UNHCR jointly coordinate the LCRP, which has played a vital role in the Syrian refugee response in a complex operating environment. However, challenges remain in enabling synergies between the humanitarian and development responses. This is particularly important in the

context of Lebanon, where there is a disconnect between the concept and realization of the LCRP approach. Currently, development and resilience dimensions of the refugee response are pigeonholed as ‘host community support’, which includes both host and refugee communities and does not reflect the nexus approach needed. The United Nations system has been limited in enabling a longer-term approach to the protracted crisis which addresses underlying development constraints in the country, and which is critical for a comprehensive and conflict-sensitive refugee response.

A major success of the LCRP was to mobilize resources for the Syrian refugee response and stabilization, and facilitate collective decision-making between government actors, donors, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The LCRP has been one of the highest per capita protracted humanitarian responses and enabled a framework to be agreed for the international community and national entities to share responsibility for the refugee response. This framework was successful in developing common goals and objectives for actors involved in addressing immediate humanitarian needs, improving municipal infrastructure, and enabling short-term employment opportunities. The joint coordination of the LCRP by UNHCR and UNDP is a unique feature, which promotes linkages between the humanitarian and resilience dimensions of the response.

The LCRP was conceived as a departure from the usual approach to humanitarian crises, and intended to enable a coherent humanitarian-development nexus approach to the refugee response. However, there were challenges in interpreting how to translate these approaches into practice in the absence of medium- to long-term funding, as humanitarian agencies pursued short funding windows. A narrow interpretation of the approach resulted in competing and conflicting narratives of the required strategies, and a lack of interventions to comprehensively address the needs of both refugee and host communities. As a result, assistance to less-developed regions of Lebanon, essential for a strong refugee response, did not receive sufficient

attention. This reduced the overall contribution of the United Nations, including UNDP.

Funding for resilience programmes addressing the drivers of conflict at community level was limited, leading to heightened tensions. Host communities are severely affected by existing development and governance challenges, as well as the refugee influx. Strong concerns about the disproportionately small scale of international support for vulnerable Lebanese communities remain unaddressed. There were limitations in leveraging humanitarian aid and exploring other opportunities to provide a more holistic humanitarian-development nexus response, including engagement of the private sector.

The LCRP consists of several compartmentalized sectors, and there is a lack of coordination and linkages between field and central levels. This bulky architecture is a reflection of the complexity of institutional structures in Lebanon and operational silos within the United Nations system. National ownership is weak and there is scope for greater government participation, while parallel United Nations local initiatives have continued in high priority municipalities in prolonged emergency mode. The area of solid waste management did not receive the attention it deserved, although some interventions addressed immediate clearance needs.

Ultimately, the LCRP platform has not been successful in addressing the development drivers of the Syrian refugee crisis and sustaining progress, and continues to operate in a mode more suitable to an immediate crisis response. Though UNDP has a mandate to promote the resilience approach, the agency cannot be held entirely accountable for the limitations of the LCRP. UNDP made efforts to influence the approach, but was not able to drive shifts towards longer-term development. In particular, global advocacy was not sufficient to enable paradigm shifts in the Syrian refugee response.

2.3 Social and local development

UNDP support to social and local development has centred on initiatives to strengthen produc-

tive sectors for improved employment, livelihoods and basic services under outcome 3. In addition, employment and income generation activities were carried out under outcome 1 (in Palestinian Gatherings and peacebuilding projects), and infrastructure rehabilitation under outcome 4 (environmental governance support). Cross-cutting measures to address the drivers of conflict and regional inequalities were also covered.

Under this portfolio, UNDP aimed to improve livelihoods and economic opportunities for 260,000 Lebanese and 125,000 Syrians and establish linkages between the immediate recovery response and longer-term sustainable growth through strategic partnerships and upstream policy support. This included support to create integrated local development plans that respond to priority community needs, including in Palestinian Gatherings. UNDP also coordinates the livelihoods and social stability areas of the LCRP and is responsible for solid waste-related issues.

LHSP interventions were designed to generate short-term employment in local infrastructure, agriculture and environmental management, and develop medium- to long-term opportunities through a focus on small-to-medium enterprises, value chains and employability. UNDP support included institutional strengthening for the business support and employment services sectors and assistance to establish new service centres. UNDP aimed to strengthen the capacity of emerging institutions at subnational level, such as the Social Development Centres of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), to strengthen their role in the coordination and implementation of municipal activities and their connections to relevant national bodies.

The portfolio comprises 12 projects, all but one carried over from the previous country programme. Overall programme expenditure for employment and livelihoods was \$83 million for 2017–2018. The majority (\$49 million) was spent under the area of inclusive growth and development, \$18 million under the environment area, \$15 million

under conflict prevention and peacebuilding and \$1 million under governance.³⁵

Finding 6: Building on previous initiatives, UNDP has made significant contributions at local level to respond quickly to the crisis, with strong local engagement. Through the LHSP, UNDP contributed to immediate basic services under pressure from the influx of Syrian refugees.

Given the lack of funding faced by municipalities, UNDP support has filled some critical gaps in service capacity. So far, over 175 communities have benefited from LHSP support, covering more than 1.4 million Lebanese and 500,000 Syrian refugees through a variety of interventions related to health, education, water, wastewater and waste management, as well as livelihood interventions.³⁶

For over a decade, the UNDP 'ART GOLD' project enabled local support to the most deprived regions of Lebanon, which were also those most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. When the crisis broke, as the only United Nations agency with a presence in these areas, UNDP was able to respond quickly, building on its continuous presence, previous interventions and strong partnerships with local authorities. Overall, UNDP provided short-term employment opportunities for 264,275 Lebanese and 126,545 Syrians through various infrastructure development projects. This also aimed to promote peace and develop conflict dialogue mechanisms in the most vulnerable communities. UNDP also contributed to strengthening the capacity of local institutions to develop and implement integrated local development plans that responded to priority community needs, using a participatory and conflict-sensitive approach to improve livelihoods and services.

The LHSP, considered a continuation of ART GOLD (which closed in 2018), is the largest UNDP project,

accounting for 37 percent of 2017–2018 programme expenditure, and aims to provide comprehensive, coordinated and durable support to host communities.³⁷ It supported municipalities overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, and with limited budgets, to build agricultural roads, landfill sites, irrigation canals and vegetable markets, and facilitated basic services for host communities. Interventions in the Palestinian Gatherings addressed direct needs for water and sanitation, shelter and socio-economic development.

LHSP projects in Palestinian Gatherings and for peacebuilding were implemented in parallel at local level, to promote holistic and inclusive approaches to livelihoods. Furthermore, in recognition that that eight-year long refugee crisis had created problems for neighbouring communities (such as overuse of local landfill sites), the LHSP used a community cluster approach to scale up and implement social service initiatives not feasible at community level. This increased the possibility of including communities with a minimal Syrian presence but high compounded effects, and of creating medium-scale interventions with a higher level of impact.

A number of actors are supporting value chains, with agriculture and agro-industry receiving most support, at 54.5 percent and 21 percent respectively. In an effort to forge linkages between activities supported by different agencies, avoid duplication and attract funding, UNDP has developed an interactive dashboard to indicate who is implementing each stage of a value chain and highlight gaps. This is an important source of information for new initiatives in the value chain area.

Finding 7: LHSP initiatives to support livelihoods and municipal services were of only one-year duration, due to the humanitarian funding model, and not suitable for medium- to long-term income generation.

³⁵ Atlas/PowerBI, April 2019. Relevant projects include: LHSP and the LCRP Engagement Facility (Social and Local Development); Palestinian Gatherings, Peacebuilding in Lebanon Phase 3, LMAC Phase 4, Community Security and Access to Justice, Employment and Peacebuilding, Tensions Monitoring System (Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding); Increasing Access to Water in Host Communities, Renewable Energy Programme and Solid Waste Management in Baalbek (Environment); DRM Phase III (Governance).

³⁶ From UNDP monitoring data.

³⁷ Initially, UNHCR was the main contributor to the LHSP followed by contributions from UK, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Japan. As of 1 April 2019 (Atlas/PowerBI), expenditure for the LHSP was \$46.6 million out of the \$124.2 million total 2017–2018 programme expenditure.

As shown by various studies and monitoring in Lebanon, a lack of jobs is consistently the top cause for conflict. With the economy in decline, there is high unemployment and competition for work, requiring more concerted strategies. However, the sustainable livelihoods sector is not well funded or a high priority for humanitarian donors. The LHSP has demonstrated successes at micro level, but these are not sufficient to address the employment and livelihood challenges of host communities or Syrian refugees, highlighting the importance of continued support for more sustainable solutions.

Considering the work restrictions for Syrian refugees, employment generation calls for well-conceptualized and developed models and longer-term programming. The evaluation of the LHSP 2015–2017 found that a short-term approach to livelihoods, enterprise development and sustainable job-creation did not enable viable solutions at scale, and considered that the impact would be higher if multi-year funding were available. The overreliance of UNDP on traditional funding channels and programming approaches undermined its potential added value, and the country office is yet to leverage its long-term local presence and strong partnership with the Government to inform policy processes.

UNDP support to around 100 cooperatives through vocational training and the provision of equipment, grants and in-kind support contributed to strengthening their capacity. Service centres supported specific value chains in the agro-food sector, one of the main economic growth sectors identified by the McKinsey study.³⁸ The final evaluation of LSHP 2015–2017 concluded that its support to cooperatives was effective, with positive results in terms of job creation and income generation, particularly for women, and improved production efficiency, quality and marketing.³⁹ For example, UNDP worked with the Union of Cooperatives in Akkar region to expand existing value chains in honey, jam, zartar, milk, honey, olives and vegetables.

The area has 900 beekeepers, 60 percent of whom depend on apiculture as their only source of income. UNDP support allowed a honey cooperative to raise production levels and become a centre of expertise and capacity building for beekeepers. The cooperative is now working with the Chamber of Commerce to refine its products and increase its value and market potential through product testing and labelling for international exports, and to improve its links to markets. UNDP has filled a critical gap in government support by providing cold storage and transport systems.

In the livelihood sector, several actors are engaged in microlevel activities similar to the support provided by UNDP. Although they broadly align with LCRP outcomes, there were limited efforts to promote or create medium to long-term employment opportunities. Most efforts were focused on short-term income generation opportunities with few strategies or models to generate employment at scale or inform policy. The outcomes of vocational training, internship and job placements for unemployed youths varied between regions.

Overall, vocational training has had limited success in generating income or enabling enterprise development, as facilitating factors were absent. The legal and institutional framework required for small-to-medium enterprises to accelerate job creation needs to be improved. Despite their short-term nature, some interventions have the potential to link to national-level policies or ongoing initiatives at municipal level. For example, forest management interventions have contributed to ecotourism and honey value chain development. For these micro-initiatives to link to larger value chain processes, however, multi-year financial and market support would be required. Coordination mechanisms have been established between the Ministry of Economy and Trade and the LHSP livelihood component to ensure that the value chains identified do not suffer any administrative setbacks.

³⁸ This report was prepared for the Government of Lebanon with recommendations to kickstart the declining economy of the country following the historic Council for Economic Development and Reconstruction. McKinsey & Company (2018) Lebanon Economic Vision.

³⁹ Mansour, A. et al. (2018) Final Evaluation Report LHSP 2015–2017.

Early in the crisis, UNDP developed an agricultural sector development strategy to inform the donor and government response. This strategy sought to mitigate negative impacts on jobs and income of the closure of the Syrian border for agricultural exports, but could not be implemented as part of the LCRP because of donor preference to fund immediate economic revitalization for Syrians. UNDP made further efforts to promote a development perspective in the humanitarian livelihood response through regular meetings with donors and other development partners. While it was successful in including livelihoods under other LCRP sectors, a coordinated approach to inclusive and sustainable employment for host communities and refugees was not developed. There is some competition among agencies working on livelihoods, and a strategic and streamlined response between key actors from the United Nations system was lacking.

Finding 8: Cash-for-work initiatives contributed to quick, temporary income generation, essential in the initial stages of the refugee response. However, a protracted response requires more durable employment generation solutions.

For the upper-middle-income context of Lebanon, labour-intensive infrastructure development was not an appropriate option for temporary work creation. UNDP has yet to explore solutions that can generate employment at a scale that would address unemployment in host communities as well as of refugees. UNDP implemented a number of labour-intensive cash-for-work initiatives, which provided Syrians and Lebanese with temporary employment opportunities. The infrastructure created will benefit the local economy in the long term, as rural roads and irrigation improve access to markets and promote value chain development.

These initiatives have been well managed, with built-in quality standards, but the risk of an extended delivery timeframe and the possible quality implications of manual- versus technology-centred approaches could affect UNDP credibility. Furthermore, the emphasis on cash-for-work moved UNDP away from more efficient and longer-term

infrastructure solutions suitable for the Lebanese context. Finally, support to vocational training was not successful in generating employment, given the limited engagement of the private sector, the short duration of training, and restrictions with regard to areas where refugees are allowed to work.

