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United Nations Development Programme

EVALUATION
OF UNDP SUPPORT TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

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FOREWORD

This evaluation was conducted at a time when programme countries are grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, which is threatening to reverse decades of development gains. In conflict-affected countries, this pandemic is likely to pose further challenges to the efforts to address multiple crises, including the rise of violent conflict, increase in forced displacement, climate impacts and disasters. The socioeconomic impact of multiple crises further compounds the risks in conflict settings. Given this context, the momentum generated by the Sustainable Development Goals, and the United Nations emphasis on a new way of working within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, take on further significance.

There is increased urgency to improve the resilience of the 1.8 billion people living in 34 conflict contexts. Addressing the drivers of conflict and violence has been a strategic priority of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. In conflict-affected countries, UNDP has made important contributions to stabilize, build and strengthen institutions, enable economic revitalization, and create peace. Engaging in efforts to address the most intractable challenges in conflict-affected countries, UNDP strategies and approaches have taken a more holistic perspective. Partnerships have expanded the reach and contribution of UNDP to achieve outcomes in reconstruction and service provision.

This evaluation points out that the pandemic gives added impetus to the need for comprehensive strategies to address the drivers of conflict. It notes some shortcomings in UNDP efforts to address cross-cutting and intersecting elements, and urges a response at multiple levels, combining short-term support and greater attention to improving governance to promote peace, stability and inclusive growth.

The humanitarian-development-peace nexus provided a much-needed common direction in conflict contexts, as a framework for international and national stakeholders to collectively work towards outcomes based on comparative advantage over multi-year timelines. While there are good examples of joint efforts and programme synergies among agencies, there is a lack of a committed collective impetus to enhance peace and development outcomes.

There is considerable scope for UNDP to show leadership in facilitating and promoting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus agenda. UNDP should prioritize its support to conflict prevention, further develop its prevention offer with a focus on facilitating long-term structural change, and be a champion for generational transformation in conflict-affected countries. I hope this evaluation will serve to inform UNDP corporate conflict prevention and response strategies, and debates on strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCPR   Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery

BPPS   Bureau for Policy and Programme Support

CAR   Central African Republic

COVID-19   Coronavirus Disease 2019

CRU   Crisis Response Unit

DAC   Development Assistance Committee

DPO   Department of Peace Operations

DPPA   Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs

DRC   Democratic Republic of Congo

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

FAO   Food and Agriculture Organization

FARC   Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia

FFS   Funding Facility for Stabilization

GBV   Gender-based violence

GDP   Gross domestic product

GEF   Global Environment Facility

GEWE   Gender equality and women's empowerment

GFATM   Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria

HDI   Human Development Index

HDPN   Humanitarian-peace-development nexus

IASC   Inter-agency Standing Committee

ICRRP   Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme

IDP   Internally displaced person

IEO   Independent Evaluation Office

ILO   International Labour Organization

IT   Information technology

LGBTQ   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer

LOTFA   Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan

MDTF   Multi-Donor Trust Fund

MPTF   Multi-partner Trust Fund

MSME   Micro, small and medium enterprise

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NWoW   New Way of Working

OCHA   Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

ODA   Official development assistance

OECD   Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

OHCHR   United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

PBF   Peacebuilding Fund

PBSO   Peacebuilding Support Office

PCVE   Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

PDA	Peace and Development Adviser
PVE	Prevention of violent extremism
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
RSF	Regional Stabilization Facility
S2S	Support to Stabilization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WHO	World Health Organization

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Background

The increase in conflict, violence and natural resource and climate-related tensions continues to be a cause for concern over the past decade, with overwhelming human, social and economic costs. It is estimated that, by 2030, two-thirds of the world's extreme poor, estimated to be 2.3 billion people, will live in fragile and conflict-affected situations. While it is hard to quantify the enormous human suffering, the global economic impact of conflict in 2019 is estimated at US$ 14.5 trillion, equivalent to 10.6 percent of the world's economic activity. Conflict remains a major obstacle in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Addressing the challenges of conflict and related fragilities is central to achieving UNDP goals for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) carried out an 'Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries'. The evaluation assessed the UNDP contribution to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and statebuilding. This evaluation is part of the IEO Work Plan for the period 2018-2021, approved by the Executive Board. The evaluation covered programmes active between 2014 and 2020, which coincides with the organizational restructuring of UNDP crisis response, and includes the previous and current strategic plans.

The evaluation will contribute to the forthcoming UNDP Strategic Plan, corporate strategy for programming in conflict and fragile contexts, and its positioning and role in the context of the reforms and repositioning of United Nations peacebuilding mechanisms. The evaluation was carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy to support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners, and contribute to programme strategizing and learning at corporate and country levels.

The evaluation assessed the UNDP role and contributions in 34 conflict-affected countries in the key areas of crisis prevention, response (including early recovery and stabilization), peacebuilding and statebuilding for the transition to medium- to long-term development. The evaluation builds on IEO country programme and global thematic evaluations in conflict-affected countries. As well as the UNDP contribution at country level, the evaluation assessed key streams of programme interventions, including programme principles and cross-cutting issues. Specific attention was paid to the concepts and approaches used by UNDP, and its global advocacy role in promoting the humanitarian, peace and development nexus (HDPN) and resilience. The evaluation also includes an assessment of UNDP global and regional efforts and advocacy.

UNDP programme scope and scale

UNDP strategic plans explicitly emphasized that strengthening peace and stability and increasing resilience to crisis were fundamental to achieving the SDGs. UNDP programmes seek to support sustainable development while building resilience to future shocks. The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan aimed to achieve this through a significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion, while the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan also envisaged accelerating structural transformation. The importance of building resilience to crises and shocks was stressed in both strategic plans.

UNDP supports countries affected by conflict in their efforts towards conflict prevention, recovery and stabilization, and their transition to development. The key streams of UNDP programme support are conflict prevention and peacebuilding, basic services, economic revitalization and inclusive growth, local economic development, institutional strengthening (public administration capacity, democratic processes and rule of law), and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Processes and

policies affecting the UNDP programme response in conflict-affected countries include the SDGs, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New Way of Working (NWoW), emphasis on HDPN and the 2018 repositioning of the United Nations system.

Programme expenditure in 34 conflict-affected countries for the period 2014-2019 accounted for more than half (51 percent) of total programme expenditure, amounting to approximately $13 billion. There was a significant increase in expenditure in 2018, mainly due to programmes in Iraq and Yemen (representing 25 percent of the $2.5 billion total annual expenditure).

Key findings

A. UNDP positioning and support to global policy and advocacy

UNDP programmes sought to address the most intractable challenges in conflict-affected countries. Across different conflict contexts, UNDP demonstrated the value of its support in enabling peace and accelerating development. During the two strategic plan periods, UNDP has supported a variety of interrelated interventions to support response, stabilization, recovery and prevention in a diverse range of conflict and post-conflict contexts. To a large extent, UNDP programme areas have remained fairly consistent over the past decade, though UNDP strategies and approaches have taken a more holistic perspective since 2014, reinforcing the importance of humanitarian-development-peace linkages and resilience-based peace and development. In countries where peacekeeping and stabilization missions have been deployed, UNDP collaborated with them in the areas of rule of law, elections, the security sector and gender equality. The contribution of the Crisis Bureau since its establishment in 2019 has been significant for UNDP global positioning and the provision of technical support, policy and practice tools to country offices.

UNDP strategic plans were implemented within an enabling global policy environment which gave renewed impetus to the humanitarian-development-peace interface, including a host of intergovernmental agreements. UNDP has made considerable progress in its global partnerships with humanitarian agencies, international financial institutions and donors. Despite inter-agency efforts, challenges remain in addressing peace in the HDPN trio and enabling more concrete solutions for a stronger humanitarian-development interface. While the UNDP contribution to these global policy processes is important, UNDP has not asserted its expertise in development and peace, and its unique advantage of country-level experience, to provide leadership to the HDPN agenda at global and country levels. As the development agency of the United Nations, UNDP has a longer-term, country-level development perspective which crosses the peace, security and humanitarian interventions of the United Nations system. This puts it in a position to facilitate multidimensional and integrated responses. The UNDP role in advocating for the implementation of global commitments to the nexus approach, particularly within the United Nations system, does not match the urgency of the issue. Given the severity of challenges in enabling sustainable solutions for peace, security and development in the Sahel, a strategic and concerted engagement on the part of UNDP is needed.

B. Strengthening national institutional capacities

Economic revitalization and employment: UNDP was consistent in its support to revive local economies and strengthen local and national plans and strategies using an array of adaptable approaches to incorporate economic revitalization in conflict contexts. Medium-term economic revitalization programmes at the subnational level provided opportunities for sustainable livelihoods approaches. Economic revitalization efforts were based on an integrated approach, incorporating social cohesion, peacebuilding, environment and renewable energy objectives. Livelihoods were used as an entry point to improve community social cohesion and facilitate dialogue to promote peace, security and development. When humanitarian and development programmes were pursued simultaneously, they had the potential to address significant drivers of economic revitalization and peace in conflict contexts.

UNDP has prioritized inclusive business and markets to integrate communities in value chains and markets as consumers, suppliers, employees and entrepreneurs. To be successful, inclusive market development initiatives need to operate at different levels, linking small-scale producers, policy, infrastructure and incentives. There were limitations in combining downstream support with upstream policy and fiscal incentive components, which is crucial to the sustainable development of value chains in key sectors. While programme approaches were pertinent to enable medium- to long-term change processes for economic revitalization, application has been inconsistent.

Restoring and strengthening basic services: UNDP support to infrastructure restoration, ranging from large stabilization programmes to small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, contributed to the oper-ationalization of basic services. The comparative advantage of UNDP lies in its integrated approach to the restoration of basic services, connecting reconstruction with recovery, development and peacebuilding. This development approach to the restoration of infrastructure has resulted in a substantial ripple effect for recovery across sectors.

Key areas of infrastructure support included the rehabilitation of public buildings, livelihoods infrastructure and social services (such as the construction of health centres, schools and wells). Besides support to small- to medium-scale infrastructure rehabilitation across conflict-affected countries, the UNDP portfolio includes large-scale infrastructure projects in post-conflict contexts including Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. These are undertaken to restore destroyed infrastructure and accelerate basic services as part of stabilization or early recovery interventions. Community infrastructure and service projects were used as a tangible symbol to promote peace and as a means to strengthen community participation in the rebuilding and reconciliation of their communities.

Reconstruction efforts in post-conflict contexts delivered more than physical infrastructure, strengthening community and national recovery efforts and helping to reduce tensions. Lack of services is one of the underlying causes of conflict. UNDP efforts to restore basic services including electricity, water and food security (through water provision) helped to address some of the root causes of conflict and reduce tensions around absent or scarce resources. Support for community and social infrastructure strengthened national efforts to improve health, education, the environment and energy.

UNDP played a major role in the establishment and successful management of large stabilization facilities and enabled the restoration of services in highly risky environments. Since 2015, UNDP has managed one of its largest single programmes in Iraq, the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) and the extensive Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP). This experience has come to be emblematic of UNDP work on stabilization, and the model has been exported to a wide variety of contexts and modalities.

Strengthening governance and rule of law: The UNDP contribution to strengthening institutions and governance includes support to public administration capacities (institutional structures, processes and capacities at national level, local governance, civil service, accountability and transparency), rule of law (justice sector, police and security sector reform), and democratic political processes (inclusive political processes such as elections, parliament, civil society and human rights institutions). The key UNDP programme assumption is that strong and accountable institutions, able to promote inclusive economic growth and social cohesion, are central to both development and lasting peace.

UNDP made contributions to strengthening government capacities in conflict-affected countries, to advance reforms, deliver services and engage citizens, in ways that increased the responsiveness and accountability of institutions. Support to strengthen institutional capacities was important in improving the functionality of governments. UNDP has contributed to strengthening processes for more structured and transparent engagement of parliaments, and has

effectively supported electoral processes. UNDP is yet to fully build on its comparative advantage in promoting democratic processes through medium- to long-term support.

In the area of inclusive governance, whether through parliamentary strengthening or electoral capacities, UNDP is one of the few agencies with the comparative advantage of earned trust and engagement of national institutions in conflict contexts. UNDP has effectively built the capacity of parliaments to pursue legislation, engage citizens transparently and promote the rights of women. UNDP support has enabled engagement between federal and subnational levels, boosted opportunities for citizen engagement and instituted parliamentary rules and procedures.

A lack of longer-term engagement in core areas of governance reduced the UNDP contribution to promoting fundamental institutional change processes. The sustainability of governance outcomes was more difficult in least-developed countries and lower-capacity policy contexts compared to middle-income or local-level conflict contexts. In many lower-capacity conflict-affected States, UNDP support included funding and deploying technical specialists in public sector entities. Often such technical support enabled government strategies to be delivered and programmes implemented.

Support to the rule of law, human rights and the security sector is one of the major areas of UNDP work. UNDP has funded and trained police, supported physical and functional infrastructure for the police and the judiciary (buildings, vehicles, uniforms, computers and forensic equipment), trained judicial personnel and prison officers, developed legislation, regulations and procedures governing the criminal justice sector, and built the capacity of ministries and other oversight bodies. Such support, in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region as well as in Libya, Afghanistan and South Sudan for example, has directly contributed to stability, increased trust in government and improved access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups such as women.

Extending formal state justice into areas where it had been previously absent was an important UNDP contribution. Technical and material support was provided to chief justices, ministries of justice, mobile courts, legal education programmes, legal aid groups and established traditional justice mechanisms. In several conflict-affected countries, justice sector programmes built the organizational capacity of the justice ministry and courts, undertook awareness-raising, supported legal aid clinics, and in general improved access to justice and justice for women. Transitional justice is an especially sensitive area, connecting justice reform with peacebuilding. UNDP assisted in several such processes with mixed results. Despite the vast scope of UNDP engagement, its impact has at times been undermined by sustainability challenges and the lack of a comprehensive strategy informed by robust political economy and conflict analysis.