Finding 9: One-off, fragmented initiatives to strengthen municipal services did not systematically address the capacity challenges of local authorities.

Capacity building and institutional development are core elements of the LHSP, delivered in collaboration with MoSA and its 30 Social Development Centres across Lebanon. MoSA valued its partnership with UNDP at local and national levels, though there were concerns that projects were not well aligned with ministry activities and processes. At municipal level, needs are extensive relative to the international assistance received, and more comprehensive solutions are required. All municipalities face a lack of civic amenities and major problems in services for solid waste and sewage, water and electricity. For example, open landfills reach maximum capacity in six months, highlighting ongoing pressure on solid waste management services and the limitation of small-scale, fragmented solutions. The various microlevel initiatives, while cumulatively important, are not sufficient to achieve sustainable capacity at municipal level. Therefore, different streams of support for building institutional capacity at local level need to be well coordinated and more systematically addressed.

Finding 10: Engagement with the private sector is evolving, but largely confined to CSR initiatives. UNDP recognises the importance of new and alternative instruments for development financing, but lacked concerted efforts to create an enabling policy environment for private sector investment in development.

Lebanon has a relatively robust private sector compared to most of its neighbours, which despite a decline has been able to hold its ground through economic challenges and intermittent political deadlock. The private sector has had to adjust to

regional economic dynamics and changing development paradigms, as well as economic stagnation and recession and the humanitarian crisis. In 2015, financial inflows dropped to \$2.3 billion, the lowest level in a decade and a 50 percent reduction from their peak. However, given the civil war in neighbouring Syria and general turmoil in the region, inflows of foreign direct investment have held up remarkably well. Real estate, hotels and tourism accounted for 82 percent of capital expenditure between 2003 and 2015, and a large proportion of greenfield investment⁴⁰ originates from Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with a half from the United Arab Emirates.⁴¹

Since 2009, UNDP has supported 'Live Lebanon', a crowdsourcing platform to connect the Lebanese diaspora and private sector with local communities to support the development of underprivileged areas through quick impact projects in health, environment and education. An evaluation of the platform for 2009–2018 found that activities funded through Live Lebanon were effective, timely and professionally delivered.⁴² Live Lebanon was one of the first crowdfunding initiatives supported by UNDP and has helped other countries, such as Somalia, Armenia and Yemen, set up similar initiatives.

Given the speed of development in alternative finance, the Live Lebanon project will need to adapt to take advantage of new technologies and financing mechanisms. Beyond instruments such as Live Lebanon, UNDP needs to rethink its strategy of impact investment, and explore tools to facilitate funding for the SDGs and local development in host communities. Alternative sources of financing and social impact investment are needed to generate resources at scale and de-risk private sector investments.

To encourage private sector engagement, macro-level policies need to simplify trade and promote competitiveness, but UNDP has not yet developed

a strategic role in improving the policy ecosystem for impact investments. UNDP has worked closely with the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL) and the Office of President of the Council of Ministers to support investment in new sectors, and provide the necessary frameworks and incentives for potential investors. In other initiatives with IDAL and the Ministry of Economy and Trade, UNDP has helped to identify entry points and build on opportunities in the productive sectors, though progress has been limited and more sustained efforts are needed. UNDP initiated a pilot for solar panels in schools in Mount Lebanon and efforts are currently underway to launch impact investments. UNDP is exploring the further engagement of the private sector in Lebanon's mine action with a focus on access to employment for people with disabilities. In most of these examples, the pace is slow and the scale is small. The focus has been on low-hanging efforts, rather than facilitating efforts to de-risk the business environment and create incentives for investment in new sectors.

2.4 SDG Mainstreaming

Finding 11: UNDP efforts to promote and strengthen SDG mainstreaming in national policies and practices are highly relevant and should be continued and expanded. In particular, UNDP support to strengthen the collection and management of statistics has been important as Lebanon moves forward with mainstreaming the SDG agenda.

As Lebanon prioritizes the SDGs in its national development strategies and plans, ongoing UNDP support to map policies and initiatives for SDG target-setting and to strengthen government capacity for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on SDG implementation will be increasingly important. The Government of Lebanon has already taken significant steps to put in place policy measures and institutional mechanisms for medium- to long-term development and

⁴⁰ A greenfield investment is a type of foreign direct investment in which a parent company creates a subsidiary in a different country, building its operations from the ground up.

⁴¹ OECD MENA (2018) Economic Resilience Task Force, Background Note: Foreign direct investment in fragile and conflict affected economies in the Middle East and North Africa; trends and policies.

⁴² Moussa, Z. et al (2018) External Independent Evaluation of Live Lebanon for the 2009–2018 period.

the refugee response. It prepared its first Voluntary National Review in 2018, and established four thematic committees with coordination leads.⁴³ The SDG Parliamentary Committee was established to follow up and advance progress towards the SDGs, and is in the process of mapping existing legislation related to Agenda 2030.⁴⁴ Lebanon's Sustainable Development Agenda integrates economic, social and environmental objectives into one strategically-focused blueprint for action at national level. The preparation of the SDG plan, scheduled for 2020, will kick start national planning, though the specific policy mechanisms have yet to be elaborated.

UNDP support is in early stages and specific areas of engagement are still being defined, though statistical challenges were prioritized as an important area of support. Lack of statistical data and robust tracking systems present a major constraint to monitoring progress on the SDGs, and CAS formed a task force to collect SDG-related data and statistics. UNDP conducted awareness-raising initiatives on mainstreaming for the SDG Parliamentary Committee, private sector and CSOs. UNDP and the MoE are looking at ways to address the SDG and climate change agendas holistically.

In other areas, UNDP is yet to engage substantively. UNDP is yet to make systematic efforts to improve mainstreaming at sector level and in private sector development. At national level, further efforts are needed to streamline the country's budgets and policies in line with the SDGs, and to support the Government to establish a cross-sector institutional mechanism to coordinate inputs to policy processes. At municipal level, UNDP could use its comparative advantage to enable a strategic approach to localization of the SDGs. As UNDP explores a potential integrator role in strengthening data and statistics, similar roles could be identified at the municipal level. In terms of private sector engagement, vital for progress towards the SDGs, UNDP is yet to identify appropriate tools to facilitate sustainable

finance mechanisms, beyond CSR, at national and municipal levels.

'Towards Sustainable Development' was a recent initiative to engage the Lebanese private sector to support the SDGs. This CSR approach generated interest, though not sufficient to promote stronger engagement of the private sector, and was subsequently terminated. Respondents from the private sector indicated that there was limited buy-in, although they agreed that the private sector had an important role in enabling the achievement of the SDGs. UNDP chaired the Board of the project, but lack of clarity on the expected outcomes in terms of CSR culture was a major challenge. Lessons from the Global Compact on the parameters of success for engaging the private sector will be important, but the success of this initiative will depend on the development of, and buy-in to, concrete frameworks for CSR, alongside stronger government engagement at all levels. UNDP is in a position to meaningfully facilitate this.

2.5 Environment and energy

Initiatives in the environment and energy portfolio aim to contribute to environmental governance and halt the environmental degradation that has been exacerbated by the crisis. The portfolio comprises two areas of support. The first encompasses climate resilience-related interventions, including support to build a low-carbon economy by increasing access to climate financing, promoting and raising awareness of renewable energy technologies, and improving the coordination of climate change responses in agriculture, water and land management. The second area is environmental management, which supports integrated and sustainable management and the protection of natural resources by focusing on biodiversity, forest and land management and water ecosystems and reducing industrial and other pollutants. Efforts to build the capacity of the private sector

⁴³ Lebanon identified five 'Ps', namely, People (Ministry of Public Health); Planet (MoE); Prosperity (Ministry of Economy and Trade); Peace, justice and strong institutions (OMSAR). The fifth 'P' Partnership was considered a cross-cutting issue in implementing and achieving the SDGs.

⁴⁴ Republic of Lebanon (2018) Lebanon Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals.

to engage in environmental governance and improve government capacity to enforce environmental legislation at central and local levels are addressed across areas of support.

The portfolio comprises 36 projects, of which 19 included several phases and 10 are closed. There are nine projects in the pipeline which are likely to be initiated during this country programme period. A large number of projects respond to the diverse and significant environmental challenges facing Lebanon, though the scope and scale of initiatives are small.⁴⁵ The budget allocation for the energy and environment portfolio for the period 2017–2019 was \$47.7 million, while expenditure for the period 2017–2018 was \$26.7 million.⁴⁶

Finding 12: UNDP is the key actor in the resource-challenged environment and energy sector, and its contributions are appreciated by the Government. While support from UNDP and other international actors has been critical to address environmental concerns in Lebanon, government commitment and resources will be vital to bring initiatives to scale.

UNDP energy and environment initiatives have been essential to fill key capacity gaps, create an enabling policy environment, and address challenges with appropriate policy responses. The UNDP facilitation of advisory services enabled the MoE to fulfil its obligations under international environmental conventions, mainstream sustainable development concepts, and address long-standing problems such as solid and liquid waste. Ongoing work includes environmental policy development in terms of laws, regulations and other policy mechanisms and instruments, mainstreaming the SDGs in local development planning, and setting up a monitoring system at ministerial level.

To enable the implementation of international conventions such as the Montreal Protocol and

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UNDP provided technical support to produce Lebanon's sixth national report to the Convention on Biodiversity and Third National Communication. Measures to analyse the gender-responsiveness of climate change policies and plans supported gender mainstreaming. Similarly, efforts are underway to better align SDG goals and targets with Lebanon's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) policies and identify opportunities for streamlining their implementation. UNDP support for progress on international environmental conventions, particularly the Montreal Protocol and UNFCCC, have entailed exchange of knowledge and expertise with national teams from other countries in the region, including Egypt and Kuwait.

Lebanon faces several constraints in maintaining UNFCCC reporting standards and timelines, including lack of adequate technical staff at the MoE to manage climate reporting processes, limited availability of data, weak coordination between institutions working on climate change and difficulties in quantifying emissions reductions. The low priority afforded to environmental management in Lebanon is a challenge, yet it is an area that requires sustained attention given the critical linkages between environmental management, sustainable development and public security. Cross-ministerial committees set up to work on the SDGs and climate change have the potential to promote integrated sustainable environment approaches, though capacity constraints undermine this potential.⁴⁷ UNDP supported several institutional strengthening and policy development initiatives in the renewable energy and waste management sectors. However, these initiatives are either not recognised in policy processes or not effective.⁴⁸ The majority of projects have a strong element of training, workshops and other capacity-building activities such as study tours, but there is high turnover of trained personnel.⁴⁹ Given the

⁴⁵ Projects range in value from \$32,000 – \$15,205,000, and 64 percent of projects have a budget under \$1 million Source: UNDP Atlas system as of 14 December, 2017–2019 totals.

⁴⁶ Atlas/PowerBI, 1 April 2019.

⁴⁷ The Climate Change Coordination Unit is composed of representatives from 40 different governmental and non-governmental institutions as well the private and the academic sectors.

⁴⁸ Tortell, P. (2019) UNDP Lebanon Energy and Environment Programme 2017–2020 Outcome Evaluation.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

high proportion of UNDP-recruited staff within the MoE, the risk of these staff leaving and/or failing to pass on their expertise is a real concern for sustainability.

UNDP work on environmental issues is closely linked to the Syrian refugee response. While environment and energy initiatives were able to garner some humanitarian resources, there was not a comprehensive focus on the development issues facing the country as a result of the deteriorating environment. Without such a holistic approach, the scope of UNDP to engage in policy and strategy development was limited, reducing its potential to enable longer-term development solutions to environmental issues such as solid waste management, water and energy. While the emphasis of UNDP was primarily on solid waste landfills, which was much needed, a comprehensive solution to promoting solid waste management was lacking. UNDP support to the rehabilitation of irrigation canals could also have been more comprehensive, and build on its earlier work with the Ministry of Energy and Water on water conservation and management. More holistic approaches to water conservation would have had greater potential for sustainable solutions.

There is some evidence of environmental issues being mainstreamed into other national programmes, though the extent to which they have informed development policies and plans is minimal. Uncertain financial resources, institutional capacity gaps and policy limitations have posed challenges to the sustainability of progress. Towards the end of 2018, Lebanon prepared the Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy with technical support from UNDP. This is a good first step, though concerted efforts are needed for its implementation, which had not started at the time of the evaluation.

Environmental issues continue to be overlooked due to the overwhelming political, economic, social and security challenges facing the country. Yet the

looming environmental crisis is readily visible across the country, and environment-related tensions are evident (for example the solid waste crisis and the pollution of the Litani River) and likely to grow. Further studies and improved data are needed to build the case for greater investment, and strategic environmental impact assessment modalities are being piloted to integrate environment and natural resources into local and urban management plans. It is too early to make observations on their wider application and policy impact.