Security sector reform, including ensuring the democratic control of security forces and right-sizing forces, is a critical contributor to good governance and peacebuilding. UNDP has provided technical support to security sector reform secretariats, but sustainable reform is dependent on strategic political calculations by powerful domestic and international actors, usually outside of the control of UNDP. A complex political and donor environment, in which there are many actors interested in a fragmented security sector, limits what UNDP can achieve. When there are numerous political and institutional interests and many interested international actors, UNDP technical work can only contribute to enabling institutional capacities. Where security sector reform can be brought within the remit of a national development plan, there is a greater chance of making a sustainable impact. UNDP is yet to take stock, learn lessons and see how it can leverage results at the level of institutional reform of police forces in complex environments.

Building national capacity for conflict prevention: In line with United Nations efforts, UNDP adopted an integrated approach to sustaining peace, working simultaneously across all phases of conflict and seeking to take comprehensive approaches that involve working with all relevant actors. This

approach was informed by reviews of United Nations work on peace which shaped the direction of United Nations policy towards greater investment in conflict prevention, pathways for peace, and a renewed emphasis on HDPN. UNDP work on prevention and peacebuilding has been dominated in recent years by work on physical infrastructure and services, rather than on building governance capacities and dialogue and enabling timely conflict analysis. Prevention-related programmes were short-term, lacked policy linkages, and remained micro-level. UNDP is yet to demonstrate its thought leadership, building on some of the good research work it has done to target violent extremism more directly and link this very closely to work on conflict prevention.

Social cohesion and peacebuilding: UNDP used post-conflict livelihood recovery and infrastructure rehabilitation initiatives as an avenue for peacebuilding and promoting social cohesion. These interventions have been important in stabilization and reducing community tensions and laying the foundations for trusted government and inclusive development. It has helped to create jobs, rehabilitate infrastructure, establish local peace committees, public councils and community security working groups, support legal aid provision, and train community police.

The overlap of peacebuilding initiatives with what is classed as stabilization is considerable. Where UNDP has been able to scale its work to the broader national peace architecture, it has demonstrated greater impact. However, it has sometimes been challenging to reach agreement with national authorities, and UNDP support in the areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has reduced since 2014. However, it has continued work on weapons collection in West Africa, and reintegration and livelihoods programmes targeting former fighters have remained part of the peacebuilding portfolio.

UNDP interventions around the infrastructure for peace can be useful in themselves, but are not always relevant to the wider conflict prevention or peacebuilding context. The limitation of pursuing an infrastructure for peace approach alone, amidst the significant structural challenges of conflict, was evident in most countries.

Furthering gender equality and women's empowerment: UNDP has made GEWE a strategic priority, developed sufficient institutional guidance and tools to mainstream gender in the programme cycle, and established an accountability system to track its performance. The sum of these efforts, however, does not culminate in tangible gender-responsive programming, much less gender-transformative results on the ground. UNDP has ensured that corporate structures are in place to support GEWE in crisis prevention and response. There is a distinct gap between UNDP corporate policy commitments and the operational reality, with consequences for programme outcomes in conflict-affected countries. At country level, UNDP is yet to adopt an intersectional perspective. Country office projects and programmes complied with gender-targeted and/ or gender-responsive programming, but there were still very few gender-transformative results.

Youth development: UNDP programmes in conflict-affected countries included a range of youth-related initiatives including livelihoods and skills development programmes, youth engagement in local peace processes and social cohesion, and rehabilitation programmes. Strengthening the capacity of young people's organizations, networks and youth advocacy groups has fostered partnerships. Initiatives such as Active Labour Market, YouthConnekt, or the youth leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship project Youth Co:Lab are important to create viable models in conflict contexts. Notwithstanding such successes, the sustainability of these initiatives remains to be addressed and requires linkages to larger programmes of governments or other agencies.

Programme approaches: HDPN and NWoW provided a much-needed common direction in conflict contexts as a framework for international and national stakeholders to surpass the humanitarian/ development divide by collectively working toward outcomes based on comparative advantage over multi-year timelines. While there are good examples of joint efforts and programme synergies among agencies, the wider picture was a lack of committed collective impetus to enhance

peace and development outcomes. NWoW and the nexus approach are yet to gather momentum, without a deliberate strategy to overcome agency programme silos. The HDPN interface needs to be more systematically harmonized in programming at country level, in coordination with United Nations country teams (UNCTs) as well as governments.

UNDP has collaborated with humanitarian agencies on a range activities across the humanitarian-development nexus, from stabilization, recovery and development to peacebuilding. While UNDP prioritized support to the nexus approach, more concrete efforts are needed to provide thought leadership in terms of practical ways to break humanitarian-development-peace silos in country responses. The concept of resilience has been used by UNDP as a vehicle to catalyze the nexus approach and engage at multiple levels of a programme response, to address drivers of conflict and peace at the sectoral level. UNDP is yet to assert its programming across the spectrum of the humanitarian-development-peace approach and capitalize on its country-level presence to provide leadership in this area.

There have been several missed opportunities to comprehensively address multiple crises both within the UNDP programme and at country level. Weak synergies between UNDP initiatives, and the lack of a well-conceptualized prevention programme, undermined efforts to address the interlinking dimensions of conflict and other crises. UNDP is well-positioned to support climate-conflict nexus efforts, given its substantive engagement in both of these areas. UNDP had projects on the drivers of conflict and displacement, food insecurity and lack of services, but these were compartmentalized.

C. Partnerships

A strength of UNDP that adds significant value when operating in conflict-affected environments is its long-standing and trusted relationships with governments across programme countries. There is scope for leveraging partnerships with government to accelerate efforts for sustainable solutions.

Partnerships expanded UNDP reach and contribution to outcomes in reconstruction and service provision.

Partnering with UNCT members such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), provided technical and specialized support to strengthen the quality of services. UNDP worked through existing structures and agreements with other United Nations agencies, peacekeeping and special political missions to provide a joint response and programming for a more comprehensive and predictable solution to infrastructure and service needs, such as in health, education, demining and energy. These partnerships facilitate a quick and effective response appropriate to the needs of the country, avoid duplication of effort and work with and/or transfer responsibilities to local officials and government. UNDP has consistently worked to advance GEWE in joint programming with United Nations agencies and the gender units of United Nations missions.

In the area of institutional strengthening and governance, UNDP has forged partnerships at global level with the relevant United Nations bodies. Notable examples include, on elections with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and on human rights with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights. A significant collaboration with the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO) was the establishment of the Global Focal Point on Rule of Law in 2012, which provides a One United Nations approach to rule of law issues. Global partnerships are yet to be fully leveraged at country level. Collaborations with the World Bank in Yemen and the European Union, especially in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, enhanced the UNDP contribution.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. In conflict-affected countries, UNDP has made important contributions to stabilize, build and strengthen institutions, as well as enabling processes for statebuilding and peacebuilding.

The evaluation period has been marked by major escalations of violent conflict in regions of great

strategic geopolitical importance, escalations of both internationalized and localized conflicts, protracted armed conflicts, growing concerns about international violent extremism, the increasing intersection of climate change with conflict and displacement, and politically sensitive peace processes. UNDP responded to this wide diversity of contexts and complex challenges with effective interventions supporting national and international partners, filling critical gaps across the spectrum of recovery and stabilization. UNDP has been responsive, facilitating core government functions, restoring services and providing temporary employment and livelihoods. Notwithstanding challenges in arriving at the right response in some cases, UNDP should be credited for its contributions to the progress made in conflict-affected countries.

While the programme areas UNDP has supported have remained consistent over the years, the contexts and scale of conflicts have varied, forcing UNDP to learn and adapt rapidly. UNDP has displayed agility in adapting to context, whether swiftly setting up a large stabilization facility in Iraq to deliver at scale, supporting peace processes in Colombia, or promoting resilience-based approaches in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. UNDP has the unique distinction of having operational and strategic capability to mobilize multi-sectoral, whole-of-government responses together with agency-specific expertise to promote peace and development in crisis-affected countries. In line with changing geostrategic trends, the UNDP focus has shifted from post-conflict peacebuilding and disarmament to stabilization and countering extremism across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

UNDP made concerted efforts to strengthen partnerships with other United Nations agencies, particularly humanitarian agencies and international financial institutions. This assumes significance given the corporate emphasis on furthering NWoW and HDPN. Although there is considerable scope for improvement, partnerships with United Nations agencies enhanced contributions to improving basic services and institutional capacities. Programmatic partnerships for consolidated engagement in line with NWoW are yet to be prioritized.

UNDP programme presence in all conflict contexts gives it the comparative advantage to contribute to global policy and advocacy on NWoW and the triple nexus. There is scope for improving its global and regional engagement by identifying areas for consistent participation and optimizing its regional presence. The broad, ad hoc nature of UNDP engagement has reduced its contribution to the global policy space and providing thought leadership to the HDPN agenda. At global level, there is a vacuum in leading the operationalization of HDPN and scope for UNDP to provide thought leadership in translating the HDPN concept into a practical inter-agency approach. UNDP did not strengthen synergies between country programmes and global-level engagement, to further consolidate its positioning in global policy discourse.

UNDP is yet to comprehensively address the challenge of the reduction in programme funding for longer-term livelihoods, employment and core governance support in conflict-affected countries, and the implications for the role it can play. Donor funding for these thematic areas has increased in recent years, but UNDP has not been able to tap into this funding. A significant component of the UNDP programme portfolio comprises fiduciary support, and funding for programme support is currently smaller. Although conflict-affected countries comprise a significant proportion of overall UNDP expenditure, actual resources are small. Considering that traditional donor contributions are the primary source of UNDP programme resources, there has been insufficient diversification of funding sources.

Conclusion 2. UNDP made a significant contribution to stabilization efforts. Anchoring stabilization support in peacebuilding and institutional strengthening processes is essential for sustainable outcomes.

Stabilization support in protracted crises is a major component of the UNDP portfolio, laying the groundwork for peacebuilding and preventing the reoccurrence of violence. UNDP has played a significant and constructive role in the establishment and successful management of large stabilization facilities and enabled the restoration of services in high-risk environments. As such,

UNDP has served to create a clear niche in complex post-conflict responses. The Iraq experience has been successfully replicated, globally supporting infrastructure and other early recovery efforts in immediate post-conflict contexts.

UNDP programme frameworks recognize the importance of the stabilization-peace-development interface but, in practice, the approach to stabilization focused on immediate tasks to restore and rebuild social infrastructure. While there are tangible outcomes in terms of improved social services and the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), these were not anchored in local institutional processes and peace initiatives, reducing the sustainability of outcomes and opportunities to strengthen institutional capacities. The emphasis of stabilization programmes on the quick restoration of services widened the stabilization-peace-development divide. Treating stabilization programmes as a means for quick rehabilitation and restoration of public infrastructure runs the risk of missed leveraging opportunities for peacebuilding and institutional strengthening.

Conflict-sensitive, inclusive processes would have further enhanced the UNDP contribution to stabilization programmes. UNDP is yet to clarify its value addition in stabilization programmes, irrespective of adaptation to different country contexts. In the absence of defined stabilization principles, UNDP is predisposed to comply with different donor requirements, which often do not pay attention to institutional strengthening.

Conclusion 3. Prevention, as an overall framework for UNDP work, is evolving. As the largest United Nations development agency, UNDP did not take a proactive approach to develop an integrated prevention offer at global and country levels. Lack of systematic effort to address prevention accelerators reduced the UNDP contribution to peace and development.

Underprioritization of conflict prevention is a common issue in international support, not just for UNDP. At the corporate policy level, UNDP acknowledges the significance of conflict prevention

for progress on the SDGs and is committed to enhancing synergies between development and peace interventions. But this commitment has not translated into concrete prevention programming support. In conflict and post-conflict contexts, UNDP sought to build institutional resilience through initiatives such as strengthening public administration, rule of law and the security sector; and community resilience through inclusive economic revitalization and addressing climate impacts. But such efforts were short-term and did not always result in a coherent and critical mass to contribute to conflict prevention. UNDP is yet to clarify its conceptual approach to integrated prevention before, during and after conflict, and how its conflict and development programming can be leveraged towards this.

Work on identifying the accelerators of prevention for more sustained engagement was limited. This gap is more evident in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, where prevention of violent conflict assumes significance given the interlinked security, humanitarian, political and climate risks. UNDP country and regional programmes have deprioritized systematic support to institutionalized prevention mechanisms. The increase in the climate-conflict interface required systematic efforts to address interlinked dimensions and prevent tensions and conflict. There is scope for further investment in youth as agents of peace, and youth-led solutions to the prevention of conflict and violence, including violent extremism.

Conclusion 4. In conflict-affected countries, UNDP programmes are predisposed towards short-term programming, reducing its contribution to accelerating peace and sustainable development. Important contributions were made in enabling temporary employment, infrastructure for basic services and core governance functionality, which form the basis for longer-term efforts. Notwithstanding such contributions, post-conflict contexts require sustained engagement to provide durable livelihood solutions and stronger governance processes.

The rehabilitation of basic services infrastructure contributed to the stabilization of conflict-affected

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areas. Short-term local- and community-level recovery and rehabilitation efforts have been a useful strategy for restoring services, enabling the operation of public administrations and generating temporary employment, encouraging the return of displaced populations. For this progress to be sustained, linkages between stabilization or early recovery programmes and peacebuilding and institutional strengthening are required, and UNDP was not always successful in enabling these linkages. Similarly, UNDP economic revitalization programme interventions, while appropriate for coping and recovery, fell short of addressing key constraints in durable solutions for employment and livelihoods and the necessary institutional processes. UNDP is yet to balance short-term inventions with medium- to long-term engagement to address the key drivers of peace and development.

While UNDP adopted pertinent programme approaches for medium- to longer-term solutions, their application and implementation remain uneven, reducing its contribution to accelerating the transition to development. UNDP introduced sustainable livelihood practices through approaches such as 3X6 and Area-based Development. There were, however, challenges in microfinance and the expansion of markets for the sustainable development of value chains. The concept of resilience is theoretically an improvement in the livelihoods approach, but in practice, did not provide a dynamic model for livelihood change processes at household, community and institutional levels. The Area-based Development approach has been promising in post-conflict contexts, but not consistently pursued.