Finding 13: While efforts were made to engage the private sector in renewable energy, there is considerable scope for demonstrating renewable energy models, informing policies and sustaining the interest of the private sector.

Despite low levels of private sector activity, a poor enabling environment and economic recession, there is potential for the private sector to act as a catalytic force for growth and job creation. UNDP efforts to engage the private sector were relatively more pronounced in the environment sector, with successful projects related to energy efficiency and pollution reduction. These projects introduced new technologies, raised awareness and encouraged uptake by the private sector. The renewable energy sector is growing despite the current economic climate. In 2018 the Government agreed its first power purchase agreement with three Lebanese wind power companies. Lebanon set a target of 12 percent renewables installed by 2020⁵⁰ and 20 percent of power and heat demand met by renewable energy by 2030.⁵¹ It is expected to be one of the few countries in the region that will reach this target.

The Global Compact provides opportunities to promote initiatives for greater environmental responsibility in the private sector, but the pace of efforts is slow. UNDP has worked with the Global Compact to inform the private sector on reducing their carbon footprint, and more sustained

⁵⁰ Republic of Lebanon Ministry of Energy and Water and Lebanese Centre for Energy Conservation (2016) The National Renewable Energy Action Plan for the Republic of Lebanon 2016–2020.

⁵¹ MoE/UNDP/GEF, (2019) Lebanon's Third Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC.

efforts will be necessary to address the significant challenges for Lebanon in this area. The main UNDP renewable energy projects were carried forward from the previous country programme, though more consistent engagement was lacking, and the outputs could not be sustained as the project closed. UNDP largely confined itself to a CSR approach and did not explore other private sector tools, although there were exceptions. Even engagement on CSR was suboptimal, partly due to low awareness. For example, engagement with the banking sector had limited success, and only one bank (Audi Bank) set up a unit on environmental management in Lebanon.

Finding 14: Community-level initiatives provided practical options for alternative energy, sustainable land management (SLM), and solid waste management and were anchored in municipal-level processes. However, lack of linkages to national policy processes and insufficient efforts to access alternative financing undermined the potential of such initiatives.

Small, decentralized renewable energy initiatives far exceeded targets for installed capacity, electricity generated and emissions savings. The renewable energy project produced a range of publications, including technical guides, grid codes, a de-risking study, a photovoltaic (PV) status report, and quality control mechanisms at vocational and institutional levels. UNDP contributed to creating a supportive technical, policy and regulatory environment for both utility-scale and decentralized renewable energy applications.

Such efforts led to increased uptake of solar PV technology by the private sector. A reduction in the capital costs of solar PV, coupled with promotional and demonstration activities, encouraged private sector enterprises in Lebanon to install solar PV-based electricity generation systems without any subsidy or grant on the capital cost. However, technical assistance and subsidised loans will still be necessary for the wider adoption of renewable energy practices. There is scope to promote more diversified renewable energy technologies. UNDP support fell short of establishing a policy for feed-in

tariffs for renewable energy-based decentralized power generation.

Installation of renewable energy technologies in municipalities, such as solar street lights and solar energy supplies for public and social buildings including hospitals, orphanages and care homes, addressed immediate needs and promoted alternative energy options. The size of these renewable energy systems was also expanded to meet the needs of larger commercial and industrial facilities. There are examples of uptake of various types of technical support and financial grant mechanisms. While such initiatives served to raise local awareness of alternative energy sources, there remain constraints in pursuing more cost-efficient sustainable energy alternatives. There are ongoing measures by the Government to scale solar and wind systems by providing low-interest loans to promote the installation of renewables in various sectors. Such measures should be further accelerated.

UNDP needs to strengthen efforts to ensure that environmental considerations are mainstreamed into the national crisis response. The country programme acknowledges that the refugee crisis response should be aligned with issues of long-term development assistance such as solid waste, wastewater and water resource management. Support to solid waste management facilities, farmers and the agricultural sector, and the rehabilitation of irrigation canals responded to immediate needs at the local level. However, these activities were not located within a wider framework to strengthen policy and link municipal-level activities with national policy processes. As such, UNDP initiatives risked becoming stand-alone efforts with sustainability challenges. Examples such as the temporary landfill site at Ghazze, while beyond UNDP control, carry serious reputational risks.

Microlevel SLM pilot initiatives in the Qaraoun catchment area have the potential to inform environmental protection policy and practice in Lebanon. UNDP supported various policy initiatives, including the development of a land use masterplan, strategic environment assessments for West Bekka, Zahle and Rachaya, integration of

SLM into the Forest Law, and national guidelines for SLM considerations. Landscape-level uptake of SLM forest, rangeland and agriculture interventions will be required to reduce land degradation and realise ecosystem and development benefits in the Qaraoun catchment area. As SLM is a relatively new concept in Lebanon, the lessons from the pilot initiatives will be of wider value and should be widely disseminated.

Finding 15: UNDP has significantly contributed to setting Lebanon's NDC targets and climate agenda, and the prioritization of negotiations under the UNFCCC.

UNDP contributed to delivering Lebanon's national and sectoral 2030 targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. These are now nationally-recognised objectives owned by the various ministries mandated for implementation. An interministerial coordination mechanism was established to prepare the Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions (INDC).⁵² UNDP worked with the NDC committee to strengthen commitment, technical capacity and coordination, resulting in increased ownership and improved coordination among ministries, and the mainstreaming of climate change into ministries. The MoE will continue to follow-up on INDC implementation through the INDC interministerial coordination mechanism. This was transformed in 2017 into a follow-up entity, by Council of Ministers' decision, to ensure the successful implementation of the INDC. In this context, the establishment of the Lebanon Management and Information System for Climate Action platform is important for data management for greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation. MoE and the Ministry of Energy and Water have ensured its sustainability and adoption.

Industrial pollution is a major issue in Lebanon, resulting in significant losses in GDP. The World Bank 2011 Country Environmental Analysis estimated the cost

of environmental degradation in Lebanon to be \$800 million annually.⁵³ In 2020 the Government estimated that the economic benefits of controlling pollution would be 4 percent of GDP, about \$2 billion per year.⁵⁴ This highlights the importance of UNDP support to industries to comply with Environmental Compliance Decree 8471/2012, which enabled them to access low-interest loans to adopt environmental compliance mechanisms. A World Bank loan of \$15 million to the Government, managed by the Central Bank of Lebanon, provides seven-year subsidized loans to commercial banks, to then lend on to enterprises.⁵⁵ Seven industries received the subsidized loans, amounting to \$10.6 million for wastewater and solid waste treatment and reductions in air emissions. Disbursement of the remaining 4.4 million is scheduled by the end of 2019. Italian development assistance also provided free technical assistance to industrial enterprises to evaluate their environmental status and propose actions to improve their environmental performance. UNDP is working with 10 industries, some of the largest in the country, including market leaders across a range of sectors such as brewing, cement, sweet manufacturing and slaughterhouses. The second phase is expected to provide \$50 million of additional funding and the possibility of opening up the facility to other areas such as recycling.

The Government has an important role to play in catalysing private sector participation through strong enforcement of legislation and incentives to adopt pollution abatement practices, yet low enforcement of the decree/regulation continues to pose a challenge in convincing the private sector to manage pollution. Initially, the project actively approached industries to persuade them to take loans. However, since 2017, government engagement around the issue of the pollution of the Litani River prompted industries to seek help from the UNDP Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project. While it is too soon to assess the

⁵² The INDC committee was composed of the ministries of Environment, Energy and Water, Public Works and Transport, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, and the Lebanese Petroleum Authority.

⁵³ World Bank (2011) Lebanon – Country Environmental Analysis. Report No. 62266-LB.

⁵⁴ Government of Lebanon Ministry of Environment (2019) Rapid Cost of Environmental Degradation.

⁵⁵ World Bank, Lebanon-Environmental Pollution Abatement Project.

impact of this project, it is expected to be a tool to kick start change and catalyse pollution abatement uptake. Getting the right incentives and penalties in place for industry would greatly facilitate compliance and action.

Finding 16: Despite a range of activities at municipal level, and technical support at national level, core issues related to solid waste management are yet to be addressed. UNDP had limited success in enabling a comprehensive and sustainable solid waste management solution.

Solid waste management is a high profile, long-standing and complex problem in Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon is party to international conventions on hazardous waste management, and recognises the policy challenge. The Lebanon Voluntary National Review notes that: *“Several strategies have been drafted over the last two decades to manage the municipal solid waste sector in Lebanon, but none were properly implemented for various reasons but primarily social acceptance and political factors.”*⁵⁶ The issues are multi-faceted, and the influx of Syrian refugees has intensified the challenges, with the number unsanitary dumpsites increasing from an estimated 650 to 750 and a similar increase in the volume of solid waste generated. The country experienced a solid waste crisis in 2015 and appears to be heading for a second crisis, as tensions over solid waste are rising.

With UNDP support, the MoE prepared a solid waste management strategy and issued several ministerial decisions and guidelines pertaining to solid waste and more specialized industrial waste, but implementation remains an issue. UNDP has supported several solid waste management initiatives and the installation of solid waste facilities, some at municipal scale. But these represent short-term temporary fixes rather than addressing the core of the problem. UNDP has financed three major waste infrastructure projects in Sidon, Baalbeck and Tripoli, but these have faced operational issues as political, policy and institutional arrangements were not addressed. The Cabinet

endorsed decentralized waste treatment plants managed by municipalities, but implementation is yet to happen.

Although the Syrian refugee crisis worsened solid waste management, this has been a longstanding issue for Lebanon. Over the years, UNDP has had limited success with institutional solutions, despite solid waste management being a high priority national-level challenge. Despite high per capita humanitarian aid, there were challenges in finding a sustainable solution, in part due to the lack of political will, clarity on institutional roles, or an enabling policy environment. The various perspectives on solid waste management from civil society, municipalities and national government are yet to be harmonized. There is considerable expectation that the new National Solid Waste Management Strategy will provide an opportunity for strategic engagement. Lessons from previous efforts will be important in the operationalization of the strategy.

2.6 Democratic governance and institutional development

UNDP support for democratic governance and institutional development aimed to address a range of governance challenges at national and subnational levels. Broadly, the governance portfolio can be categorized into two areas: support to strengthen institutional processes; and advisory and policy support. The former includes support to transparent elections, inclusive and participatory policies, accountable and functioning institutions, and enhanced community security. The latter comprises facilitation of technical, advisory and support staff positions in various government institutions to enable core government functions. This support, which UNDP has provided continuously since 1997, aims to contribute to the functionality of the Government.

The portfolio comprises 15 projects of which eight pertain to advisory services. Approximate expenditure for 2017–19 was \$24 million, of which

⁵⁶ Republic of Lebanon (2018) Lebanon Voluntary National Review of Sustainable Development Goals.

democratic governance activities took \$9.5 million and the remainder was spent on advisory services.

Strengthening institutional processes

Finding 17: UNDP support to strengthen institutional processes is important in the context of slow political reform and intense governance challenges in Lebanese institutions. The UNDP programme responded to national efforts in key governance areas, but the scope of such engagement is limited with no tangible outcomes in terms of promoting institutional reform processes and little scalability.

Over the years, UNDP has provided technical support to accelerate governance processes and improve the capacity of a range of Lebanese institutions. Most areas of support spanned several UNDP programming periods, with varying levels of contribution to policy formulation and immediate capacity needs. During the current programme, UNDP core engagement to strengthen institutions and governance processes lacked technical depth and consistent engagement.

Specific UNDP initiatives for electoral assistance, building the capacity of community police and facilitating parliamentary discussions achieved their intended outputs. Given the political complexity and weak electoral institutions and infrastructure in Lebanon, UNDP support was important to the smooth conduct of municipal elections. Municipal electoral assistance helped to maintain the momentum of strengthening electoral processes for fair and transparent elections. The 'Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections' (BRIDGE) project and formal training and interactions with electoral staff contributed to change processes. UNDP effectively used opportunities arising from a five-year delay in holding local elections to engage in the capacity development of electoral staff and the MoIM. However, given the low donor interest in this area, UNDP had to continue the support for a longer period than intended with the same financial resources.⁵⁷

Given the complexity of electoral reform in Lebanon, longer-term engagement is essential, and UNDP is well-positioned to contribute to this area. Electoral reform and capacity building of key electoral institutions require the systematic institutional strengthening of agencies in the electoral system, which is currently beyond the scope of the UNDP programme. UNDP efforts were dedicated to strengthening the capacity of the MoIM, whereas institutions such as the Special Commission for Elections (SCE) did not receive adequate technical support to establish standard operating procedures. The outcome of the 2018 elections emphasises the importance of strengthening participation and accountability processes and highlights the capacity gaps of the SCE in managing and monitoring elections. Structural limitations in the electoral system and institutional reluctance to reform have undermined the outcomes of UNDP interventions. Ongoing efforts to strengthen the election capacity of the MoIM and streamline the structure and role of the SCE should be complemented and informed by electoral reform and restructuring.