UNDP has the distinction of supporting the functionality of institutions in responding to public administration needs and providing services. In post-conflict contexts and countries transitioning to development, functionality alone is not sufficient, and UNDP approaches to strengthen government institutions and governance processes are not fit for purpose.

Strengthening governance capacities requires sustained engagement, and there were missed opportunities to position governance as central to the conflict prevention agenda. UNDP, rightly, makes the case that its work on governance and institutional strengthening helps to prevent conflict and promote peace, but is yet to position its support as such. A lack of long-term focus and demonstration of technical domain expertise are factors undermining UNDP positioning as a key governance actor. Major donors are making extensive use of consultancy firms to implement governance programmes. UNDP did not reposition its governance support in tune with current public management practices and is yet to go beyond technical policy and the substitution of functionality to consistently pursue the institutional reform agenda. There are pockets of innovation in UNDP work in conflict-affected countries, but these are isolated and limited.

Conclusion 5. Compartmentalized responses to different crises at country level missed opportunities to address cross-cutting and intersecting elements. The cumulative impacts of multiple crises in the Sahel and Horn of Africa required comprehensive strategies.

The recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic notwithstanding, the intertwined security, humanitarian and climate challenges in the Sahel and Horn of Africa demand a comprehensive approach. Several strategies adopted by regional institutions require operationalization. Response was needed at multiple levels, through a combination of short-term support and measures to address the strategic issues of institutions and governance to promote peace, stability and inclusive growth. While there have been isolated efforts, such as the Lake Chad Basin facility, overall UNDP regional and country programmes did not demonstrate the urgency and intensity demanded by the Sahel and Horn of Africa situation. UNDP did not build on programme interventions addressing conflict and refugee crises, climate impacts and poverty reduction, to enable advocacy and coordinated engagement. A common issue in Africa and the Arab States is the lack of comprehensive regional programmes to develop well-tested models to inform country programmes and regional discourse on prevention

and response. Similar to other regions, NWoW is yet to manifest in practice in the Sahel. UNDP did not have much success in forging programme partnerships with humanitarian and development agencies in the Sahel for a consolidated response.

Conclusion 6. UNDP commitment to strengthening the role of youth as agents of peace and change is undermined by the lack of a multi-pronged programme in select areas. Given the small scope of UNDP programmes in conflict-affected countries, mainstreaming youth development and extremism prevention has had limited outcomes.

UNDP corporate policies and strategies have consistently emphasized youth as agents for development and resolving and preventing conflict, and thus as key stakeholders in programme support. Youth development is considered a cross-sectoral priority, and is addressed in various UNDP interventions, specifically in employment, prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and social cohesion programmes. With some exceptions, youth programmes had micro-level success, but there is limited evidence of them addressing policy bottlenecks in youth employment and development. In the absence of targeted programmes and collaboration with agencies with large youth programmes to scale up, contributions have been minimal. Furthermore, UNDP is yet to use programme tools such as Accelerator Labs to develop more sustainable solutions for youth development in conflict contexts.

Conclusion 7. Conflict contexts present challenges and opportunities for private sector engagement. While the UNDP strategy for private sector engagement and development prioritizes conflict-affected counties, progress has been slow as concerted efforts are lacking at the programme level. UNDP has not adequately considered the area of global partnerships for private sector development in conflict-affected countries.

Private sector development in post-conflict contexts reflects both the complexity of this important area, as well as the lack of sustained UNDP engagement. With programmes in key areas of development,

UNDP has opportunities for private sector engagement. There are examples where UNDP has demonstrated replicable and sustainable private sector models that could be adapted to other fragile and post-conflict contexts. In the sustainable energy sector in Sudan, for example, UNDP enabled private sector investments resulting in transformative agricultural livelihoods. Such successful examples, while important, are small in number, and private sector engagement was not consistently taken into account during reconstruction and redevelopment. Notwithstanding the enabling environment challenges posed by post-conflict and conflict contexts, opportunities were missed in leveraging UNDP programme areas for private sector engagement. Economic revitalization, inclusive growth and jobs have been constrained by the absence of clearly prioritized and sequenced support for a focused medium- to long-term strategy for private sector engagement.

Stabilization and other early recovery efforts are yet to prioritize private sector development as a solution for financing and sustaining redevelopment. A lack of sustained attention undermined the promotion of the private sector as a legitimate driver of economic revitalization. To succeed, micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) initiatives required business support along the entire supply chain, suggesting that programmatic engagement in private sector development is now a necessity. Opportunities were missed, particularly in countries with localized conflict where engagement in more stable areas could be leveraged for engagement in affected areas. UNDP is in the process of testing various tools appropriate for adaptation to conflict contexts, such as the venture accelerator and MSME action platforms. Constraining such efforts is the lack of prioritization of private sector engagement as integral to UNDP programme support.

Examples of success show the importance of nurturing the enabling environment for private sector development and investment. Supporting the business environment is most challenging in conflict contexts, which therefore require a more collaborative approach. UNDP support to de-risking the policy and investment space

has been sparse in conflict contexts and lacked partnership. Government policies can play an important part in providing a private-sector-friendly environment, but UNDP has not sufficiently used the evidence gathered through its support to business development to engage governments on policy reform.

Conclusion 8. The UNDP contribution to enhancing women's roles in peacebuilding and addressing gender inequality remains weak. The lack of prioritization of GEWE is reducing the UNDP contribution to conflict-affected countries.

The UNDP approach to GEWE was not commensurate with the severity of challenges for women and gender inequalities perpetuated by multiple crises. While there has been progress on mainstreaming GEWE in UNDP programme support, targeted policy and advocacy contributions in conflict-affected countries are limited. Viewing women as beneficiaries, rather than supporting them as agents of change in areas of early recovery, peacebuilding and statebuilding, undermines transformative outcomes. UNDP support to the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 has considerably reduced over the years, more so with the closure of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). A minimalist approach to GEWE in conflict responses has significantly undermined peace and security efforts. The consequences of this are more severe in the Sahel and Horn of Africa.

Although UNDP has prioritized GEWE as a strategic objective, and there is an acknowledgement of the critical importance of support to women, peace and security, this is not reflected in resource allocations for GEWE-related programmes. UNDP was a pioneer in promoting programming solutions to advance GEWE in crisis contexts, such as the minimum 15 percent expenditure for GEWE initiatives which informed the United Nations system-wide policy. UNDP has not been successful in making the case for its potential strategic contribution through support to different thematic areas in conflict-affected countries. The potential of UNDP to strengthen GEWE is underutilized, in

part because of the trend in overseas development assistance (ODA) to fund specialized agencies for gender-related programming.

Conclusion 9. The reconstitution of the Crisis Bureau has provided a much-needed anchor for UNDP support to conflict-affected countries, and an impetus for consolidating programme responses at global and national levels, and is a significant step forward.

The reconstitution of the Crisis Bureau has been important in positioning UNDP in the evolving context of reforms of the United Nations Development System and peace and security architecture, and the emphasis of the Secretary-General on prevention for peace. Having a dedicated bureau focusing on crisis has improved the consolidation of UNDP conflict-related support, streamlined technical support to country offices, rationalized programme approaches, and ensured steps were taken to move beyond immediate response-related programming towards a more substantive role in prevention. The Crisis Bureau has been successful in repositioning UNDP conflict programming, addressing disengagement issues since the closure of the BCPR, and enabling UNDP to engage in global debates on peace and security and policy discussions with the Secretariat. In line with NWoW and the HDPN agenda, there have been concerted efforts to strengthen global-level partnerships. There is scope for further deepening partnerships with other United Nations agencies such as FAO, ILO and UN Women, and for system-wide partnerships for comprehensive support in the Sahel region.

The UNDP business model in conflict-affected countries has improved, in terms of programme management processes and instruments for greater efficiency of country programmes, with the streamlining of surge deployment, fast-track finance processes, and access to advisory services. The recently introduced Global Policy Network is being streamlined to improve technical support to country offices. Technical assistance from headquarter bureaux and regional offices add value to county programmes, and the distributed model of the Global Policy Network is

a sensible way to tap UNDP-wide expertise. UNDP was able to respond quickly to the immediate needs of conflict-affected countries, though maintaining that level of response over the long term was difficult. The current structure can promote efficient advisory and technical services, but this also requires investment in technical expertise to support prioritized areas of programme support.

The division of responsibilities between the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) and the Crisis Bureau is evolving. Further clarity in the functioning of the two bureaux would avoid duplication and build on synergies and coordinated approaches for a more comprehensive response in post-conflict contexts. In prevention programming, where the overlap between the two policy bureaux is greatest, and particularly in inclusive growth and core governance functions, parallel BPPS and Crisis Bureau programming could reduce the contribution of UNDP. Similarly, clarity of roles and responsibilities between policy and regional bureaux is fundamental, to better leverage the various UNDP programme units, though there are areas yet to be clarified.

The delinking of the Resident Coordinator system from UNDP has provided an opportunity for the organization to strategically reposition its programmatic analytical, policy advisory and advocacy work at the country level. In conflict contexts, this is particularly important in mission countries, where the change processes have impacted UNDP programmes. Identifying areas for repositioning and strengthening the UNDP response post-delinking is key to the continued contribution of UNDP in crisis-affected countries.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP needs a well-focused corporate policy that responds to the Secretary-General's call for a coordinated and integrated approach to sustainable peace. UNDP should demonstrate global leadership in facilitating and promoting the HDPN agenda.

UNDP should prioritize its support and engagement in the United Nations peace reform agenda. Within

UNCTs, UNDP should support joint analysis, planning and programming towards collective nexus outcomes in select sectors.

Given the favourable global policy environment, with the United Nations impetus for sustainable peace and NWoW for programme collaboration and the nexus approach, UNDP should identify areas where country offices will consistently contribute to HDPN policy and advocacy. At the country level, enable programming instruments for linking humanitarian, development and peace responses that are anchored in development frameworks.

To unpack the complexity of HDPN programming, identify sectors where programme models can be developed to demonstrate development and peace outcomes to inform policy. Prioritize HDPN solutions at the local level in efforts to strengthen services and livelihoods. For policy lessons in nexus programming to strengthen pathways to peace and address drivers of conflict, implement well-tested signature programme models in a select area in all conflict-affected countries.

Recommendation 2. Prioritize support to conflict prevention at global and country levels. UNDP should develop its prevention offer with a focus on facilitating long-term structural change and a generational transformation agenda in conflict-affected countries. Identify areas where there will be a sustained long-term focus. As part of the prevention offer, address the interlinked dimensions of climate and conflict.

The core added value of UNDP is its ability to work long-term with government institutions and communities to build effective and accountable governance and peace ecosystems. In line with the Secretary General's priorities, conflict prevention should become a central theme of country programmes in fragile contexts. Rather than automatically classifying all institutional strengthening and economic growth as prevention interventions, UNDP should identify and pursue key accelerators of prevention. Focus on the drivers of conflict and related fragility to address risks early on, before they escalate to crisis. Anchor UNDP support at the local level to enable bottom-up change processes.

As UNDP develops its corporate strategy for support to fragile and conflict-affected countries, build on the organization's comparative strengths in multiple programme areas for system-wide engagement on key areas of conflict prevention and response.

The evaluation recommends three areas for prioritizing prevention support. First, PVE should be more explicitly brought into the conflict prevention fold, to ensure that this subset of conflict prevention is not ad hoc and disconnected. In a sustained manner, prioritize youth development as part of PVE. Collaborate and invest in integrated, multi-sectoral approaches to youth empowerment and to ensure that PVE National Action Plans and other national policy frameworks to build peace are both youth-inclusive and youth-focused. Second, given the extensive environment and crisis programme portfolios of UNDP, address interlinked dimensions of risk from multiple crises that exacerbate conflict. Identify UNDP programmes where the integration of a prevention dimension can add value. Lastly, consistently support local risk and tension monitoring /early warning systems as a signature offer of UNDP, separately or as part of ongoing data collection mechanisms. Collaborate with United Nations and other agencies for collective efforts in data collection and the interpretation of risk.

Recommendation 3. UNDP management should ensure organization-wide policy coherence to address inconsistent conceptual and programmatic responses across regions. Address constraints that are limiting the substantive and long-term engagement of UNDP in core areas of support.

UNDP should ensure that there is policy coherence across programme countries, putting corporate strategies and tools into practice. Predominantly generalist support can reduce the potential role of UNDP in post-conflict countries. Consistently prioritize long-term engagement in select areas with technical depth. Prioritise comprehensive global programmes on select themes to provide well-tested signature solutions to country offices, for conceptual coherence, and to facilitate UNDP engagement in global policy and advocacy on integrated responses to peace and development.

The regional bureaux and Crisis Bureau should enhance their coordination for conceptual and programmatic coherence. Take measures to ensure corporate strategies and guidance are used by country offices to stay ahead of the curve in responding to crises.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should emphasise medium- to long-term livelihood and employment support. It should take measures to put holistic employment and livelihood options into practice for wider use and replication in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

In conflict-affected countries, UNDP should seek opportunities for more substantive programmatic engagement on poverty reduction, developing more realistic medium- to long-term frameworks for livelihoods and employment. UNDP should emphasise employment and livelihood approaches that seek to address the structural underpinnings of poverty and fragility. Programme areas which enable structural transformation in income generation and employment, such as inclusive business and markets, need consistent engagement. Specific attention should be paid to the peace dividend as a way to address challenges for sustainable businesses and livelihoods. Likewise, ensure conflict-sensitivity in the design and implementation of livelihoods programmes.

Prioritize SDG-related analysis and planning support in conflict-affected countries, to keep the focus on sustainable development and peace. Consider strengthening the economist programme for more consistent support to policy analysis and planning.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should make long-term governance intervention central to its agenda of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. UNDP governance programmes should invest in new public administration models, with emphasis on planning and analysis, digital technologies and private sector engagement.