UNDP also supported advocacy for more inclusive politics and to increase the representation of women through quotas in municipal elections. Given the complexity of promoting women's political participation in Lebanon, there were no discernible outcomes, but instances were reported of greater openness of women to participate in electoral politics, despite the dominant confessional system. Affirmative action for the inclusion of more women in electoral politics is challenging, and more concerted efforts are needed to increase women's participation in party politics as well as elected positions.

UNDP has supported Lebanon's anti-corruption efforts since 2011. During the current programme, this has included support for the technical committee of the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption,

⁵⁷ Charlemagne, S. (2018) UNDP Lebanese Electoral Assistance Project 2013–2019 Final Evaluation Report.

and develop the national anti-corruption strategy and implementation plan, currently awaiting cabinet approval. This is important to address systemic limitations and support the Government's commitment to the 2018 CEDRE conference to initiate governance reforms. However, UNDP has limited initiatives to support anti-corruption measures and enhance transparency and accountability at sector level. Concrete action is needed, beyond technical committees and self-assessments, to strengthen corruption risk management, empower oversight institutions and strengthen links to judicial processes. Partnership with the World Bank will be important to enable more concrete institutional processes for reducing corruption.

UNDP has provided long-term support to parliamentary committees through technical studies and facilitation of exchange of good practices to inform parliamentary debates. There have been several publications over the years on themes such as human rights, gender and public accountability, including in the current programme period an analysis of the SDGs which parliamentarians consulted considered an enabler for legislative debate and advocacy. In its previous country programme, UNDP supported legislative and executive measures to enhance human rights through the National Human Rights Action Plan 2014–2019.

However, one-off publications do not provide the continued analysis required for parliamentary debates and there is a lack of parliamentary follow up on human rights issues, in part due to a lack of data and analysis. More continuous evidence-based analysis on key themes for parliamentary debates requires sustainable systems using existing research and analysis from Lebanese universities and research institutions. More durable solutions are needed for the facilitation of parliamentary debates, and the sparsely-funded UNDP research secretariat in the Parliament is not fit for this purpose. An evaluation of the parliamentary support project highlighted that the approach and

activities have reduced the scope and role of the secretariat.⁵⁸ An overemphasis on workshops rather than more institutionalized research and analysis support in key policy areas is a shortcoming of UNDP support.

Finding 18: The UNDP approach to the prevention and management of natural disasters and conflict-related situations is in early stages.

Disaster management is important for Lebanon to achieve the Sendai Goals and it is an opportune time for UNDP to enable a national disaster management framework. The CPD outlined support to disaster and conflict management, but did not define the approach. In the case of natural disaster management, there were challenges in establishing a Disaster Risk Management Authority, and modest progress in the formation of local disaster management committees.

A systemic approach to conflict prevention and management is critical given the situation on the ground, and UNDP is in the early stages of developing a more structured approach. Recent events at municipal level point to challenges in diffusing and responding to tensions between refugees and host communities. An upsurge in violent encounters and conflicts between host and refugee communities, increasing internal displacement of refugees, heightened anti-refugee rhetoric and strict government regulations at different levels (for example municipal curfews and tightening national labour and residency requirements) are precipitating a rise in tensions. Tension monitoring has been piloted, as described in following sections, but is yet to be institutionalized and linked to security institutions to ensure timely action, for reasons beyond UNDP control. The Government and United Nations agencies are cautious to apply a more structured use of tension monitoring information, and systems need to be put in place to ensure that the information generated is appropriately managed and used.

⁵⁸ Mouawad, J. (2018) Project evaluation of UNDP technical support to Lebanese Parliament.

Facilitating advisory and support staff

Since 1997, UNDP has supported Lebanese government institutions by establishing and staffing Policy Support and Advisory Units, with positions at different levels. The Units operate in various capacities, to provide core capacity, advisory and technical functions, or support services. The Government of Lebanon fully funds these staff positions through a cost-sharing mechanism (accounting for approximately \$9 million per year), and UNDP manages their recruitment and staffing.

During the 2015–2019 programme, UNDP recruited 145 personnel, all Lebanese nationals, for the ministries of finance, economic policy and trade, education and environment as well as the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers, OMSAR; OMSWA; IDAL; and the Railway and Public Transport Authority. The profiles of the advisory and support staff facilitated by UNDP are presented in Table 2. This support added to the capacity of four of the

nine ministries supported, enabling a range of functions. This evaluation did not assess the sector expertise of the technical staff facilitated by UNDP, though respondents noted that, overall, they have the required skill sets to ameliorate capacity gaps

Finding 19: The confessional system of power-sharing and public decision-making poses constraints to the creation and recruitment of government staff positions, affecting the functionality of ministries and institutions. UNDP support to the recruitment and management of technical and support staff should be assessed in this context.

The civil service system in Lebanon has had challenges in attracting and retaining civil servants with high-level technical expertise, as incentives for qualified professionals to formally join the civil service are limited. This is partly due to wage disparities between the public and private sectors, and exacerbated by the politicization of the civil service, institutional instability, lack of tenure guarantee and

TABLE 2. Advisory and support staff profile

Government institutions with UNDP-facilitated staff	Policy and technical staff		Project and support staff		Total
	Senior policy advisors	Technical policy specialists	Recurring functions (secretarial and other support staff such as drivers)	Administrative support	
OMSAR	13	8	21	1	43
MoF	6	4	15	3	28
OPCM	7	8	4	7	26
MoET	5	4	2	5	16
IDAL	1	4	8	2	15
MoE	1	1	1	9	12
MEHE	3	0	1	1	5
OMSWA	3	1	0	2	6
Railways	1	0	0	1	2
Total	40	30	52	31	153
Percentage	45.75		54.24		
Percentage of total	26.14	19.60	33.98	20.26	

Source: Hate, Aditi, 2018. Strengthening Core Governance Institutions for SDG Implementation: Technical Review of UNDP Policy Support Advisory Units in Lebanon. UNDP Lebanon.

the absence of a merit-based system. The confessional system not only undermines merit-based recruitment of civil servants but is also an obstacle to the creation of positions to respond to emerging needs. These challenges have justified the continuation of UNDP support to facilitate advisory and support staff across ministries for over two decades.

Finding 20: The facilitation of advisory and support staff has varied outcomes, enabling core functions or complementing ongoing activities in some government entities, while making a minimal contribution to others.

The technical experts and service staff recruited through UNDP played an important role in some entities, such as MEHE, MoE and the Office of the President of the Council of Ministers. For example it has supported the MEHE information technology unit which fulfils a vital function in the Ministry, and technical support for the preparation of policies in the MoE and Ministry of Finance has filled an important gap. Digitalization of revenues by the Customs Office and steps towards the digital transformation of OMSAR are also notable contributions. In the MoE, a large number of technical staff are recruited outside of the civil service process and make up a critical mass in the resource-starved Ministry.

In some institutions, government staff were reluctant to use the inputs of UNDP-seconded advisory staff, raising questions about the need for such support. There are several reasons for the disconnect, which included confessional politics, the location of the staff within institutional structures, lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities, a history of a weak civil service system, and discontent arising from salary differences. As a UNDP internal review pointed out, the extent of the contribution of the units depended to a large extent on where they were located and whether they were supported by key decision-making actors. In some cases, use of the policy inputs was low as UNDP-seconded staff were not located in the

directorates of ministries. In a complex decision-making environment, it was challenging for UNDP-recruited staff to demonstrate the value of their policy inputs and get the support of all decision making actors.⁵⁹

Despite filling capacity gaps, the existence of a parallel system of staff recruitment for a prolonged period can have an adverse impact on strengthening the civil service. Several respondents considered that the staff recruited through UNDP play or could play an important role in advisory and policy support, but that the system subverts institutional processes and, in some cases, creates additional costs to ministries. Furthermore, the system can create sustainability challenges. For example, the information technology operations of the MEHE could be affected if UNDP-recruited staff leave without the back-up process of a government system. This parallel system of externally-recruited, government-funded advisory and support staff undermines efforts to address issues with the confessional system, strengthen the civil service and develop sustainable institutional capacity. UNDP should take responsibility for the length of time it has been providing this support, which raises perceptions of nepotism and clientelism, though perhaps not fully justified.

For UNDP, it is not clear how effective staff facilitation has been as an entry point for core governance engagement, although there are instances where UNDP appeared to be better placed to inform policy processes.

Finding 21. While human resource facilitation in Lebanon is in line with UNDP support provided in middle- and upper-middle-income contexts, it is problematic to frame this as core governance strengthening.

Cumbersome government procedures for the creation of staff positions, and the faster recruitment processes and more competitive salaries of UNDP, have meant that UNDP has been able to

⁵⁹ Hate, A. (2018) Strengthening Core Governance Institutions for SDG Implementation: Technical Review of UNDP Policy Support Advisory Units in Lebanon. UNDP Lebanon.

attract skilled Lebanese and expatriate professionals with expertise in key policy areas. The extent to which they augmented existing civil service capacity and the functionality of ministries has depended on several factors, often beyond the scope of UNDP, to whom the activities and outcomes of the advisory and support staff cannot be attributed. There is limited evidence to support a link between UNDP facilitation and government outcomes.

There are challenges in the framing of UNDP facilitation of advisory and support staff, which UNDP defines as core governance support. This support has been delivered under a project modality, which lends itself to misperception and misrepresentation of the roles and responsibilities of the participating government bodies and UNDP, and the accountability of the staff to their host agencies. There is confusion, more on the part of UNDP, of roles in the management of the advisory and support staff. The facilitation of support services in particular is difficult to justify, as it appears to contradict the reasoning behind the support to technical and policy positions. The framing can be misleading as it attributes the performance of government staff as a contribution of UNDP. In reality, the project approach to human resource facilitation adopted by UNDP, with specific outputs for each position, is more procedural. Given that UNDP has minimal inputs and limited control of how the government staff function, its accountability for ensuring policy outcomes and related governance processes is superficial. In the majority of entities, the advisory and support staff were clear that they were accountable to their host institutions and considered the UNDP project process a procedural requirement.

Several respondents expressed concerns about weak contractual obligations to the Government, especially on issues of confidentiality, as UNDP-recruited staff are officially seconded and therefore not subject to government rules and procedures. This would need to be comprehensively addressed to demonstrate accountability and satisfy public

oversight requirements. Others shared concerns about staff becoming entrenched for a prolonged period, leading to unaccountable parallel structures that become counterproductive and inefficient. Even where staff made policy contributions, over the long term, the parallel system of technical support undermined the building of institutional capacity. These observations are substantiated by a detailed internal review of the Policy Support Advisory Units conducted by UNDP in 2018.⁶⁰ Concerns were also raised about transparency in the recruitment process, and whether UNDP is influenced by nepotism in the selection of the staff.

Compared to other countries where UNDP facilitates government staff positions, Lebanon has a high human resource capacity, making such support a perverse incentive for qualified staff to join formal government services. Perceived and real salary discrepancies between UNDP-recruited experts and bureaucrats were not considered justifiable, irrespective of the technical support provided, and are a demotivating factor for government staff, who often perform similar functions. While it is usual for staff supported by United Nations agencies and international organizations to receive higher pay than government employees, in this case the Government is funding the UNDP-facilitated positions, making salary disparities more unusual. The government salary review in 2017 narrowed the salary gaps between civil servants and externally-recruited policy staff considerably.

Despite a well-established partnership, UNDP faced challenges in formalising technical positions, and a large number of the staff continued on short-term contracts, renewed periodically often over long periods. UNDP is in discussions with the Government to close the projects on human resource facilitation, with some areas of recruitment already being transferred to the respective government institutions. An abrupt end to the facilitation of advisory and support staff could result in technical and policy gaps in ministries such as the MoE and MEHE, especially as the government employment freeze would

⁶⁰ Ibid.

limit the immediate creation of new positions in these ministries. Phase-out would therefore need to be carefully managed to avoid negative repercussions of the withdrawal of such support.

There is space for core governance support in Lebanon, and UNDP is well-positioned to engage in this area, but with more consistent engagement with the reform agenda. For example, UNDP was not proactive in strengthening MEHE governance systems, even those related to information management, and other agencies are providing such support.

2.7 Promoting peace

UNDP implemented 12 projects to support mechanisms to promote peace and prevent, mitigate and manage conflict through policy and at community level. These cover support to the Lebanese Palestinian Dialogue Committee (LPDC), Palestinian Gatherings and community peacebuilding efforts, which emphasise humanitarian-development linkages and focus on stabilization. This section analyses all of these projects except for the tension monitoring initiative, which is covered in depth in the following section. For the period 2017–2018, the total expenditure on this area was \$19.1 million.

Finding 22: Social cohesion and peace are of high strategic importance to Lebanon's development, and UNDP is well-positioned to provide this support at local and national levels. UNDP has contributed to positioning the social cohesion and stability agenda at the centre of the Syrian crisis response. At the micro level, there are several examples of contributions to promoting social cohesion but comprehensive responses are needed within a national policy framework to enable drivers of peace.

UNDP peacebuilding Interventions comprised two streams of support: the facilitation of advisory support at national level to strengthen technical and operational capacities; and support to local-level social cohesion and community security initiatives that could provide a replicable model for municipalities. Both are essential in the Lebanese context,

particularly to enable linkages between municipal-level initiatives for social cohesion and peace and national policy processes. However, the UNDP approach was constrained by its own strategy and by the lack of an enabling policy environment.

UNDP provision of technical and advisory services to LPDC and government initiatives on the prevention of violent extremism (jointly with other United Nations agencies) provided entry points to engage in core peacebuilding policy issues. The LPDC, established in 2005 by the Council of Ministers to manage Palestinian issues, is embedded in the Prime Minister's office. UNDP contributed to strengthening the capacity of the LPDC to implement its overarching strategic plan (2015–2020), and set up a comprehensive policy for Palestinian refugees with significant outcomes that have the potential to inform policymaking. Key achievements of the Committee include: the finalization and presentation to the Council of Ministers of the first Unified Lebanese Vision for Palestinian Refugees' Affairs; the completion and dissemination of the Census of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon; execution of a labour force survey in Palestinian camps and Gatherings in partnership with CAS; and the implementation of vulnerability assessments of the Palestinian Gatherings to inform programming. The Palestinian census is widely regarded as a well-designed and well-executed survey which can serve as an example for other big data exercises.

With longstanding partnerships at national level, UNDP is well regarded and seen as less politicized than other humanitarian United Nations agencies. As such, it was able to play an enabler role for agencies such as UNHCR and UNRWA, and provide entry points to work with municipal and national institutions. UNDP also established new partnerships with NGOs, United Nations agencies and donors. LPDC is heavily dependent on donor funding, and diversification of funding streams will be important to its effective functioning. There is an expectation from national stakeholders that UNDP should facilitate this outreach.

Despite the changing political landscape, UNDP has been able to implement peace and social cohesion

initiatives at municipal and community levels, even at times when national ownership was not guaranteed. Social cohesion initiatives benefited from strong engagement with municipal actors, NGOs and national-level government entities. In several cases, municipal authorities expressed strong satisfaction with UNDP hands-on support, tools and methodologies which use bottom-up, participatory and conflict-sensitive approaches to build bridges and reach agreements in diverse communities. UNDP microlevel bridging initiatives between communities and to engage youth at risk have been significant. Examples of potential approaches to promote social cohesion through livelihood support include employment and psychosocial support to former civil war fighters, and playback theatre to reduce tensions. However, such initiatives require a certain scale to generate a critical mass for change.

A range of UNDP social cohesion initiatives had microlevel successes or advocacy value, but overall they lacked scale or linkages with municipal level processes. While UNDP is a key agency facilitating microlevel social cohesion initiatives, more emphasis is needed on building municipal capacity for the continued local management of tensions. High unemployment and recession pose additional challenges for youth employment, with consequences for social cohesion and peace. Opportunities were lost in facilitating a coherent, well-tested approach to youth employment and inclusion to promote social cohesion. This lack of a coherent framework integrating interrelated initiatives in social and local development, social cohesion and community peace hindered a more strategic contribution to peacebuilding outcomes.

In its present form, UNDP is not in a position to respond to the recent evolving heightened conflict, and the sum of its activities did not enable larger change processes. The small scale of activities, low ownership from municipal institutions, and lack of linkages to national policy processes reduced the impact of UNDP interventions. UNDP needs to address the larger question of the added value of its

role in supporting one-off microlevel social cohesion initiatives when Lebanon needs broader, institutionalized processes. A mainstreamed approach to social cohesion, particularly when linked to development and humanitarian interventions, has a higher probability of promoting sustainable outcomes. For example, work under the Palestinian Gatherings project to deal with waste management in Alkharayeb municipality (where it had been a source of conflict) showed that social cohesion outcomes were stronger when the work was mainstreamed into municipal-level initiatives. This work enabled change processes, transforming the contentious issue into a unifying factor for the communities involved. Lessons from Alkharayeb attracted the attention of other municipalities keen to incorporate it into their municipal processes, as well as of the national Government.⁶¹

Given the lack of concerted effort by the Government since the civil war to deal with the past, UNDP initiated advocacy efforts to promote peace and cohesion. For example, the education curriculum had not been updated after the Amnesty Law, meaning that today's youth may not be exposed to diverse narratives which would help them to build an objective perspective of conflict and its impact. The Memories of the Past Coalition, launched in 2018, was moderated by UNDP as a neutral actor to bring together Lebanese organizations working on initiatives to help people deal with the past.

Certain peacebuilding initiatives, such as Violence-Free Schools or the women's platform, do not fit well within the overall framework of activities. While the Violence-Free Schools initiative has created spaces to bring together parents, students and teachers, and open channels for social cohesion, the overall theory of change to achieve social cohesion objectives is not clear. Sustained attitudinal change requires follow-up actions in the schools, linkages to broader municipal-level social cohesion processes, and scale up in collaboration with other agencies. The concept of violence-free schools was defined too broadly in the project scope and

⁶¹ Bugnion de Moreta (2019) Outcome Evaluation of UNDP's Crisis Prevention and Recovery Programme in Lebanon.

included issues that pertain to school governance rather than social cohesion *per se*. In collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP contributed to introducing peace education in the National Child Protection Policy. Well-demonstrated models for violence-free schools should inform the project model and the conflict prevention work of MEHE. UNDP has commenced ten pilots combining violence-free schools with the Mechanism for Stability and Resilience (MSR), media and access to justice as an integrated intervention to support municipalities. This provides an opportunity to address the limitations of the Violence-Free Schools model.

The protracted nature of the Syrian crisis demands conflict-sensitive processes that are apolitical and mainstreamed, and that have the buy-in of Government and other international humanitarian and development actors. Tensions are growing and becoming more complex, and the propensity for violence is rising. According to tension monitoring data, host community fatigue is increasing, with the percentage of Lebanese reporting 'no tension' between host communities and refugees dropping from 40 percent in 2014 to 2 percent in 2017. Competition for lower-skilled jobs was identified as the main driver of tension. Refugees are facing shrinking space for protection, with growing restrictions on their movement and employment rights by local authorities. The UNDP response is not commensurate with the need for social cohesion. Part of the reason for a more truncated response by UNDP is the overemphasis on international humanitarian support.

Finding 23: The iterative support of UNDP to improve the capacity of national and local institutions to respond to Palestinian refugee needs in an integrated and coordinated way assumes importance, given the significant challenges faced by Palestinian Gatherings.

UNDP support to the Palestinian Gatherings is a sole initiative, supporting the 54 most vulnerable of the estimated total 154 Gatherings. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, including the 24,000 who fled Syria, face extended challenges. Palestinian Gatherings are among the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in Lebanon. The 140,000

old and new Palestinian refugees live in the most difficult conditions, marked by poverty and inequality, lack of social services and limited access to jobs and income generation opportunities. Around 50 percent of Palestinians live in Gatherings outside of UNWRA camps. They are neglected by UNWRA, which is not mandated to work outside of camps, and are not supported by municipalities. This situation has increased tensions and conflicts in the Gatherings, affecting stability and increasing violence and risky community behaviours.

Given this background, UNDP support to strengthening the resilience of the Palestinian Gatherings host communities through enhancing living conditions, providing adequate water and sanitation services and facilities, and promoting healthier, safer and more inclusive physical environments assumes significance. UNDP also addressed the risky behaviour of young people through community and livelihood initiatives, and has worked to strengthen the capacities of municipalities, successfully bringing municipalities together to address shared development challenges. For example, the initiative to deal with waste management in Alkharayeb used basic community-level service interventions to promote social cohesion among communities.

As discussed in the section on local development above, UNDP had limited success in ensuring that vocational training contributed to employment, as the training was not long enough to generate enterprise or employment. In the Palestinian Gatherings project, UNDP revised its vocational training approach to support longer-term education, ranging from one to three years subject to funding. This focused on training for nursing, as Palestinians are allowed to join the nursing union and there is demand for these jobs, alongside investments in new domains such as the installation of solar energy systems and plumbing.

Finding 24: Pilot initiatives to strengthen community security in municipalities with a Syrian refugee presence are very relevant. Continued efforts are needed to formalize and link such efforts to national security sector processes.

UNDP has prioritized support to institutionalize and improve the security and stability of local communities, given the protracted Syrian crisis and consequent increase in demand for municipal services. A major strength of UNDP is its ability to work across different geographic, religious and political constituencies, and between sexes, making its initiatives acceptable to local people. This flexibility, which some international actors constrained by anti-terrorism restrictions lacked, is yet to be leveraged by UNDP.

UNDP support to professionalize the municipal police is both relevant and justified, as they are the first line of response in dealing with host communities and vulnerable groups. Pilot initiatives contributed to enhancing municipal police capacity, facilitating partnerships between various stakeholders and establishing Standard Operating Procedures. A Code of Conduct for municipal police officers was adopted in pilot municipalities. Awareness-raising initiatives, alongside consultations between local government, security agencies and constituents, helped to change perceptions of policing from being a security force to a service provider. The Standard Operating Procedures have been disseminated to all municipalities, which is in itself important progress.

The municipal police training has been institutionalized in the Internal Security Forces (ISF) and provided to all municipalities, not just those supported by UNDP. The training is largely perceived as useful for the professionalization of community police, contributing to less aggressive behaviour when dealing with complicated cases. The main takeaway from the training appeared to be social skills, and an attitudinal shift is expected to become corporate behaviour once the entire municipal police force has been trained. Municipalities have limited budgets and equipment for policing, meaning that even small-scale support for equipment and training is important to promote a supportive environment. However, periodic training and resources would be needed to professionalize the municipal police. UNDP

also provided training for the ISF on issues such as the Human Rights-Based Approach (a normative framework of the United Nations) and social skills, creating a degree of capacity development within the institution. UNDP also created opportunities for the ISF Academy, which provides training to the municipal police, to engage with municipalities and better understand their contexts.

Closely related to local police capacity is the issue of access to justice. This is challenging for refugees, given that most do not have residence or work permits. This adds to refugees' vulnerabilities and limits their legal protection. These issues need more comprehensive engagement and well-coordinated responses, but UNDP support in this area lacked vertical linkages, and good practices remained isolated initiatives. A system of legal aid centres based on referrals would facilitate synergies and partnership between the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association and CSOs, and improve legal aid services. Other areas requiring support are the capacity of judges and the development of Judicial Training Centre curricula that address local legal issues, particularly those related to Syrian displacement.

While most international agencies in the security sector engage at national policy level, UNDP is addressing a critical gap at the community level. UNDP support demonstrated the value of municipal police capacity development, but the needs are huge. The training was deemed very useful and applicable, providing quick gains for participants, but there are a large number of municipal police who are yet to be reached. Of the 251 municipalities targeted in the LCRP, only 14 received UNDP support, and only 143 municipal police were trained. There are also structural constraints, as municipal police do not have a defined hierarchy. Except for the head of police, all are at the same level, and many are contracted as temporary staff affecting wider motivation in the local police force. Security sector reforms in Lebanon recognise the importance of integrating the municipal police within wider security systems and policy frameworks, but such linkages are yet to take place. The current strategic plans

of the ISF,⁶² General Security⁶³ and Lebanese Armed Forces⁶⁴ each include commitments to enhance their engagement and outreach with communities. Moving forward, the sustainability of UNDP pilot initiatives at community level requires iterative horizontal scaling and institutionalized linkages with security sector policy processes and frameworks.

Finding 25: UNDP support to the Mine Action Centre and Strategy has been significant to the progress made in addressing both the security and humanitarian aspects of demining in Lebanon.

UNDP has a long-standing relationship with the Lebanese Armed Forces on mine action. Support for demining has been scaled up as the north-eastern border has become an area of concern and intervention. Support to the Ministry of National Defence and the Mine Action Centre has focused on security and humanitarian aspects, and also on the development aspects of demining. 75 percent of mined areas could be used for agriculture, and mine survivors face reintegration challenges due to financial constraints and limited access to livelihood opportunities.

UNDP has built the institutional capacity of the Lebanon Mine Action Programme and contributed to the Lebanon Mine Action Strategy and LCRP. This is expected to lead to the ratification of the Ottawa convention.⁶⁵ A major achievement to date has been the release of updated National Mine Action Standards in March 2018. Government counterparts, as well as donors, considered the UNDP contribution to be significant given the tight timeframe.