An excessive focus on short-term support can be counterproductive to the role UNDP can play in addressing governance challenges. To stay relevant in the governance area, UNDP needs to engage in

reform-oriented core governance support at national and local government levels. Identify select areas of core governance function for consistent, long-term engagement across conflict-affected countries.

There will inevitably be pressure from partner governments and donors alike to support a short-term technical facilitation or fiduciary role, and this may be to the financial benefit of UNDP. Too much focus on short-term technical facilitation support runs the risk that UNDP is not seen as an agency with governance expertise that can facilitate reform and an institutional strengthening agenda.

Recommendation 6. The Sahel programme is considerably underfunded. UNDP should demonstrate the urgency and intensity of the response demanded by the situation in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, recognize the unique challenges faced by the Sahel and prioritise the regional programme to galvanise support. Prioritise partnerships for a coordinated and collective response.

Take measures to put NWoW into practice in the Sahel, forging partnerships with humanitarian and development agencies for a consolidated response. UNDP should pay specific attention to mobilizing resources for its programme in the Sahel, while at the same time taking concrete measures to enable financing. Consider developing a Sahel programme to address intersecting elements of security, climate and development challenges.

Recommendation 7. Stabilization programmes need further consolidation. Merely focusing on infrastructure rehabilitation and building will not produce the desired outcomes unless combined with capacity development of local institutions and peace initiatives. Building on lessons from ongoing stabilization programmes, anchor future programmes within a peace and development framework.

UNDP support to stabilization demonstrates the importance and unique value proposition of its work in conflict and post-conflict countries. UNDP should ensure that its stabilization approaches are linked to institutional strengthening, peacebuilding and other early recovery interventions. Provide a stabilization programme framework for country offices, with mandatory principles of linkages with peace and development efforts.

Recommendation 8. UNDP should further improve collaboration with United Nations agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors for contributions to long-term outcomes in conflict-affected countries.

UNDP has embarked on a strong partnership with humanitarian and peace agencies and with the World Bank. Systematize and clarify expectations for more efficient collaboration, to further HDPN at global and country levels. The delinking of the Resident Coordinator function from UNDP has consequences for UNDP programmes in mission countries. UNDP should strengthen partnerships with the United Nations Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs (DPPA) and DPO for engagement in the areas of rule of law, the security sector and elections. Instead of one-off project-based partnerships, identify areas of synergy for regular collaboration with FAO and ILO to strengthen value chain and employment interventions.

Leverage the UNDP comparative advantage in conflict-affected countries to strengthen partnerships with the World Bank and develop global thematic initiatives in key areas of prevention and response, to further the HDPN agenda. Consolidate programmatic and advocacy partnerships for a comprehensive Sahel response.

Recommendation 9. UNDP should make private sector engagement integral to its economic revitalization, inclusive growth and service delivery support. UNDP should accelerate the pace and scale of its engagement, with context-specific tools and interventions.

The recently adopted corporate private sector strategy is important for the momentum of private sector development and engagement in conflict-affected countries. While UNDP recognizes the significance of private sector engagement in crisis contexts, and has developed tools to enable it, further efforts and resource investments are needed to systematically pursue this. UNDP should ensure a long-term commitment to private-sector-related support, and this should be integral to country programmes.

Conflict contexts are diverse, and UNDP should have a more customized approach to private sector engagement to address structural constraints in harnessing market opportunities. Innovative private sector finance tools should be developed and promoted. UNDP should strengthen partnerships to address private-sector development policy bottlenecks, and catalyze and de-risk private sector investments in conflict contexts. UNDP should select sectors for consistent private sector development.

Recommendation 10. UNDP should prioritize support to GEWE for enabling gender-inclusive prevention, response and peace solutions.

Notwithstanding the initiatives of specialized agencies, UNDP should take concerted efforts to address the drivers of gender inequality. Improve the effectiveness of gender-responsive and gender-transformative interventions based on a well-grounded programme approach. To this effect, the indicators developed by the United Nations Technical Working Group on Global Indicators for UNSCR 1325, currently being revised, are a suitable framework.

Beyond the mainstreaming approach, UNDP should develop sectoral strategies for enhancing women's productive capacities and livelihoods. UNDP should increase its capacity of gender expertise, which is on a decreasing trend. Likewise, the Crisis Bureau should build its capacity to support GEWE in conflict-affected countries, in coordination with the regional bureaux. Addressing GEWE in conflict contexts requires dedicated resources. Take measures to mobilize resources for GEWE-related programming in crisis contexts, given the opportunities the range of UNDP programme engagement provides. Take measures to address issues of coherence in the comparative advantages between UNDP and UN Women at the country level.

Chapter 1.
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purpose

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) carried out this 'Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries'. The evaluation assessed the UNDP contribution to conflict prevention, peace and statebuilding. This evaluation is part of the IEO Work Plan for the period 2018-2021, approved by the Executive Board.[1] The evaluation covered programmes active between 2014 and 2020, which coincides with the organizational restructuring of the UNDP crisis response and includes the previous and the current strategic plans.

Addressing the challenges of conflict and related fragilities is central to achieving UNDP goals for poverty reduction and sustainable development. Conflict remains a major obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Increasing conflict, violence and natural resource and climate-related tensions continues to be a cause for concern over the past decade, with overwhelming human, social and economic costs. It is estimated that, by 2030, two-thirds of the world's extreme poor, estimated to be 2.3 billion people, will live in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

The evaluation will contribute to the forthcoming UNDP Strategic Plan, corporate strategy for programming in conflict and fragile contexts, and its positioning and role in the context of the reforms and repositioning of United Nations peacebuilding mechanisms. The evaluation has been carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy to support greater UNDP accountability to global and national stakeholders and development partners and contribute to

programme strategizing and learning at corporate and country levels.[2]

1.2 Objectives and scope

UNDP supports 34 countries affected by conflict in their efforts towards conflict prevention, recovery and stabilization, and transition to development. During the two strategic plan periods assessed, UNDP has been supporting interrelated interventions pertaining to response, recovery and prevention efforts in a range of conflict and post-conflict contexts. The current and previous strategic plans outline conflict mitigation as a key area of support to accelerate sustainable development. Building resilience to crises and shocks is emphasised as fundamental to safeguarding development gains. UNDP emphasises strengthening national crisis prevention capacities and resilience-building through a dedicated signature solution. The current Strategic Plan 2018-21 considers conflict-affected countries as one of three development settings for UNDP work, while the previous Strategic Plan 2014-17 outlined conflict prevention and response as an expected outcome of UNDP contributions to poverty reduction. Expenditure for conflict-related programmes is approximately US$ 13 billion (51 percent of total expenditure) for the period 2014-2019.

The evaluation assessed the UNDP role and contributions in 34 conflict-affected countries in the key areas of crisis prevention, response (including early recovery and stabilization), peacebuilding and statebuilding for the transition to medium- to long-term development. The evaluation builds on IEO country programme and global thematic evaluations in conflict-affected countries. Besides

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[1]   UNDP (2018) Independent Evaluation Office workplan (2018-2021), DP/2018/4.
[2]   The evaluation was carried out within the framework of UNDP Evaluation Policy and UNEG norms and standards.

assessing the UNDP contribution at country level, the evaluation includes an assessment of UNDP global and regional efforts and advocacy.

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To assess the role and contribution of UNDP to peacebuilding and statebuilding in conflict-affected countries and those with conflict-related fragilities;

- To assess the extent to which UNDP promoted integrated humanitarian, development and peace nexus approaches in its support to recovery and stabilization;

- To identify the factors that have impacted on the UNDP contribution; and

- To identify lessons for the UNDP programme in conflict contexts and global advocacy.

For the purposes of this evaluation, conflict-affected countries are those that are in war, civil unrest or armed violence (or a combination of these), where there is a fundamental failure of the State to perform the functions necessary to meet citizens' basic needs and expectations in the provision of basic services, citizen security, maintenance of law and justice and enabling economic opportunities. Conflict parties may be State or non-state actors. According to the types of actors involved and the interactions between them, armed conflicts fall into one of three categories: international (or inter-State); internal; or internationalised. An international armed conflict takes place between two or more States (or a group of States) on the territory of one or several States, as well as the global commons. An internal armed conflict is fought by a government (and possibly allied armed groups) against one or more non-state actors, or between two or more non-state armed groups. An internationalised armed conflict is an internal conflict, in which the kernel of the dispute remains domestic, but one or more external States intervene militarily.[3] Conflict-related fragilities are a critical development challenge, threatening

efforts to end extreme poverty and exacerbating inequality. A state of fragility is a period when a country's sustainable socioeconomic development requires greater emphasis on complementary peacebuilding and statebuilding activities focusing on inclusive political settlements, security, justice, jobs, management of resources, and accountable and fair service delivery.[4]

The evaluation covered conflict-affected countries in Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean (See Figure 1 for the scope of the evaluation). This included country programmes in contexts with active and recent conflicts, national and subnational level conflicts, as well as programmes related to peacebuilding in countries predominantly receiving development support. The key streams of programme interventions assessed were conflict prevention, recovery and early recovery, resilient livelihoods, building national institutions, strengthening institutions and governance functions, local development infrastructure and reconstruction, promoting peace and accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). The evaluation assessed the extent to which UNDP supported youth development and enabled the participation of youth in peacebuilding and statebuilding.

Specific attention is paid to the concepts and approaches used by UNDP, and its global advocacy role in promoting the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (HDPN) and resilience to conflict and related fragilities. The evaluation assessed the extent to which UNDP addressed multiple crisis contexts and their intersecting programming dimensions to reduce development vulnerabilities and drivers of conflict. The implications for UNDP positioning, and the contribution of United Nations reforms and the delinking of United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative functions at the country level, were taken into consideration. The evaluation

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[3]   The International Institute for Strategic Studies (2020) The Armed Conflict Survey 2020. Routledge: Oxon.
[4]   Defined at the G7 Technical Meeting, Dubai, 2013.

also assessed UNDP support to the management of multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) including the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

UNDP crisis response programme management has evolved during the period of assessment. The evaluation specifically assessed management processes, and the financial and technical resources mobilized by UNDP in response to different conflict contexts. The evaluation assessed whether the business model used by UNDP has been appropriate for conflict contexts, in engaging different actors and responding to conflict-related challenges.

FIGURE 1. Scope of the evaluation

Conflict contexts	Sub-sets of conflict and fragile contexts		Areas of UNDP support		Cross-cutting issues	Programming approaches
Conflict with an external element pursuing regime change or has a regional dimension	Country wide conflict (armed conflict, armed violence, social unrest)		Conflict prevention & peacebuilding		Gender equality	Early recovery
	Subnational conflict (armed conflict, armed violence, social unrest)	Institutional response (UN / Nato / Regional Mission)	Basic Services	Response and Transition to development		3x6
			Economic revitalisation and inclusive growth		Human rights	Humanitarian-development nexus
Conflict is structural with deep roots (civil war, armed conflict)	Conflict and multiple crises		Local development		Youth development	Resilience
	Post-conflict/transition context with conflict related fragilities		Institutional strengthening (Governance)		Private sector engagement	Integrated approach

Source: IEO

1.3 Approach and methodology

Drawing on the Integrated Results and Resources Framework conceptualized in UNDP strategic plans, this evaluation has established an aggregated theory of change to assess the UNDP role and contribution in conflict-affected countries. The theory of change (schematically presented in Figure 2) provides a framework for assessing seven streams of programme areas spread across the outcomes outlined in the two strategic plans. It outlines the contributory pathways of programmes to understand:

- The extent of UNDP programme support given a particular conflict context (what UNDP did);

- The approach of the contribution (whether UNDP programmes were appropriate for the diversity of conflict contexts);

- The process of contribution (how the contribution occurred); and

- The significance of the contribution (what the contribution was and whether UNDP accomplished its intended objectives).

FIGURE 2. UNDP support to countries in conflict - A Theory of Change

OUTPUTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANS 2014-17 AND 2018-21

During humanitarian phase promote early recovery

National and subnational level capacity development for inclusive local economic revitalisation and deliver basic services

Promote measures to enable functioning of public institutions (justice, security and redressal institutions); facilitate reintegration, and reconciliation

- Enable data and tools for gender-sensitive prevention and preparedness planning
- Enable measures to promote national strategies and partnerships to advance GEWE; accelerate women's economic empowerment and increase women's participation in decision-making
- Enable measures to prevent / address Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

- National capacities strengthened for reintegration, reconciliation, peaceful management of conflict and prevention of violent extremism
- Security sector institutions strengthened for increased citizen safety and reduced levels of armed violence
- Mechanisms are enabled for consensus-building around contested priorities

- Data and risk-informed development policies, plans, systems and financing to prevent risk of conflict
- Policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms enabled at the national and subnational levels for the peaceful management of emerging and recurring conflicts and tension
- National capacities strengthened for the prevention of violent extremism

INTERMEDIARY OUTCOMES

Strengthened national institutional capacities and policy processes for conflict prevention, recovery, resilient reconstruction and development

- Strengthened institution to progressively deliver universal access to basic services (A2)
- Core government functions restored/strengthened (A4)
- Promote policy processes and practices for economic revitalisation (A1)
- Early recovery
- Strengthened institutions to promote peace and reconciliation (A5)
- Accelerate gender equality and women's safety and empowerment (A3)
- Reduce/prevent the likelihood of conflict and violent extremism

OUTCOMES

Resilience to conflict and reduction in the likelihood of conflict situations

Sustainable stabilisation and rapid return to sustainable development pathways are achieved in post-conflict settings

Accelerated progress in enabling gender equality and safety of women

Line of accountability

RESULTS

Contribute to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs

Fragility / post-conflict situation ⇄ Conflict contexts → Stabilisation → Transition to development → Rapid return to sustainable development

Assumption 1 (A1): UNDP programmes are context-specific and fit for purpose
Assumption 2 (A2): UNDP exercises its mandate of promoting early recovery/stabilization within a sustainable development framework instead of getting co-opted into a humanitarian mode of support
Assumption 3 (A3): The scope and scale of UNDP programmes are reasonably sufficient to contribute to intermediary outcomes
Assumption 4 (A4): UNDP used programme approaches and tools that would enhance the pace of peacebuilding and statebuilding
Assumption 5 (A5): UNDP forged programmatic partnerships for enabling resilience to conflict and accelerating sustainable development pathways

The theory of change distinguishes between outputs and intermediate and long-term outcomes, recognizing that some components are iterative. Outputs are UNDP initiatives that have the likelihood of contributing to programme outcomes, namely UNDP programme strategies and choices of activities that are appropriate to conflict and post-conflict contexts and capacity.