2.8 Measurement tools: needs and social stability assessments

Finding 26: The various instruments developed by UNDP to assess basic service needs or to mainstream conflict sensitivity show potential, but challenges remain in their institutionalization and potential to

enable streamlined municipal-level responses. Lack of consolidation of municipal needs assessment instruments by various agencies, including those of the United Nations, remains an issue.

The assessment tool used by the LHSP, Maps of Risks and Resources (MRR), was developed by UNDP in other countries and adapted to the Lebanese context. At the beginning of the crisis, a rapid targeting mechanism such as the MRR was crucial to increase the pace of implementation as the scale of immediate needs was high and the funding was short-term. The MRR process was undertaken primarily with municipalities and MoSA Social Development Centres, to engage key stakeholders from the local community in a two-phase discussion on the impact of the Syrian crisis on basic services (such as water, health care and solid waste management) and livelihood opportunities. Based on this assessment, Municipal Action Plans were developed to define policies and actions to alleviate the refugee pressure on municipal resources. Assessments have been carried out in 251 vulnerable communities with high levels of Syrian refugees and poverty (25 percent of the communities in Lebanon). In 2015, an additional criterion on the ratio of Lebanese to Syrian population was included in MRRs.

Another tool developed by UNDP to undertake conflict sensitivity assessments is the Mechanism for Social Stability. As the 251 municipalities covered by the LHSP and the peacebuilding project were identified as LCRP priority intervention areas, there were incidences where assessments were simultaneously carried out using the two tools in the same municipality, creating confusion for some partners and communities. UNDP subsequently streamlined these two tools into a single tool called the Mechanism for Stability and Resilience (MSR), which is being piloted in 110 municipalities. The MSR is seen as a more integrated and refined approach to mainstream conflict-sensitivity into all interventions and improve targeting processes. MSRs have

⁶² <http://www.isf.gov.lb/files/ISF%20SP%20Booklet%20English.pdf>.

⁶³ General Directorate of General Security Strategic Plan 2018–2022.

⁶⁴ <https://civilsociety-centre.org/party/lebanese-armed-forces-laf-0>.

⁶⁵ Midterm Evaluation, CPR Programme, 2019.

considerable potential, but they are not yet used effectively. There are concerns about the quality of the instrument and the level of institutionalization achieved. Many respondents considered that the MSR methodology was not sufficiently robust. In addition, data collected is not uniform and inadequately supported through other data sources.

The context of Lebanon needs strategic and evidence- (rather than perception-) based assessments, requiring tools that enable better targeting of vulnerable host communities by Government and donors. MSR is not a solution in itself, but needs to be part of broader stability and social cohesion efforts. Despite positive examples of how MSR has been used to identify the underlying causes of conflict at municipal level and inform mitigation solutions, much of its success depends on complementary activities by municipal or national government or a coherent LCRP response. UNDP is yet to establish processes for MSR to become part of municipal-level assessments for development and humanitarian responses. UNDP provides operational support for MSRs, but the transfer of capacities is yet to be ensured and processes for assessing the level of use and outcomes of these instruments have not been put in place.

In the absence of a coordinated approach to assess development needs and conflict sensitivity in Lebanon, there are a number of other assessment tools employed at the municipal level. For example, UN-Habitat developed detailed neighbourhood profiles focused on cities, which assess vulnerabilities and risks and lead to recommendations at a sector/multi-sector level. UN-Habitat has helped to set up technical units under the Union of Municipalities to improve municipal technical capacity and ensure that projects align with priorities. UNHCR and the World Food Programme are also developing a targeting process for contractors.

UNDP had limited success in enabling institutionalized planning at the municipal level. There were limited efforts to ensure that municipal assessments

were not duplicated, and opportunities were lost to develop a consensus tool at the municipal level with the buy-in of all actors. Greater ownership and institutionalization of assessments is critical to ensure that resources are allocated effectively to address the challenges identified. There were concerns that assessments and municipal action plans are not readily available for use for planning or to attract additional funding. They are not uploaded to the MoSA website and need to be further institutionalized to become a management instrument for municipalities and ministries, not just for donors.

Municipal-level planning processes are not well linked to national-level resource allocation. Despite enabling mechanisms to increase interaction between local and national ministerial bodies, there is a disconnect between government responses in vulnerable host communities implemented at local and national policy levels.⁶⁶ It is essential that relevant regional representatives of line ministries participate in discussing the sectoral proposals identified in the MSR process at community or cluster levels, to inform government actions. The LHSP governance structure does not enable the engagement of sectoral actors,⁶⁷ and linkages between operational projects and policy-level processes are too weak to enable learning of what works and why. In the case of the Palestinian Gatherings project, LPDC (a higher-level policymaking body) provided entry points to establish linkages, ownership and policy goals, and persistent efforts are required to keep up this momentum. There are no similar institutional mechanisms for the LHSP.

Finding 27: There is considerable momentum to strengthen data and statistics. Jointly with UNFPA, UNDP technical assistance and support to the constitution of the National SDG Committee have been important measures in strengthening the Central Administration of Statistics.

The UNDP programme recognises large gaps in data for evidence-based policy and programming at national and subnational levels, a concern shared by

⁶⁶ Mansour, A. et al. (2018) Final Evaluation Report LHSP 2015–2017.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

government and development actors. One of the key challenges to evidence-based policy is the weak data and analysis of CAS. Lebanon's census and development data are outdated, constituting a severe constraint to sectoral reforms and policies. Poverty projections are not available and substantial structural changes in the country, in large part due to the refugee influx, are not reflected in the 2011/12 survey data for estimating poverty.⁶⁸ Similarly, environmental data needs updating to support environmental impact assessments, estimate the cost of degradation for economic and health policies, and report on SDG progress.

As the Government pursues the SDG agenda, it is an opportune time for UNDP to support data strengthening, and the national ownership and institutionalization of data systems to inform policies. The Government has shown interest in addressing data gaps and has sought and valued UNDP support in this area. The success of the Palestinian census, undertaken by the LPDC with technical support from UNDP and UNFPA, is notable and has given CAS the legitimacy and confidence to embark on other data exercises. UNDP has been working with other United Nations agencies to reinforce the national statistical system, and pool resources to collect common data in a cost-effective way.

UNDP, with UNFPA, has supported a capacity assessment of CAS to identify bottlenecks and set a roadmap to address them, and the CAS strategy is awaiting the approval of the Prime Minister's Office. The ongoing assessment of SDG data needs will help to build a coherent, timely, reliable national database with internationally comparable statistics. Lebanon needs a centralized system to consolidate data from different ministries and sector agencies so that it is consistent, harmonized and up-to-date. Baseline data is also needed to monitor and report on progress towards the SDGs. UNDP prioritization of support to CAS is relevant

in this context, initiating concrete measures to strengthen institutional capacity to produce robust statistics for monitoring the SDGs. UNDP has also supported SDG-related assessments and action plans, although in early stages, which is significant given the overall strategy to strengthen development data.

Finding 28: UNDP developed a tension mapping system for identifying, reporting and addressing tensions between host and refugee communities. This has the potential to inform government and international agency actions to defuse drivers of conflict. However, an unresponsive political environment has prevented the institutionalization of tension mapping and processes to address the drivers of tension.

As coordinator of the LCRP social stability area, UNDP has taken the lead in compiling and analysing inputs from a range of qualitative and quantitative data sources. For this, it has expanded its tension monitoring system, in coordination with MoSA and UNHCR. A Tensions Task Force was formed comprising key line ministries: MoIM, MOSA and the Ministry of Displaced Syrian Affairs.

Using perception surveys, on-the-ground reality checks and different types of available information, tension mapping generates information on hotspots of disrupted social relations with the potential for community-level conflict.⁶⁹ Trends on the geography and propensity to violence, perception of bias in the development and humanitarian response, and concerns about imminent return among host and refugee communities were tracked periodically. Tension briefings summarized the scale and patterns of incidence on a monthly basis, and examined trends on a quarterly basis to disseminate to key decision-makers. Tension profiles, nationally representative of Syrian and Lebanese adult populations, were regularly produced. While initially circulated among a closed group given the

⁶⁸ CAS and World Bank Group, Snapshot of Poverty and Labor Market Outcomes in Lebanon Based on Household Budget Survey 2011/2012.

⁶⁹ As of 2018, the tensions monitoring system relied on eight data sources: UNDP quarterly perceptions monitoring survey (quantitative); MoIM Security Cell data; Lebanon conflict incident tracking; UNDP and UNHCR convened Tension Task Forces in four regions quarterly; WhatsApp Survey Tool in hotspot areas piloted through the 'Speak your mind to prevent conflict in Lebanon' project; Social Media Analysis; and Protection Monitoring; and Conflict Analysis reports.

sensitivities, the Government subsequently agreed to broaden the circulation of the briefs to reach key national and international NGOs, United Nations agencies, embassies and donors.

This mapping filled a gap in information on the level of tension in different parts of the country, enabling timely action by the Government, and informing humanitarian and development interventions. This system was widely commended by stakeholders as a significant effort providing regular security updates, especially for small organizations without the resources to conduct their own assessments. The data was also used towards promising advocacy outcomes. UNDP and UNHCR contributed to advocacy efforts to persuade municipalities to postpone or cancel locally-led collective evictions of Syrian refugees.

The tension mapping data shows an increase in aggressiveness and violent incidents in areas with significant Syrian populations. Lebanese respondents reported more negative relations, particularly in Bekaa and the North. Environmental and resource issues are growing and becoming flashpoints for tensions, with a risk of politicization. Eviction threats by the municipality in Batroun district were predominantly put down to environmental concerns such as wastewater disposal and river contamination, though instrumentalized by political figures in the region. A common underlying perception worsening tension was that vulnerable Lebanese people have been neglected in the Syrian refugee response, leading to further expressions of frustration by host communities.

While these insights are important for government action and advocacy by international agencies, there was no good evidence of the use of this information to assuage tensions. Neither was it evident how the United Nations, including UNDP, under the LCRP umbrella, engaged meaningfully with community concerns on resource allocation and issues such as solid waste management through dedicated programming. Although not specific to UNDP, conflict sensitivity in responses and meaningful

engagement between refugees and host communities is yet to be systematically implemented.

2.9 Promoting gender equality

Finding 29: UNDP had some success with women-specific initiatives to promote income generation and enterprise skills, but opportunities for gender-sensitive programme design and implementation were underutilized.

UNDP has integrated women's issues into its economic empowerment and livelihood support and prioritized women's participation in economic value chains and support to build resilience to disasters, climate change and conflict. Women were included as beneficiaries in project initiatives across the programme portfolio and there were specific initiatives to advocate for women's inclusion in electoral politics. Women have also been central to interventions for community-level inclusive growth, employment and livelihoods. The participatory approach used by UNDP increased the number of women in economic empowerment activities, and support to basic services targets men and women equally. Some specific projects were implemented on women's empowerment and support for women's political inclusion and affirmative action for elected positions, complex areas in the confessional politics of Lebanon, where sustained efforts are needed.

UNDP is in the process of developing a gender equality approach for mainstreaming and addressing gender issues more coherently in its support. Programme initiatives are yet to be informed by a gender analysis, although there are ongoing efforts to address this. A survey of UNDP project managers found that fewer than 30 percent found that their project contributed to gender equality or women's empowerment. An assessment carried out as part of developing a gender strategy for the environment programme found that the country programme did not yet make a direct link between gender and the environment.⁷⁰ In areas

⁷⁰ UNDP Corporate Gender Strategy, 2018–21.

such as social cohesion and peacebuilding, gender-sensitive approaches are in early stages.

UNDP recognises the gaps and is taking measures to promote and implement gender-informed programming. There are concerted efforts to include gender analysis in environmental projects. The corporate

Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2021 provides an enabling framework to structure the UNDP response to gender inequalities. A gender screening tool, developed by UNDP, is being used to review ongoing initiatives and develop new interventions. In some specific instances, external gender analysis has also been conducted.



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness
COORDINATION HUMAN effectiveness COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sustainability
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COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness NATIONAL OWNERSHIP sustainability PARTNERSHIP

This evaluation assessed the UNDP contribution to key programme areas and cross-cutting themes for the period 2017 to 2020. Building on the findings set out in the previous chapter, the conclusions presented here focus on broader programme-level contributions and strategic issues in UNDP support to social and local development, governance, peace and energy and environment within the overarching Syrian refugee response. The recommendations take into consideration evolving opportunities in Lebanon as the Government moves forward with the Capital Investment Plan and related commitments, as well as UNDP organizational change and prioritization processes. The recommendations take into consideration the recent context of public protests triggered by governance issues.