Intermediary outcomes involve strengthening processes for the enhanced institutional capacity of State and non-state actors to pursue recovery and stabilization efforts.

The evaluation took into consideration that, for UNDP, it is not always possible to support comprehensive recovery and stabilization

programmes that result in or contribute to the outcomes outlined in the Strategic Plan in a significant way. The same applies to causal linkages to progress on the SDGs at country level. The level of visibility of UNDP programme outcomes in relation to economic revitalization and growth, peacebuilding and strengthening core governance processes depends largely on the positioning of the support vis a vis other actors, the resources assigned by UNDP, and the length of engagement, among other contextual factors. Outcomes related to stabilization and accelerating sustainable development pathways entail a complex set of actions and interactions among various institutions and actors. Similarly, reductions in the likelihood of conflict are often beyond the conflict triggers of an individual country. Determining contributions to conflict prevention and sustainable stabilization is, therefore, an iterative process.

1.4 Data collection and analysis methods

The evaluation used national, global and regional analyses to determine the UNDP contribution in conflict-affected countries. The evaluation made a distinction in the typology of country contexts and crises within which UNDP operates, and considered the extent to which the previous and current strategic plans, and the global, regional and country programmes, are responsive to these contextual specificities.

Evaluation data was collected to assess five criteria and make evaluative judgements (see Table 1). Factors that can explain UNDP performance and positioning in crisis prevention, response, stabilization and transition to longer-term development were identified.

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TABLE 1: Evaluation criteria and assessment points

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Key criteria	Assessment points
Programme positioning for improved contribution	• Level of emphasis given to programme support in conflict-affected countries (financial and human resources). • Extent to which variation in conflict contexts is taken into consideration by UNDP in developing its programmes. • Extent to which the programmes respond to country needs for a more customized approach to conflict prevention and response. • Positioning of UNDP to promote gender-informed conflict prevention and response. • Extent to which UNDP engagement in global and regional debates/advocacy is commensurate with its global presence and long-term engagement in key conflict response and development support.
Strengthening national institutional capacities	• Programme approaches/ models used by UNDP and their level of success. • Contribution of UNDP to strengthening government and community capacities in conflict prevention, recovery, response and transition to development. • Specific efforts by UNDP to enable integrated approaches to crisis response (including stabilization) and prevention. • Application of resilience and HDPN concepts in national policies and practices. • The extent to which impetus is given by UNDP to promoting public-private partnership in conflict-related programming. • Contextual and programming factors that facilitated or constrained UNDP contribution.

Contribution to global and regional policy advocacy	•	Contribution of UNDP to global and regional policy debates on conflict prevention, stabilization, resilience and nexus approaches.
UNDP convening and coordination role	•	Convening role of UNDP to enhance contributions in conflict-affected countries and globally.
Enabling partnerships	•	Partnerships established by UNDP to enhance its contribution in conflict-affected countries and globally.

The evaluation covered all 34 conflict-affected countries, with programmes of varied scope and scale. This included, for example, some countries with greater emphasis on early recovery or stabilization, and those where multiple programme areas are pursued. The list of countries included in the evaluation is presented in Annex 2.[5] 17 of the 34 conflict-affected countries studied are categorized as least developed countries, while 11 are lower or upper-middle income countries. There are currently 14 with United Nations peacekeeping, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or regional missions.[6]

The evaluation used mixed methods and took an iterative approach to gather varied perspectives on UNDP performance. Protocols were developed for each method used to ensure rigour in data collection and analysis.[7] Methods included document review, six country studies (building on country programme evaluations carried out by IEO), a meta-analysis of 193 evaluations (carried out by IEO and UNDP programme units) and remote interviews. The multi-stakeholder consultation process included interviews with a wide set of stakeholders, including a range of country-level development actors. Thematic country case studies were planned, but could not be carried out due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and lockdowns. However, this did not pose any major evaluative data limitations given the availability of substantive country programme evaluations in major conflict-affected countries.

The evaluation team used a combination of methods to analyse the data and determine the contribution of UNDP to conflict prevention, recovery and transition to development. These included:

• Contribution analysis using weighted scoring to standardize assessments across key areas of intermediary outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change;

• Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to better understand causal factors in the contribution of UNDP in conflict-affected countries; and

• Gender analysis to ascertain the contribution of UNDP to accelerating processes that enable gender equality and women's empowerment.

The evaluation used weighted scoring to assess UNDP contributions and systematize analysis. For this, parameters for assessing the contribution of UNDP or a programme area are assigned different relative weights. Multiplying the individual evaluation scores by the weight gives the score for a particular parameter. Aggregating the results of a set of parameters provides the overall contribution score. Two sources of evaluative analysis were used to arrive at the performance scores: the analysis carried out for this evaluation, based on multiple sources of data; and evaluations carried out by IEO and programme units. Details of the weighted scoring are presented in Annex 6. The weighted scoring enabled the evaluation to map patterns and assess contributions at the individual level, and provides a set of parameters in key areas of support for assessing UNDP contributions to

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[5]   Excluding the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
[6]   In CAR, Darfur, Abyei, South Sudan, Mali, Western Sahara, Kosovo (any references to Kosovo throughout this report shall be understood as "Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 [1999]) Afghanistan, Kashmir, Golan Heights, Iraq, Lebanon and Middle East. See https://peacekeeping. un.org/en/current-peacekeeping-operations
[7]   The approach and methods used for the evaluation will be quality assured by the IEO International Advisory Panel.

conflict-affected countries. The scoring used in this evaluation analysis is not a stand-alone assessment but part of wider qualitative assessments using different data sources.

The evaluation used QCA to identify the combinations of necessary and sufficient conditions required for a particular programme outcome based on the evaluative evidence. The QCA examined: the conditions necessary for the outcome to occur; the conditions sufficient (alone or in combination) for the outcome to occur; and the conditions which made the difference to the outcome, under what circumstances. Similar to regression and other statistical methods, QCA identifies associations and enables inferences to be drawn. Annex 7 provides details of the QCA findings.

1.5 Structure of the report

The report is organized as follows: Chapter 2 sets the context on the scale and impact of conflict. Chapter 3 provides an overview of UNDP strategic and programmatic responses. Chapter 4 presents key findings on the UNDP role and contribution in conflict-affected countries. And Chapter 5 sets out the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2.

CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CONTEXT

This chapter briefly discusses key issues in conflict-affected contexts that are pertinent to UNDP programming. It is not meant to be an exhaustive review of literature on the subject of conflict and development.

2.1 Escalating conflict

The rise in armed conflicts, violent extremism and natural resource and climate-related tensions has continued to be a cause for concern over the past decade, with overwhelming human, social and economic costs. Currently, about 1.8 billion people live in 34 conflict contexts, but this figure is projected to grow to 2.3 billion by 2030.[8] While it is hard to quantify the enormous human suffering, the economic impact of conflict on the global economy in 2019 is estimated to be $14.5 trillion, equivalent to 10.6 percent of the world's economic activity.[9] Conflict remains a major obstacle to achieving the SDGs.

Conflicts increasingly last longer, and besides fatalities, the cumulative impact of crises is significant for health, security, basic infrastructure and services. Conflict-related displacement, both in terms of refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs), is at the highest since records began.[10] In 2019, 22 countries worldwide were in active conflict. Additionally, from 2010 to 2019, the number of active violent conflicts in fragile contexts increased by 128 percent.[11] Consequently,

many countries in conflict (including Cameroon, Chad, Iraq and Somalia) also host refugees from neighbouring countries. The Overseas Development Institute reported that 12 of the 15 countries hosting the largest share of refugees per population are themselves fragile and conflict-affected States.[12] While there are established databases of statistics on violent conflict, there are disputes over the quality and interpretation of such data, and how to define conflict and human security.[13] One major conflict, such as Syria, may skew the figures over a period and lead to debates over whether this forms part of a trend.

There is great diversity among conflict-affected countries which demand responses which address the specificities of their situation (see Figure 3). Conflicts may be internationalized or internally-driven, characterized by huge displacement, have a regional dimension, or occur in countries with climate-related crises such as water crises, droughts and rapid-onset disasters. In terms of institutional responses, at least 11 countries have United Nations peacekeeping, NATO or regional missions. While 34 countries are affected by conflict, another ten are impacted by conflict-related fragilities related to security, justice, employment, management of resources and accountable and fair service delivery. Low-income and least developed countries comprise half of all conflict-affected countries, 35 percent are low-middle-income countries, and 14

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[8] OECD (2018) States of Fragility, OECD Publishing, Paris.
[9] Institute for Economics and Peace (2020) Global Peace Index 2020. The World Bank estimates that the economic cost incurred due to the destruction of infrastructure, dysfunctional institutional systems, economic loses and military expenditure can be over $13 trillion per year.
[10] World Bank (2018) Pathways to Peace.
[11] OECD (2020), States of Fragility, OECD Publishing, Paris.
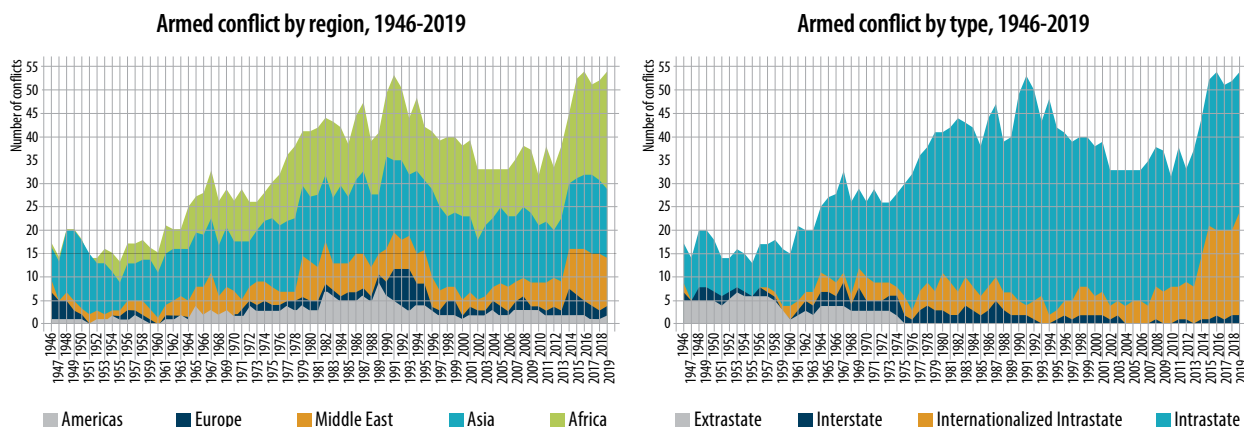[12] Overseas Development Institute (2018) SDG Progress: Fragility, crisis and leaving no-one behind.
[13] A common trend in the aftermath of "formal conflict" between State and insurgent forces, e.g. in Latin America, is the burgeoning of criminal violence, which is sometimes excluded from statistical counts. Examples of conflict incident databases include the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data database and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program/PRIO armed conflict database.

percent are upper-middle-income countries. Most conflicts are concentrated in a few countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, as shown in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3. Evolution of armed conflict by region and type

Armed conflict by region, 1946-2019 / Armed conflict by type, 1946-2019

Legend (by region): Americas, Europe, Middle East, Asia, Africa

Legend (by type): Extrastate, Interstate, Internationalized Intrastate, Intrastate

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) / PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 20.1

Figure 3 shows that the internationalization of intra-State conflict has risen in the past decade, impacting peace, security and development in affected countries and also in neighbouring States. On the one hand, a reduction in the costs of trade, travel and communication, as well as regional and international links among armed groups, contributed to increases in conflict and violence across borders. On the other, there has been growth in external intervention in inter-State armed conflicts, with up to 40 percent of civil wars now involving foreign intervention[14] from neighbouring countries or other regional and international actors, including emerging powers.[15] Actors participating in armed conflicts continue to increase in number, diversity and scope, including a proliferation of non-state armed groups. Conflict without State involvement has risen significantly since 2010 in Africa and experienced a surge in the Middle East around 2014. [16]

Armed conflict has triggered a refugee crisis in several parts of the world. The number of people forcefully displaced reached a historic high of 68.5 million in 2017, creating an unprecedented refugee crisis.[17] Conflict and political instability, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, have contributed to an upsurge in the refugee situation. The Syrian war, tensions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and conflicts in South Sudan, the Sahel and Myanmar were the primary drivers for an increase in refugees in 2017. 57 percent of all refugees and displaced people in the world originate from Syria, Afghanistan and South Sudan.[18] The economic impact of refugees and IDPs increased by 78 percent between 2007 and 2017, reaching $355 billion in 2017. [19]

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14   World Bank (2020) Research Report: As impacts of conflict and violence spill across borders, international community has stake in solutions.
15   World Bank (2018) Pathways to Peace.
16   Data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program https://ucdp.uu.se/ accessed June 2020.
17   UNHCR (2018) Forced displacement above 68m in 2017, new global deal on refugees critical.
18   UNHCR (2018) Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2017.
19   Institute for Economics and Peace (2018) Economic Value of Peace.

2.2 SDGs and other intergovernmental responses

Over the past five years, intergovernmental agreements have emphasized the importance of peace and stability in achieving development goals. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs reinforce the fundamental link between sustainable development and peace, and promote an integrated framework that recognizes the interlinkages between development, statebuilding and peacebuilding. As the SDGs emphasise "there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development".20 Conflict remains a major obstacle in achieving the SDGs. Currently, 82 percent of fragile and conflict-affected States are off-track to achieve selected SDGs, and it is estimated that by 2030 approximately 85 percent of the extreme poor, about 342 million people, will live in fragile and conflict-affected countries.21 The various United Nations and intergovernmental initiatives to accelerate prevention and enable the HDPN are presented in Figure 4.

Subsequent to the SDGs, United Nations General Assembly and Security Council resolutions adopted the concept of "sustaining peace" to bolster international efforts to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. The United Nations Secretary General's 2020 Report on Sustaining Peace and Peacebuilding noted that: "the number and complexity of violent conflicts rose in 2019", reflecting weakened social contracts and plummeting trust in government. Other factors highlighted include geopolitical rivalry, the rise of authoritarian movements, inequality, climate change, transnational organized crime and terrorism, and the impact of pandemics.[22] This has implications for how SDG 16 is addressed and integrated with other SDGs at country level, and how such efforts are supported. Sustaining peace promotes a holistic approach which integrates the three pillars of United Nations engagement: human rights, peace and security, and development.[23] Across the goal areas, going by current progress, in 2030 unmet basic needs will be increasingly concentrated in conflict-affected fragile States.[24] Besides conflict prevention, sustained efforts are needed to strengthen institutional capacities and ensure coordinated responses to accelerate SDG progress.

FIGURE 4. United Nations and other intergovernmental efforts for sustaining peace
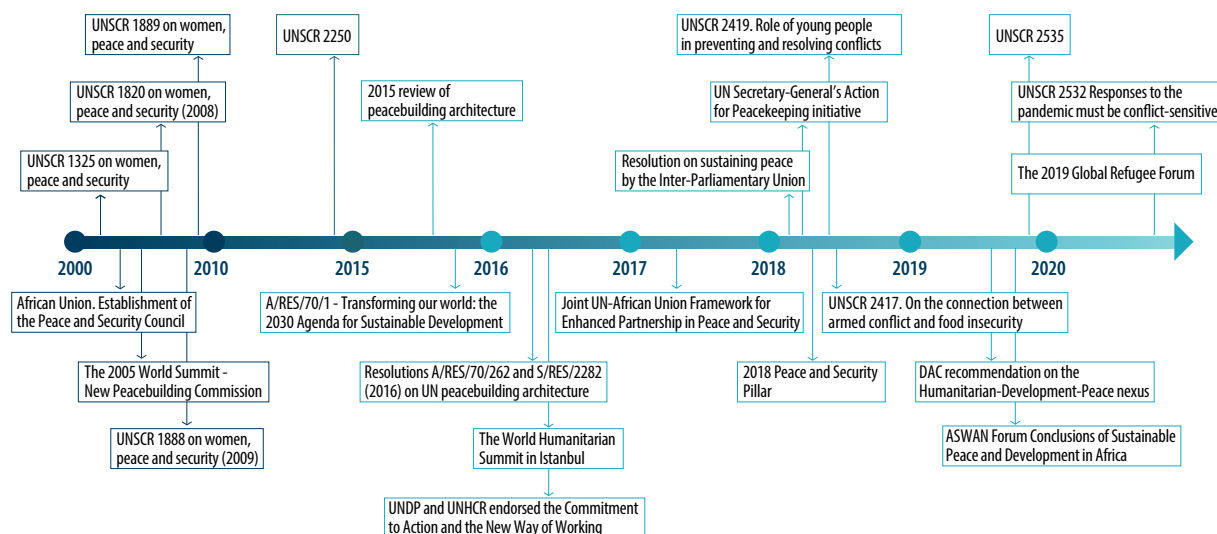
Source: Compiled by the IEO for this evaluation from UN reports.

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20   United Nations (2015) "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", United Nations General Assembly, New York.
21   Overseas Development Institute (2018) SDG Progress: Fragility, crisis and leaving no-one behind. World Bank (2018) Pathways to Peace.
22   UNDP (2020) Governance for Peace: strengthening inclusive, just and peaceful societies resilient to future crises.
23   International Peace Institute (2017) Human Rights and Sustaining Peace.
24   Overseas Development Institute (2018) SDG Progress: Fragility, crisis and leaving no-one behind. World Bank (2018) Pathways to Peace.

2.3 Socioeconomic implications of conflict

Economy and livelihoods

Violence and conflict have enormous adverse implications for the global economy in the short and long term. The economic cost of violence for ten of the most affected countries ranges between 30 and 68 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP).[25] According to the Global Peace Index assessment, in 2019 the economic impact of violence on the global economy was $14.5 trillion in purchasing power parity terms. This figure is equivalent to 10.6 percent of the world's economic activity (gross world product) or $1,909 per person. The economic impact of violence reduced by 0.2 percent from 2018 to 2019. The biggest improvement was in the impact of armed conflict, which decreased by 29 percent to $521 billion owing to a decrease in the intensity of conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. There was also a substantial reduction in the economic impact of terrorism, which fell by 48 percent from 2018 to 2019.[26] For instance, the conflict in Syria has inflicted significant damage on the country's physical capital stock. From 2011 until the end of 2016, the cumulative losses in GDP have been estimated at $226 billion, about four times the 2010 Syrian GDP.[27] Most conflict contexts include other crises such as a refugee and IDP influx, transborder diseases, climate-related episodes such as droughts and major or recurring natural disasters, or natural resource and environmental tensions, in addition to regional disparities, poverty, poor governance and underdevelopment. The macroeconomic impact of such crises is significant in itself, and also exacerbates poverty and the ability to address and recover from conflict.

Predictably, given the impact of conflict on economic growth, conflict is negatively correlated with human development. Countries severely affected by conflict are without exception in the low human development index (HDI) category. Inequality and disparity are key drivers of conflict. Therefore, addressing inequality is vital to achieving peace and improving human development in conflict-affected countries. Using the inequality-adjusted HDI, the loss of human potential due to inequality is highest in sub-Saharan Africa (over 30 percent), with some conflict-affected countries such as the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan having an inequality-adjusted HDI over 35 percent lower than the HDI in 2018.[28]

Conflicts have severe implications for livelihoods, income security, employment and food security. Two-thirds of those facing acute hunger – 74 million people – lived in 21 countries and territories affected by conflict and insecurity.[29] The lack of short- and long-term sustainable livelihoods undermines stability and development in conflict and post-conflict situations. Populations adjust their livelihood strategies to mitigate the effects of conflict, in positive and creative ways such as new ways of trading, or negatively, for example through violent competition over access to natural resources,[30] child labour, child marriage or survival sex. Lessons from conflict-affected countries point to the importance, often overlooked, of conflict and gender sensitivity in promoting durable solutions. A fragmented international response, functioning in a humanitarian mode, has had limited potential to enable linkages to sustainable livelihoods and employment generation.

There remain challenges in predictable and flexible financing, and principled commitments are required to support programme areas such as livelihoods. Compared to humanitarian aid, development financing is still low, constraining development

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[25]   The ten most affected countries are: Syria, Afghanistan. Iraq, El Salvador, South Sudan, CAR, Cyprus, Colombia and Lesotho, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace (2018) The Economic Value of Peace.
[26]   Institute for Economics and Peace (2020) Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace in a Complex World.
[27]   World Bank Group (2017) The Economic and Social Consequences of the Conflict in Syria.
[28]   A composite index that accounts for inequality in the three dimensions of the HDI: the ability to live a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. UNDP (2019) Human Development Report.
[29]   OCHA (2020) Global Humanitarian Overview.
[30]   USAID (2005) Livelihoods and Conflict.

agencies from engaging in the increasing number of crisis-affected middle-income countries.[31] While collaboration between development actors is growing, structural barriers to coherence in international responses are yet to be overcome.[32] The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to further deepen some of these issues, and the significant impact on employment and livelihoods will require more concerted efforts and prioritisation.

Institutional capacity

Stronger institutions do not always ensure peace,[33] but investments in strengthening core government capacities in conflict and post-conflict contexts promote more rapid peace and development. Strengthening local government is also critical for restoring basic services and promoting peace at community level. A recent report by UNDP and Oxford Policy Management points out that, despite the importance of effective governance in sustainable post-conflict transitions, institutional core governance capacity development in fragile and conflict-affected situations is a neglected area.[34] Although an outlier, Rwanda's significant and sustained progress in its transition from conflict was underpinned by the prioritization of core governance functions. Tackling challenging reforms early on in a conflict response (as opposed to short-term fixes), and consistent engagement even in the most challenging situations, is necessary to enable sustainable development pathways. The strengthening of public institutions is at the heart of SDG 16, which aims to enable core functions of government as an essential strategy to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Climate and conflict interface

Climate change has been identified as a risk or threat multiplier, which could trigger a vicious cycle where climate change deepens existing tension and conflict, which in turn deteriorates the environment and accelerates climate change. A Secretary-General's report on the possible security implications of climate change outlined some of these challenges a decade ago,[35] identifying five channels through which climate change could affect security: vulnerability, development (slowing down or reversing), coping and security (migration, competition over natural resources etc.), statelessness, and international conflict.[36] These continue to be pertinent today. There is evidence to support the relationship between climate and conflict, and the concentration of armed conflict in environmentally fragile regions. Studies show that changes in local climate exacerbate new and continuing conflicts, as competition over diminishing resources and migration from drought-affected regions to urban areas increase tensions, which can culminate in violence.[37]

Countries with low HDI are particularly vulnerable to the double exposure to natural disasters and armed conflict, resulting in weaker community resilience and decreased livelihood opportunities and security. There are several conditions under which climate change can affect conflict: deteriorating livelihoods and food security, influencing the tactics of armed groups, exploiting social vulnerabilities and resources by elites, and displacing people and increasing migration.[38] A report commissioned by members of the G7 identifies

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[31] Danida (2015) Coherence in conflict. Brining humanitarian and development aid stream together.
[32] Barakat, S et al. (2020) Localisation Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, Journal of Peacebuilding & Development.
[33] For example, see Matt Andrews (2013) The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions. Cambridge University Press.
[34] UNDP and Oxford Policy Management (2019) Do fragile and conflict-affected countries prioritise core government functions? Stocktaking public expenditures on public sector institutions to deliver on 2030 Agenda.
[35] United Nations General Assembly (2009) Climate change and its possible security implications: report of the Secretary-General (A/64/350)
[36] Ibid.
[37] van Weezel, S. (2020) Local warming and violent armed conflict in Africa. In *World Development,* 126.
   Buhaug, H. (2018) Global Security Challenges of Climate Change. Policy Brief No. 18. Toda Peace Institute.
   Scheffran. et al. (2019) Climate and Conflict in Africa, in *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Climate Science*.
[38] Nordvist et al. (2018) Climate Change and Violent Conflict: Sparse evidence from South Asia and South East Asia, in *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security*, No. 2018/4.

similar challenges that compound climate-fragility risks and pose serious threats to the stability of States and societies in the decades ahead, with clear relevance for conflict contexts. These include local resource competition, livelihood insecurity and migration, extreme weather events and disasters, volatile food prices and provision, transboundary water management, sea-level rise and coastal degradation, and the unintended effects of climate policies.[39] These factors are often interconnected, such as the interlinkage between climate change, human health and social instability.[40] These intersecting vulnerabilities are yet to meaningfully inform conflict and post-conflict responses or development programming.

Access to water, including erratic rainfall (increasing variability and unpredictability),[41] water scarcity, water dependency on neighbouring/ upstream countries and rising water stress, has been identified as a common risk to livelihoods, and thus a factor in increasing vulnerability to conflict in many countries and regions.[42] Water was a major factor in conflict in 45 countries in 2017, and disputes between upstream and downstream areas are likely to intensify unless proactively managed.[43] A large percentage of major droughts between 2014 and 2018 occurred in Africa, severely impacting 15 least developed countries.[44] There has been an increase in conflicts in peri-urban areas, on high-potential agricultural land such as wetlands, and in 'frontier' areas opened up for development of various kinds.[45]

Engaging youth

The important role youth can play in peace and development, while widely acknowledged, is yet to get adequate emphasis in government or donor interventions.[46] At the United Nations, the sustaining peace approach,[47] and Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs) 2250, 2049, 2419 and 2535,[48] recognize the role of youth in peace and development and seek to address the rise of radicalization and violent extremism among youth, which not only puts them at risk, but can seriously derail peacebuilding efforts and precipitate conflict. Two UNSCRs acknowledge the importance of addressing the conditions and factors leading to the rise of radicalization and violent extremism. Given the growing youth populations in conflict-affected countries, more systematic policies and investments are needed to strengthen the productive capacities of young men and women. Harnessing the transformative potential of youth also requires partnerships within the multilateral system for more holistic responses. Young women and men face a wide array of development challenges and frequently face negative assumptions about their age, experience and capabilities, as well as discrimination, repression and threats. Currently, the demographic advantages of youth populations are yet to be mobilized for peace dividends. Negative coping mechanisms among youth are on the increase, with long-term negative consequences for their well-being, and peace and development efforts. A United Nations

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39   A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks (2015) Report commissioned by G7 members.

40   Sellers et al. (2019) Climate Change, Human Health, and Social Stability: Addressing Interlinkages, in Environmental Health Perspectives.

41   Vivekananda et al. (2020) Climate Change, Conflict and Crises: Lessons from Lake Chad. Policy Brief No. 83. Toda Peace Institute.

42   The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks conducted in 2017-18 an assessment of climate security assessments in the Chad Lake Region, Iraq, Somalia and Central Asia; Reports available via https://www.sipri.org/research/peace-and-development/climate-change-and-risk/expert-working-group-climate-related-security-risks

43   World Economic Forum (2020) Global Risk report.

44   IRIN News, 'Drought in Africa 2017'. See: https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/03/17/drought-africa-2017

45   Freeman, L. (2017) Environmental change, migration, and conflict in Africa. The Journal of Environment and Development, 26(4);; Kröger, M. (2016). Spatial Causalities in Resource Rushes: Notes from the Finnish Mining Boom. Journal of Agrarian Change, 16(4); Rasmussen, M. B., & Lund, C. (2018). Reconfiguring Frontier Spaces: The territorialisation of resource control. World Development, 101.