3.1 Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: During the current programme period, UNDP continued its support to address the most intractable development, humanitarian and peacebuilding challenges faced by Lebanon. Its longstanding development and humanitarian support, work at municipal level, and the trust of national counterparts places UNDP in an advantageous position. The UNDP role in LCRP coordination and resource mobilization has been significant. In the context of the protracted Syrian crisis response, with a predominant focus on humanitarian assistance, it was not easy for UNDP to pursue sustainable long-term development programming options.**

The reputation and reach of UNDP with government institutions at national and municipal levels enabled engagement on a range of humanitarian and development issues. Well regarded for its development and crisis response support, UNDP played a visible role in the Syrian refugee response and has been responsive to service delivery needs at local level. Municipal services, critical in Lebanon's stabilization and refugee response, were addressed as a priority. UNDP is widely perceived as a trusted and go-to agency by the Government. This advantage has enabled several programmatic partnerships across the spectrum of development and crisis response agencies. UNDP

was a key agency in enabling a rapid response at the time of the Syrian refugee upsurge.

Given the middle-income status of Lebanon, donor contributions have predominantly been directed to refugee and stabilization concerns. Resilience programme models are slowly evolving to respond to the development needs and priorities that underpin the Syrian refugee response and peacebuilding. UNDP is yet to build on its comparative strengths and organizational expertise, particularly in policy engagement. Policy deadlock poses challenges but also implies that programme strategies should be responsive and adaptive to political economy factors.

UNDP support to SDG integration and related initiatives is gaining momentum. With a comparative advantage at municipal level, UNDP engagement is evolving to enable a strategic approach to the localization of the SDGs. Momentum on the SDGs at municipal level will be critical for UNDP to address development disparities. The SDG framework can enable a medium- and long-term development focus to the Syrian refugee response and bridge humanitarian and development processes. The SDG Action Plan offers an ideal opportunity to support SDG mainstreaming and data strengthening and provides a much-needed impetus to discourse on the integration and localization of economic, social and environmental aspects of the SDGs.

With programme initiatives of different scales in over 200 municipalities, UNDP is well positioned to enable local sustainable development solutions. Municipal-level initiatives are yet to be leveraged for viable models and enabling processes to strengthen service delivery capacity. Approaches such as area-based or integrated municipal development could bridge the gaps between the refugee response and local development, improve access to funding and strengthen local governance. This is at development stage, and requires concerted effort.

UNDP country programme planning took an integrated approach, but in practice this lacked emphasis on local development, peacebuilding

and municipal capacity development, effectively reducing the UNDP contribution. Individual projects paid attention to engaging women, and included women as beneficiaries, but there remain gaps in pursuing a gender equality approach. This will be critical to enable gender-sensitive development outcomes, and integrate gender equality into UNDP programmes.

- **Conclusion 2: There are limitations in providing livelihood and employment models that combine short- and medium-to-long-term interventions, and comprehensive service delivery approaches. Conflict sensitivity should inform programme interventions, given growing tensions due to overemphasis on the humanitarian response.**

UNDP livelihood support initiatives have typically been fragmented and small-scale, and therefore had limited impact. UNDP is yet to leverage its comparative advantage to develop viable models for employment generation at scale at sub-national level. Youth employment is yet to receive the attention it deserves.

UNDP pioneered the LHSP concept for more coherent support to host communities and increased stability through the provision of basic services and livelihoods. However, the short-term nature of donor funding and restrictions on the employment of Syrian refugees worked against investments in long-term development solutions.

Individual livelihood interventions remain small and fragmented, with a focus on short-term income generation. Support to small to medium enterprises, value chains in the agriculture sector and youth employment is evolving, but has had limited success in providing viable and tested models for job creation that can inform inclusive growth policies. Lack of diversity in funding and partnerships also constrained UNDP efforts to promote comprehensive livelihood and employment generation models.

- **Conclusion 3: UNDP is a key actor in a resource-challenged environment and energy sector, and has the potential to support policy processes.**

In Lebanon, environmental issues continue to be ignored due to the overwhelming political, economic, social and security challenges facing the country. Research and improved data can build the case for greater investment, but the looming environmental crisis is already visible across the country, and environment-related tensions are evident (such as in the solid waste crisis and the pollution of the Litani River) and likely to grow. *Ad hoc* approaches to solid waste management, in the absence of a medium- to long-term strategy on integrated waste management, reduced the contribution of UNDP.

UNDP initiatives are yet to systematically address linkages between sustainable environmental management, social stability, local livelihoods and economic development. The CEDRE programme and other national economic policies have not sufficiently taken environmental governance into consideration, although natural resources underpin the viability of key sectors such as industry, tourism and agriculture. Government commitment and allocation of resources are vital to scaling up initiatives.

UNDP contributed to delivering Lebanon's national and sectoral targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and enabled the Government to meet international reporting commitments. Community-level initiatives provided practical options in alternative energy, SLM and solid waste management and were anchored in municipal-level processes, and environment and energy initiatives were able to garner humanitarian resources. However, the lack of a holistic approach restricted the scope of UNDP engagement in developing the policies and strategies needed for longer-term development solutions to solid waste management, water and energy. UNDP supported the strengthening of several institutions and policy development initiatives in the renewable energy and waste management sectors, though these initiatives were not recognised in policy processes.

- **Conclusion 4: UNDP is yet to engage in a concerted manner in core governance areas that are critical to Lebanon's development. Support**

to advisory and support staff positions in government institutions contributed to timely technical and policy support, but was counter-productive to civil service reform and continues to be controversial with significant reputational risk for UNDP.

While there were important UNDP initiatives in the area of elections, core governance support has not been pursued strategically. Short-term and emerging funding opportunities, and different political agendas among donors, may easily divert attention and priorities and undermine a concerted governance programme. UNDP microlevel successes in social stability and peacebuilding are yet to translate into viable models for municipal-level peacebuilding interventions. Policy interventions are critical for strengthening social stability at the municipal level.

The prolonged nature of UNDP support to facilitate staff positions in government institutions, in the Lebanese context of high human resource capacity, is controversial. Although this facilitation is justified by challenges related to the confessional system, the duration of the support (over 20 years) has resulted in a parallel structure in the civil service, and perceptions of duplication and nepotism. The contributions of policy and support staff have been mixed, although UNDP cannot be credited for their accomplishments or otherwise. UNDP has not allayed or addressed scepticism about this support, reinforcing negative perceptions. A project approach to this technical and policy staffing support is a short-sighted solution to the complex issue of civil service systems and processes, and created a superficial accountability process. UNDP is exploring options for defining or withdrawing such support, but has created a situation where abrupt withdrawal could lead to capacity gaps and backlash in some institutions.

- **Conclusion 5: Well-established partnerships with Lebanese institutions, built over years, have strategically positioned UNDP to support Lebanon to address institutional and structural challenges in its development and humanitar-**

ian response. The extent to which UNDP used its comparative advantage has been inconsistent across areas of support, with implications for the level of contribution in addressing key challenges.

Programme partnerships with United Nations agencies and CSOs have been important in leveraging mutual comparative advantages. Most significant has been the collaboration with UNHCR to coordinate the LCRP and provide a coherent Syrian refugee response. The World Bank–United Nations Compact is a promising model of partnership, critical for collaborative efforts to strengthen accountability and transparency in Lebanese institutions. UNDP has access to policy and institutional strengthening spaces, and can further leverage this to develop a structured role in core development and governance support. The focus of UNDP support remains uneven across programme areas, and this approach is not suitable for enabling resilient institutions and policy processes in an upper-middle-income country with a protracted refugee crisis. This evaluation acknowledges that the use of this space can be constrained by the lack of an enabling policy environment and political will to reform, but UNDP efforts are not commensurate with the significant policy and institutional capacity gaps in Lebanon.

- **Conclusion 6: Private sector engagement and development is important in Lebanon's efforts to address development and humanitarian challenges. While there are examples of private sector partnerships across UNDP programmes, a more structured approach is yet to be strategically pursued, reducing the ability of UNDP to promote sustainable development approaches.**

Despite the challenging economic situation in Lebanon, the private sector contributes around 80 percent of GDP, and is particularly strong in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, trade and tourism. In this context, private sector engagement, beyond CSR, will be essential to meet development financing needs and promote inclusive employment opportunities. Given the middle-income status of Lebanon, there is very little fund-

ing to support employment and livelihoods beyond the Syrian response and concessional loans. The high fiscal deficit and lending freeze by commercial banks have slowed investment. The Lebanese context requires a diversity of private-sector tools for local development and enabling a resilience approach to the Syrian refugee crisis.

There are examples of private sector engagement across UNDP programme areas, predominantly CSR-related engagement. The pace and level of engagement remain low, and the types of tools used are not sufficiently diverse. The Global Compact on anti-corruption and environment has provided some opportunities for engagement, but is yet to gather momentum and requires sustained efforts to build partnerships. UNDP is evolving its programme models to explore and access opportunities for resource mobilization and sustainable finance and diversify private sector investment tools. Opportunities for private sector engagement at the municipal level, and to develop local strategies for investment and financing modalities to attract the right profile of partners and capital, are yet to be explored.

- **Conclusion 7: UNDP support to data, research, assessment and analysis at the municipal level has been important in a data-challenged context. These efforts should form the basis for an institutionalized approach to development data and analysis as Lebanon moves forward with integration of the SDGs into national development strategies.**

UNDP support to the Census of Palestinian refugees, though a sensitive issue, has been significant and historical, with the potential to pave the way for other long overdue censuses in Lebanon. The Census provided CAS with the much-needed impetus to embark on processes to strengthen development data. Technical assistance to CAS, in the form of institutional and data capacity assessments (together with UNFPA), is a first step in strengthening the agency. Support for strengthening national statistics and CAS is important for Lebanon to be able to properly monitor progress on the SDGs. UNDP has invested in development

needs and conflict analysis at municipal level, through MRS and the Tensions Monitoring System, highly relevant for enabling local planning and financing. Improving the quality of MRS as a robust conflict and development needs analysis tool, and measures to institutionalize its use, will be important for informing municipal-level planning. Strong partnerships will be needed to avoid multiple or duplicate assessments by different agencies.

- **Conclusion 8: UNDP played a key role in the coordination of the LCRP, a formidable task given the large scale of the refugee response. The LCRP cannot achieve humanitarian and Syrian refugee integration objectives unless it addresses underpinning development challenges. The LCRP approach is relevant, with an emphasis on bringing a resilience dimension to the humanitarian response, but implementation of this has been challenging.**

UNDP, together with UNHCR, contributed to the effective coordination and funding of the Syrian refugee response and improved government participation in the LCRP. However, UNDP is yet to position itself with a strong value proposition and clearly articulate its positioning, particularly in terms of promoting a resilience approach to humanitarian support.

The collaboration between UNHCR and UNDP at regional level and in countries affected by the Syrian refugee crisis is unique, and has been essential to bring a resilience perspective to humanitarian support. However, despite the prolonged nature of the Syrian crisis, the resilience approach is yet to be established systematically. In Lebanon, the Syrian refugee response has been predominantly humanitarian, with implications for both humanitarian and resilience outcomes. Initiatives such as the LHSP are not integrated into the Syrian refugee response, meaning lost opportunities to enable a response that strengthens municipal institutions and improves the conditions of host and refugee communities alike.

More holistic models are needed to generate employment at scale and address the needs of

host and Syrian communities, including service delivery challenges such as solid waste management, which are yet to be pursued by the LCRP. In Lebanon, over \$12 billion has been spent since the crisis erupted in 2011, achieving only short-term humanitarian and development outcomes. In part this underachievement is due to short

funding windows, and efforts to integrate resilience approaches were not sufficient to change funding approaches. If the LCRP is to achieve sustainable outcomes and reduce tensions among communities, key actors should revisit the approach and significant course corrections should be made.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.



Building on the global mandate of UNDP, the country programme should further emphasise its core development support. The Capital Investment Plan and National Development Plan provide opportunities for engaging in key development issues.

With the adoption of the Capital Investment Plan and subsequent national plans and strategies, policy change processes are gaining momentum in Lebanon. UNDP should pivot its current and forthcoming initiatives towards sustainable development centered programming with propositions that would address structural challenges undermining development and governance in Lebanon. UNDP should refocus on its core areas of expertise with a stronger focus on promoting well-tested programme models on inclusive growth and employment generation and service delivery.

UNDP should promote solutions that would enable a development approach to the Syrian refugee response. In the protracted Syrian refugee crisis, humanitarian dividends are closely linked to addressing development and institutional capacity issues and reducing development disparities at the subnational level. A more strategic nexus approach is needed to enable structural accelerators of development.

Management Response: Accepted.



Recognizing the growing trend of a complex context in Lebanon, the country office will develop a new CPD to address the core development challenges and emerging issues of Lebanon. In this regard, the country office will work with the UN Country Team to finalize the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UNSDF for 2022–2024.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
1.1 (a) The new CPD 2021–2024 will focus on the core development challenges of the country. (b) The basis of the work will be the SDGs and the commitment to 'leave no one behind'.	June 2020–Sept 2021	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team	In process of developing CCA and UNSDF	

Recommendation 2.