46   For example, UNFPA (2018) The Missing Peace, on Youth, Peace and Security.

47   United Nations (2018) Sustaining Peace, report of the Secretary General to the General Assembly Security Council.

48   United Nations (2015) Press Release: Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2250, Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels. United Nations (2018) Press Release: Adopting Resolution 2419 (2018), Security Council Calls for Increasing Role of Youth in Negotiating, Implementing Peace Agreements. United Nations (2018) Sustaining Peace report of Secretary General to the General Assembly Security Council. United Nations (2018) Adopting Resolution 2419 (2018), Security Council Calls for Increasing Role of Youth in Negotiating, Implementing Peace Agreements. United Nations (2020) Adopted by the Security Council at its 8748th meeting, on 14 July 2020.

report points out the need to address systems that reinforce youth exclusion, particularly structural barriers limiting youth participation in productive sectors and peace and security initiatives.[49]

Impact on gender equality and women's security

Women and girls are among the most vulnerable when crisis and conflict strike. Most of the threats they face under regular conditions are exacerbated, leading to higher levels of insecurity, vulnerability to sexual violence, exploitation, loss of freedoms and political rights, reduced access to education and health services and additional care, domestic and livelihood responsibilities. Although the critical importance of addressing women's issues in peace and security efforts has been recognized, there remain significant gaps. It has been two decades since the adoption of UNSCRs 1325[50] and 2122[51] to ensure women's participation in peacekeeping contexts, yet this continues to be low.[52] Peacekeeping statistics for 2019 and UN Women data for 1992-2018 do not show any significant improvement[53] or transformative change in women's roles and contributions in conflict contexts.

The changing nature of armed conflict and the livelihood, security and justice implications for women need well-conceptualized strategies and appropriately tailored application of relevant UNSCRs. Facing significant labour market barriers,

the stereotyping of women's roles to marginal and subsistence economic activities continues to be an issue. The rise of violent extremism in many parts of the world threatens the lives of women. Women also join extremist groups, out of conviction or force or as a negative coping mechanism. Conflict also significantly impacts sex demographics, which need careful consideration in programme responses. Despite general commitment, international funding for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is low, far below the threshold set by the United Nations for women-specific interventions, of 15 percent of total assistance.[54]

2.4 Overseas development assistance trends in conflict-affected countries

Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the 34 conflict-affected countries included in this evaluation[55] increased consistently in recent years, to approximately $60 billion in 2018, which is over 35 percent of ODA from official donors to all developing countries (see Figures 5 and 6).[56] There has also been a significant increase in ODA to these 34 countries[57] from donors outside of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), from about $2 billion in 2014 to approximately $13 billion in 2018.[58] Aid from private sector donors to conflict-affected countries doubled between 2015 and 2018, to over $1 billion, although it continues to be less than 20 percent of private sector aid to all developing countries.

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[49]   For an analysis of youth challenges in conflict contexts see UNFPA and PBSO (2018) The Missing Peace: independent progress study on youth, peace and security.

[50]   October 2000. http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1325

[51]   October 2013 http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2122

[52]   A study of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 showed that only 9 percent of those involved in peace negotiations were women, who also comprised only 3 percent of military missions, predominantly as support staff. See UN Women (2015) Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.

[53]   According to Council on Foreign Relations and UN Women data for 1992-2018, women only make up 3 percent of mediators; 4 percent of signatories, and 13 percent of negotiators. Also, the latest peacekeeping statistics show that, in 2019, women made up 4.4 percent of those serving in military contingents; 15.1 percent of military observers and staff officers; 26.8 percent of police; 11 percent of formed police units.

[54]   UN Women (2015) Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: A study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

[55]   Excluding the Occupied Palestinian Territory; see Annex 2 for the list of countries.

[56]   Data from OECD https://stats.oecd.org/ accessed in June 2020.

[57]   OECD (2018) States of Fragility.

[58]   Data from OECD, ODA (constant prices, 2018 $ million), https://stats.oecd.org/ accessed in June 2020.
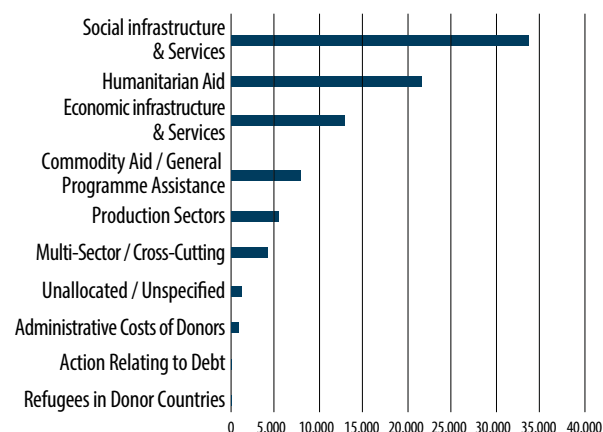
FIGURE 5. ODA by classification of the economy, 2014 – 2018 (US$ Millions)

FIGURE 6. ODA to fragile contexts by sector, 2018 (US$ Millions)
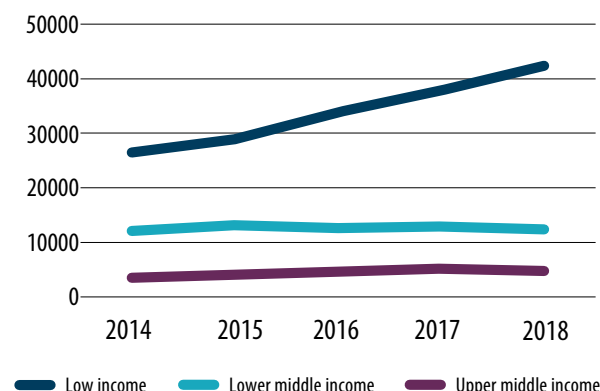
Source: OECD[59]

Total international humanitarian assistance increased by 30 percent between 2014 and 2018,[60] contributing to an overall increase of ODA to countries in fragile contexts.[61] However, there is a gap between humanitarian appeals and assistance. For example, disbursed ODA only reached 61 percent of appeal requirements in 2018, on par with previous years.[62] The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) estimates that the need for humanitarian assistance will continue to increase unless climate change and conflicts are better addressed.[63] Social infrastructure and services remain the sectors receiving most ODA, while ODA targeting gender equality and women's empowerment is still insufficient. In 2015-2016, 37 percent of $41.7 billion annual bilateral aid targeted gender and women's equality as either a significant (secondary) or principal (primary) objective. [64]

Initiatives for conflict prevention and those linking humanitarian interventions with peace and medium- to long-term development remain underfunded across conflict contexts. Traditionally, the majority of support to conflict contexts has been limited to short-term humanitarian aid, which is not suitable to address underlying development drivers for peace. Given the predominant focus on humanitarian support, peacebuilding makes up only a fraction of overall ODA spending. In 2016, 10 percent of all ODA was spent on peacebuilding, with only 4.2 percent spent on core government functions in the most fragile contexts.[65] Of the approximately $7 billion that the United Nations Secretariat spends on peacekeeping, less than $1 billion is spent on prevention, mediation and peacebuilding.[66]

59   OECD (2018) States of Fragility. OECD data as of July 2020 for the 34 countries covered by the evaluation, excluding the Occupied Palestinian Territory; see Annex 2 for the list of countries.
60   Development Initiatives (2019) Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2019
61   OECD (2018) States of Fragility
62   Ibid.
63   OCHA (2020) Global Humanitarian Overview 2020
64   OECD statistics http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm
65   OECD (2018) States of Fragility
66   World Bank (2018) Pathways to Peace

To conclude, four areas are relevant from a programme perspective.

- First, given the significant peace, security and development challenges that conflict-affected countries face, it is important to prioritize the issues and approaches used to address some of the most intractable challenges to peace, security and development.

- Second, since the adoption of the SDGs there has been significant progress in global discourse on the importance of preventing conflicts, identifying interlinking dimensions of peacebuilding, and climate, natural resources and conflict. The extent to which such an enabling environment is leveraged to promote interlinking dimensions of prevention assumes importance in programme support.

- Third, institutional strengthening needs a coordinated and long-term response to comprehensively address governance challenges.

- Lastly, tapping diverse financing sources for medium- to long-term economic revitalization and institutional strengthening is critical for accelerating peace and building sustainable development pathways.

Chapter 3.

UNDP RESPONSE

This chapter provides a brief overview of the UNDP programme and financial portfolio in conflict-affected countries during the period 2014 to 2019, which covers two strategic plans (2014-2017 and 2018-2021).

3.1 UNDP support to conflict-affected countries

The UNDP strategic plans for 2014-2017 and 2018-2021 explicitly emphasised that strengthening peace and stability and increasing resilience to crisis were fundamental to achieving the SDGs. UNDP programmes seek to support sustainable development while building resilience to future shocks. Processes and policies affecting the UNDP programme response in conflict-affected countries include the SDGs, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New Way of Working (NWoW), emphasis on HDPN, and the 2018 repositioning of the United Nations system.[67]

The two strategic plans were implemented in the context of UNDP organizational restructuring. In 2014, UNDP decentralized its operations to five regional offices or hubs and created the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), combining the Bureau for Development Policy and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). A Crisis Response Unit (CRU) within BBPS supported countries in crisis, with a primary focus on crisis response. A 2017 internal assessment found that support to prevention and peacebuilding for crisis-affected countries had been diluted because of the response function of the CRU. In response, in 2018 UNDP reverted to its earlier structure of

a separate Crisis Bureau. The Crisis Bureau has responsibility for UNDP corporate strategy, vision and priorities for prevention, response and recovery in crises relating to conflict, displacement and disasters.

The UNDP vision in both strategic plans is the eradication of poverty and accelerated sustainable development pathways. The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan aimed to achieve this through a significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion, while the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan also envisaged accelerating structural transformation. The importance of building resilience to crises and shocks was stressed in both strategic plans. In the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, 'conflict and crisis prevention and response' was included as one of three *"substantive areas of work"*, along with 'sustainable development pathways', and 'inclusive and effective democratic governance'.[68] The current Strategic Plan 2018-2021 includes this as a *"development setting to build resilience to crises and shocks"*,[69] essential for achieving sustainable development.

The 2014–2017 Strategic Plan acknowledged that all areas of work help to build resilience, including elements such as increased and sustainable employment and livelihoods, more equitable access to resources, democratic governance and protection against economic and environmental shocks. The bridging of humanitarian, peacebuilding and long-term development efforts is emphasized to reduce risks and prevent crises. It highlights two crucial areas to build resilience, rapid and effective recovery from conflict-induced crisis, and a stronger ability to deal with the consequences of natural disasters. When considering post-conflict and

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[67]   General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279.

[68]   In the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 along with 'sustainable development pathways' and 'inclusive and effective democratic governance'.

[69]   In the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 along with 'eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions' and 'accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development'.

transition settings, UNDP support to peacebuilding and statebuilding primarily focused on early economic revitalization to improve the conditions for stability and sustainability, peaceful resolution of disputes to stabilize volatile conditions, and statebuilding to improve capacity, accountability, responsiveness and legitimacy.

BOX 1. Building resilience

UNDP defines building resilience as *"a transformative process of strengthening the capacity of people, communities, institutions and countries to prevent, anticipate, absorb, respond to and recover from crises",* and focuses on *"capacities to address root causes of conflict, reduce disaster risk, mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, recover from crisis, and build sustainable peace".*[70]

As such, programmes aim to support countries and communities to better manage conflicts, prepare for major shocks, recover in the aftermath, and integrate risk management into their development planning and investment decisions.

The 2018-2021 Strategic Plan reiterates the importance of *'building resilience to crises and shocks, to safeguard development gains'* to contribute to peace, economic revitalization and statebuilding in conflict-affected countries (see Box 1). As the Theory of Change outlines, UNDP engagement in each of the phases of recovery/ stabilization, the transition to development, prevention of conflict and peacebuilding are interlinked within the broader objective of building resilience and sustainable development.

A key feature of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 is the '*Signature Solutions '*, six cross-cutting approaches to development[71] which provide an integrated way of working for the achievement of the SDGs. It established 27 different outputs contributing to the SDGs, in the thematic areas of poverty reduction (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), inequality reduction (SDG 10), sustainable communities (SDG 11), and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16). However,

causal linkages for programme contributions to the achievement of SDGs can be problematic. UNDP recognizes that climate action (SDG 13) will be critical for increasing climate resilience and reducing drought, a factor for conflict prevention in many countries. Likewise, enabling partnerships (SDG 17) is critical to promote resilience and strengthen humanitarian and development linkages in conflict-affected countries.

During the two strategic plan periods, UNDP has supported interrelated interventions for response, recovery and prevention in a range of conflict and post-conflict contexts. UNDP crisis response includes quick deployment of first responders, post-conflict needs assessments and fast-track procedures for operational support managed by the UNDP Crisis Bureau. UNDP has developed a series of crisis-related guidance notes for internal practical advice for its core work and delivery platforms, covering, among other themes, community infrastructure rehabilitation, emergency employment and enterprise recovery, debris management, national post-disaster recovery planning and coordination, and advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in crisis and recovery settings.

As part of the United Nations Development System reform, United Nations Member States recognized the role UNDP can play in achieving the SDGs, '*as the support platform of the United Nations Development System providing an integrator function in support of countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda'.*[72] UNDP has reconfigured its policy functions across BPPS and the Crisis Bureau into a Global Policy Network which, in combination with the Accelerator Labs, aims to implement innovative integrated solutions to respond to complex development challenges.