Municipal-level initiatives should be consolidated to provide viable, long-term programme models. Consider promoting integrated municipal development solutions to strengthen services, improve sustainable livelihoods and bridge refugee responses and local development initiatives. There should be substantive efforts to link successful municipal models to national policy and implementation.

Leverage UNDP engagement and strong partnerships in over 200 municipalities to demonstrate comprehensive programme models that are replicable and can inform policy. UNDP should promote integrated municipal development solutions on select development issues that can engage key actors, including the Government and the private sector, in providing more holistic responses. Integrated municipal development models have the potential to provide the necessary strategies to access diverse funding for municipal development and strengthen local governance. A deliberate approach to service sectors such as solid waste management, water management and energy efficiency should be pursued for strategic engagement.

Promote solutions that are fit for the Lebanon context and enable sustainable solutions. Revisit the LHSP approach to develop it into a sustainable local development model. Consolidation of programme activities will strengthen the UNDP response and enhance its programme contribution. Rather than isolated initiatives, peacebuilding and social cohesion should be integrated across programmes at the municipal level. Similarly, UNDP should consolidate sustainable livelihoods and local economic development efforts across programme areas. Strengthen the documentation of municipal models and incorporate these into training programmes and guidelines.

Reconsider engaging in initiatives such as labour-intensive cash-for-work infrastructure initiatives, given the possible quality risks as well as their limitations in addressing unemployment issues. Instead, pursue inclusive growth and employment models that have the potential for replication and to inform public policies.

**Management
Response:
Accepted.**



The country office will foster greater coherence of disaster risk reduction efforts, strengthening conflict-sensitive preparedness and response measures, and promoting transparency and accountability in the most vulnerable communities hosting Syrian refugees.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
<p>2.1 Establish solid synergy among several initiatives to respond to an integrated municipal support through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Developing local disaster risk reduction plans (prevention, preparedness response, and recovery). (b) Forming and building the capacity of disaster response teams. (c) Building municipal capacity in transparency and accountability concerning the implementation of regulatory frameworks related to anti-corruption. (d) Updating the SME Strategy at national level for longer-term and more transformative interventions and boost local economies. 	July 2020–December 2024	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team		

Recommendation 3.



UNDP should consider long-term support to sustainable waste management solutions, beyond temporary fixes, to avert recurring crises.



Environment-related tensions such as the solid waste crisis and the pollution of the Litani river are evident and risk escalation. Going beyond short-term solutions such as landfills, UNDP should consider the role it can play in providing sustainable solutions for solid waste management and the effective implementation of the national solid waste management strategy. In addition to ensuring compliance with all environmental standards for the landfills it has supported, UNDP should support measures to address *ad hoc* dumping/ landfills that reached capacity.

**Management
Response:
Accepted.**



Lebanon has already prepared an Integrated Solid Waste Management National Strategy. UNDP will continue to provide technical support to the Ministry of Energy and Environment and advocate for the full implementation of the strategy.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
<p>3.1 Advocate for the adoption and implementation of the national solid waste strategy. Provide technical support for the implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>(a) Work closely with Ministry of Environment to support the adoption of the strategy.</p> <p>(b) Coordinate with relevant national institutions and international partners on building national capacities to address solid waste management and to implement solutions on the ground.</p> <p>(c) Provide assistance to draft legal, technical and regulatory guidelines to support the Ministry of Environment to implement the national solid waste management strategy and the related action plan.</p>	July 2020– December 2024	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team		

<p>Recommendation 4.</p> 	<p>Leverage the standing and partnership of UNDP with government institutions to engage in core governance initiatives.</p> <p>Recent public protests on corruption only reinforce the need for public sector reforms and addressing issues of accountability and transparency in governance. The administrative reforms required under CEDRE provide avenues to engage in the reform agenda. UNDP should identify areas for more substantive engagement in strengthening governance and institutional processes. Anti-corruption is a high priority for Lebanon and critical for citizen trust in government. Rather than generic engagement, UNDP should support specific measures such as e-governance in service sectors that would have a more tangible impact on corruption. The Global Compact with the World Bank should be strategically used to support anti-corruption measures in key sectors.</p>			
<p>Management Response: Accepted.</p> 	<p>As acknowledged by the Government and the main demands of the population, UNDP has taken the anti-corruption agenda as its top priority which is necessary and critical for the Lebanon context. It is also the demand of the population witnessed during unprecedented waves of social upheaval since 17 October 2019.</p>			
Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
<p>4.1 (a) Develop a new strategy to deal with and combat corruption through an integrated and targeted approach.</p> <p>(b) Provide technical support to the relevant Lebanese institutions in developing and adopting the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Lebanon's commitments under the UN Convention against Corruption, to which Lebanon is a State Party since 2009.</p>	<p>March–June 2020</p>	<p>Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team, Regional Bureau for Arab States in Lebanon</p>		<p>National Anti-Corruption Strategy is adopted and new project document is launched</p>

Recommendation 5.



Considering the reputational risk for UNDP and its mandate, it is important to clarify UNDP assistance to human resources and facilitation of technical staff.

The evaluation recognises that UNDP is committed to providing development support services to the Government and national institutions upon their request. UNDP should clarify that support services to Lebanese institutions, while important, are operational, and should be cautious not to generalize them as institutional strengthening.

UNDP support to advisory, technical and support staff positions in ministries and government institutions remains a contentious issue, despite continued expectations for this support. Jointly with government entities, UNDP should proactively outline an exit plan that would enable government agencies to put in place formal recruitment processes or make alternative arrangements. Projectization of advisory and support staff services with a specific supervisory role for UNDP does not reflect reality and can have negative accountability implications for UNDP. While broader issues are addressed, consider defining advisory and support staff services as human resource services with appropriate mechanisms to manage it, clarifying the role and responsibilities of UNDP. This is essential to respond to negative perceptions of UNDP support and will also free programme staff to focus on core development work.

Management Response:
Accepted.



UNDP Lebanon will work to elaborate Core Government Functions Strategic framework prioritizing UNDP support to advisory functions as an essential part of UNDP support to the Government of Lebanon's efforts on strengthening core governance institutions in line with the 2030 Agenda.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
5.1 Review the existing project advisory support provided to Line Ministries and Government institutions. (a) Put in place a facility to support short-term advisory capacity in specific areas on government request, over standalone units, (b) Institutionalize a programme oversight body overseeing all advisory inputs through specific projects, (c) Ensure that policy deliberations and inputs through UNDP contribute to a process of public consultation and engagement.	March 2020– throughout the new CPD period.	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team		Work in progress. UNDP is working with UN Country Team to develop new CCA, UNSDF that would be the basis for the new CPD 2021–2024.

Recommendation 6.



Prioritize work on SDG sector integration, data collection and monitoring. UNDP should improve conflict sensitivity in humanitarian and development efforts and institutionalize municipal-level assessments.

UNDP should continue its support for strengthening CAS capacities for producing quality and timely statistics critical for public policy and monitoring SDG progress. More structured support to CAS, including collaboration in areas where UNDP as a United Nations agency can bring credibility, will be critical. UNDP should consider support to harmonize and strengthen administrative records to meet short-term needs as well as create a credible source of data. The collaboration and coordination of United Nations agencies to support data and statistics will be critical, and UNDP should proactively enable this. Clarify the role of UNDP as SDG integrator and its added value to the United Nations and other actors in Lebanon.

Improvements in the quality, institutionalization and wider use of MRS need to be addressed. Building on the MRS assessment, UNDP should invest in enabling a framework for comprehensive municipal-level development assessments. Periodic assessments are critical to inform coordinated development and humanitarian support, develop strategic solutions, and promote private sector engagement.

UNDP made a timely investment in tension mapping and sharing it with government and international agencies. Considering the importance of conflict sensitivity for development, peace and humanitarian interventions, support streamlining tension analysis to establish appropriate institutional linkages that would enable necessary action.

**Management
Response:
Accepted.**



The basis of this response will be the SDGs, and the commitment to 'leave no one behind'. Based on the capacity assessment's recommendations to provide sustainable support to CAS that extends beyond the scope of one specific exercise.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
<p>6.1 Develop joint programme on SDGs and provide technical support to CAS.</p> <p>(a) Develop and finalize joint SDG project in collaboration with UN Resident Coordinators Office and UN participating agencies.</p> <p>(b) UNDP will provide capacity-building assistance that would allow CAS to perform all future activities requiring further analysis on the data.</p> <p>(c) UNDP will help CAS in devising a data/information dissemination strategy</p>	June 2020– June 2021	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint SDG project document is drafted Support to CAS is in progress 	

Recommendation 7.



Given the importance of financing for progress on the SDGs, UNDP should increase the pace and momentum of its private sector engagement.

UNDP should revisit its private sector strategy to identify appropriate tools and areas for systematically pursuing private sector engagement and development. Private sector engagement at the level of municipality and union of municipalities should be prioritized to develop local-level strategies for investment and financing modalities to attract the right profile of partners and capital. Promote an integrated municipal development model, using the integrator approach, that would enable municipalities to better access private sector financing in priority areas. Flexible tools that are fit for purpose and can maximize the impacts of partnership at the municipal level should be developed. Instead of leaving it open-ended, UNDP should be more targeted in private sector development support, focusing on specific gaps in inclusive growth and employment and services.

Management Response:
Accepted.



The country office is working to expand the sphere of its partnership with private sector.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
7.1 Expand existing partnerships with private sector and goodwill ambassadors, bank sector and others as well as CSOs (a) Conduct mapping on potential Lebanese private sector (b) Reach out to individual business people who could contribute to UNDP programmatic interventions (c) Collaborate with CSOs	July 2020 throughout the new CPD period	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team	In progress	

Recommendation 8.

Ongoing efforts to promote gender equality in UNDP programmes should be pursued across interventions.

UNDP should take specific measures to integrate gender equality across programme activities and prioritize efforts to enhance the UNDP contribution to gender-sensitive development outcomes. Adequate resource investments should be made to ensure gender equality is addressed in programme design and implementation.

Management Response:
Accepted.



Mainstream gender in all programmatic initiatives and increase the gender capacity experts of the country office.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
8.1 Strengthening the efforts on gender mainstreaming and build the country office gender experts by recruiting one international and national gender experts.	July 2020–September 2020 for the recruitment of gender experts July 2020–throughout the new CPD cycle on gender mainstreaming	Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team	In progress, recruitment already started The country office has made progress on gender activities and has received a silver certification with a score of 72/100.	

Recommendation 9.



UNDP should address constraints in pursuing a humanitarian-development nexus approach in the Syrian refugee response. As the lead agency for enabling a resilience approach, UNDP should be proactive in building momentum for long-term approaches, revisiting its programme positioning in the LCRP and reviewing its strategy based on its strengths.

For a protracted crisis such as the Syrian refugee response, it is fundamental to address the development needs underpinning the refugee crisis in the host country, which the LCRP was less successful in enabling. Linkages between the Syrian refugee response and the development of Lebanon cannot be more highly underscored at this juncture, and international agencies and donors need to recognize this given the rising tensions. A protracted refugee crisis needs a development focus. UNDP played an important role in LCRP coordination, bringing a stabilization perspective into a predominantly humanitarian response. It is time that UNDP re-strategize its recovery support to enable humanitarian and development linkages. This is also critical for getting the buy-in of the Government.

Moving forward, LCRP should establish stronger linkages with national policy processes, developments at the municipal level and related reform processes to address the challenges that underpin an effective Syrian refugee response. LCRP should manage expectations and take measures to avoid becoming counterproductive, undermining development and peacebuilding discourse in Lebanon. Donor agencies should recognize the importance of funding nexus issues although Lebanon is a middle-income country, particularly support via medium- to long-term funding windows.

**Management
Response:**
Accepted.



The LCRP is as an integrated response to the impact of the Syria crisis. Under UNDP co-leadership of the LCRP strong efforts are being made to ensure that short-term humanitarian efforts are coupled with medium-term stabilization and resilience efforts for vulnerable Lebanese.

Recommendation 9 (cont'd)

Key Action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status*	Comments
<p>9.1 A significant part of the response (\$245 million in 2019) is directed towards strengthening national and local institutions in Lebanon. Thus, UNDP will work so that the LCRP response ensures the delivery of basic services to vulnerable populations in the country.</p> <p>(a) Ensure that the LCRP response is integrated into the new UNSDF to contribute directly to the SDGs in Lebanon.</p> <p>(b) Further strengthen resilience efforts and link them to development and peace building through piloting area-based programming.</p> <p>(c) Stronger engagement of local actors mainstreamed conflict sensitivity.</p>		Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative and programme team and LCRP team	Work is in progress	

* The implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Annexes



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12277>.

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Country office at a glance

Annex 3. People consulted

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. Status of country programme outcome indicators

Annex 6. Project list



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