UNDP supported the fiduciary administration of inter-agency pooled funds through its Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Office. In all cases of inter-agency pooled funds this included a fiduciary role, which

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[70] See https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/six-signature-solutions.html
[71] Ibid.
[72] UNGA (2018) Operational activities for development: operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A/RES/72/279, https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2018doc/UNDS_resolution-Ldoc.pdf

is firewalled from other roles that UNDP may have, including as a participating or recipient organization. Pooled financing mechanisms operate in a wide range of contexts, either managed by the United Nations or nationally operated through single or multiple funding windows, based on the scope and complexity of programmatic goals and the number and range of implementing partners. The main pooled mechanisms currently used by the United Nations system are United Nations or national MDTFs and stand-alone joint programmes. UNDP also supported large programmes funded by multiple donors. In the majority of cases, UNDP played a fiduciary role, although in some cases UNDP has received and supported implementation of funds. The list of interagency pooled funds administered by the MPTF Office is presented in Annex 5.
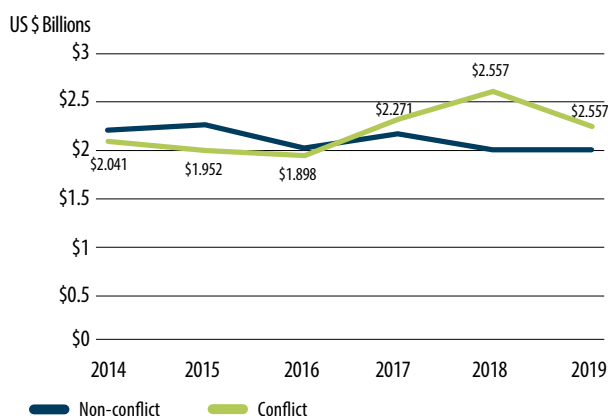
3.2 Scope and scale of the UNDP programme

UNDP programme support for conflict prevention and response sits across the seven outcomes of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, and six signature solutions of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Both the Strategic Plans are accompanied by a Gender Equality Strategy for the respective period. The key streams of programme support are (see also Figure 1, which illustrates key programme streams):

- *Conflict prevention and peacebuilding:* Support in this area includes infrastructures for peace, livelihoods, community dialogue mechanisms, participatory local governance and development, and transparent and participatory electoral processes.

- *Basic services:* UNDP supports a range of initiatives to strengthen social services during active conflict and in post-conflict contexts, restoring water and health services, solid waste management, electricity, roads, schools and hospitals. Infrastructure and basic services cut across the UNDP portfolio: as part of strengthening core functions for governments who are responsible for service delivery in their areas; and under early

recovery and sustainable development pathways through livelihoods, economic recovery, energy and sectors such as health.

- *Economic revitalization and inclusive growth:* UNDP conflict recovery and reconstruction initiatives for economic revitalization aim to improve short- and medium-term employment and livelihood opportunities at household and community levels. UNDP programmes recognize that conflict can drive people into poverty, with a disproportionate impact on the poor. At the same time, conflicts are often driven by poverty and lack of opportunity. In post-conflict contexts, UNDP aims to support the transformation of productive capacity for income generation by strengthening human capital, reducing economic vulnerability and building safety nets for resilience against economic and social shocks. Improving resources and enhancing prospects for employment and income generation is a priority.

- *Local economic development*: Dispersed across support to local government institutions, core governance functions and sustainable development pathways, this stream of programmes aims to improve access to resources for employment, infrastructure development and basic services at the community level.

- *Institutional strengthening:* UNDP governance programmes in conflict and post-conflict contexts include support to public administration capacity (structures, processes and capacity of national level public administration institutions, local governance, civil service, accountability and transparency), rule of law (justice sector, police and security sector reform) and democratic political processes (inclusive political processes such as elections, parliament, civil society and human rights institutions).

- *Gender equality and women's empowerment:* GEWE is to be mainstreamed across UNDP programme areas, in addition to specific interventions which aim to be transformative.

UNDP support to 34 conflict-affected countries for the period 2014-2019 accounted for more than half (51 percent) of total programme expenditure, amounting to approximately $13 billion. Figure 7 presents the annual expenditure in 34 conflict-affected and 79 non-conflict countries, and Figure 8 presents expenditure disaggregated by the type of resources.

There was a significant increase in expenditure in 2018, mainly due to programmes in Iraq and Yemen (representing 25 percent of the $2.5 billion total annual expenditure), followed by a return to 2017 expenditure levels in 2019. Overall, expenditure in non-conflict countries has followed a declining trend, reaching its lowest point in 2019 with $1.95 billion spent.

FIGURE 7. Annual expenditure in conflict-affected and non-conflict countries

US $ Billions

FIGURE 8. Annual expenditure: regular and non-core resources

US $ Billions
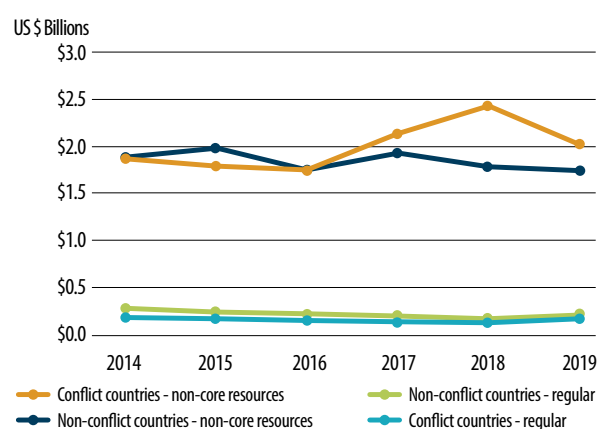
FIGURE 9. Annual expenditure by programme themes in conflict-affected countries

US $ Billions
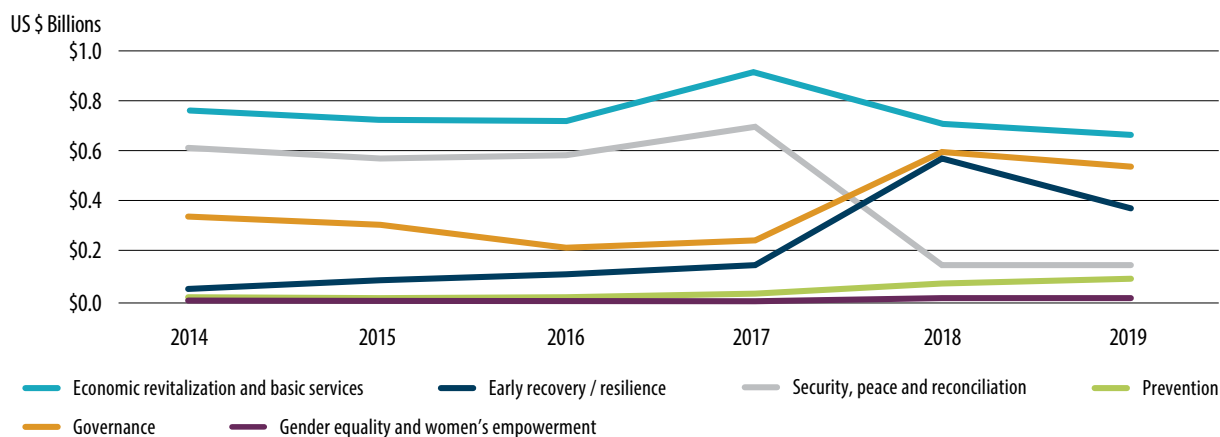
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

Several country programmes have had consistently large portfolios over the years. Afghanistan remains the largest UNDP programme (ranging from $742.7 million in 2014 to $428.3 million in 2019), in large part due to the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), which UNDP manages. Resources for the Iraq programme increased from $31.6 million in 2014 to $225.9 million in 2019, and for Zimbabwe there was a decrease from $172.5 million in 2014 to $149.9 million in 2019. These three countries are outliers and represent approximately 42 percent of total UNDP expenditure in conflict-affected countries for the period 2014-2019. Most interventions, however, consist of smaller programmes, with 15 countries having annual average expenditure of around $32 million.

Figure 9 shows programme expenditure by thematic area. The economic revitalization and basic services area accounts for the largest share of expenditure (35 percent of the overall $13 billion). This high expenditure is predominantly due to infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction in post-conflict

contexts. The other areas where expenditure has increased since 2017 are governance and early recovery and resilience. Part of the reason for this is the reconfiguration of thematic areas under the 2018-21 Strategic Plan. Prevention and GEWE have had the lowest levels of funding, though it is important to note that expenditure for prevention-related programming increased from $23 million in 2017 to almost $100 million in 2019. Lastly, expenditure for security, peace and reconciliation, which comprised 22 percent of overall expenditure, has decreased significantly since 2017, with a reduction in expenditure for early recovery, basic services and governance since 2018. Again, one of the reasons for this decline is the 2017 recategorization of security, peace and reconciliation expenditure under the governance area, reflected in the 2018 budget.

Expenditure on GEWE in conflict-affected countries has been declining, with the lowest expenditure of $7.6 million in 2017. Although it increased to $21.8 million in 2019, this is just 1 percent of overall expenditure in conflict-affected countries.

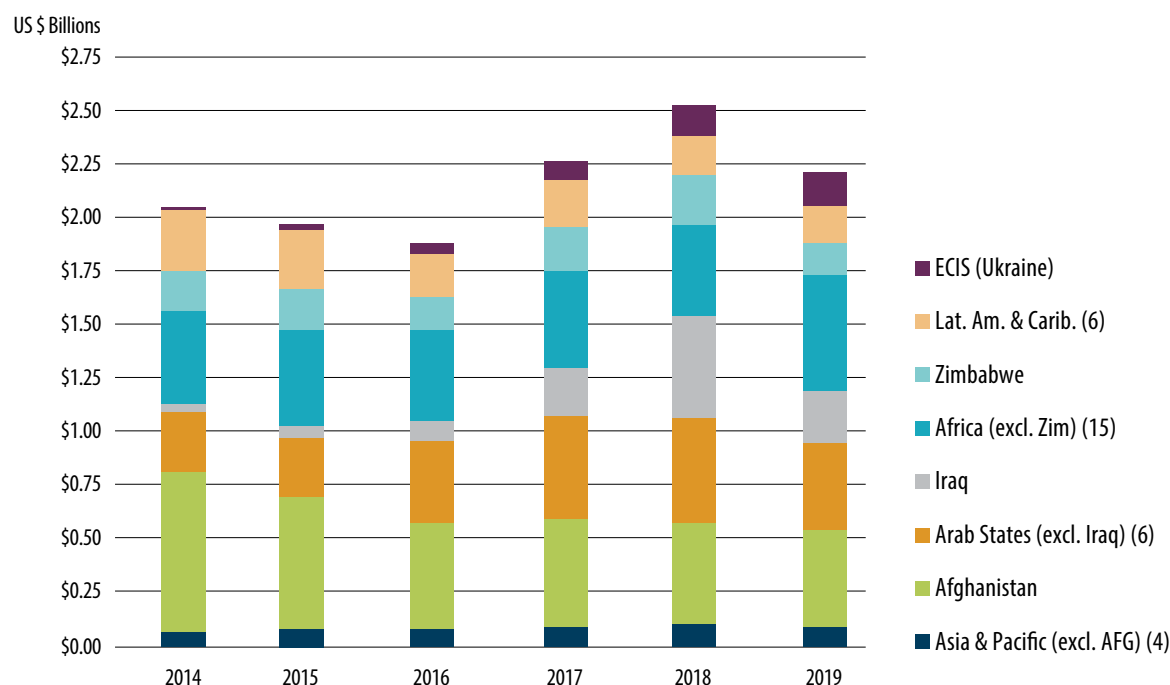**FIGURE 10.** Non-programmatic expenditure (fiduciary role)
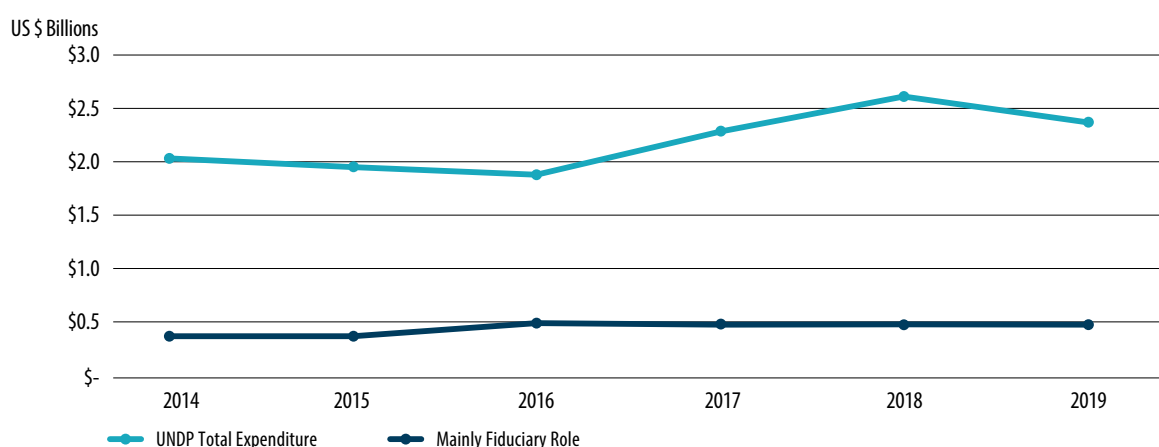
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

It is important to note that over 21 percent of total expenditure in conflict-affected countries is under a fiduciary role (see Figure 10).[73] In seven conflict-affected countries,[74] total expenditure through the fiduciary role is $2.8 billion. These figures exclude the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), which accounts for 13 percent of overall funding in conflict-affected countries, taking the fiduciary support to 34 percent. Considering that this amount is not intended for programme expenditure, it skews the overall portfolio of UNDP. For a realistic assessment, it is important to separate this financial stream to better understand the total programme expenditure of UNDP in conflict-affected countries.

Figure 11 shows the regional distribution of programme expenditure and outlier country programmes in terms of scale. Nearly half of the 34 conflict-affected countries are in the Africa region,

though these represent less than 30 percent of total expenditure during the 2014-2019 period. While expenditure in Africa increased, the overall expenditure of $715 million over six years across 15 conflict-affected countries is low given the complexity of multiple crises in the region. The Sahel region, with multiple crises, has the lowest expenditure, though this increased in 2019 because of funding through the Lake Chad Basin Facility (see Figure 12). In relative terms, the Arab States has seen a significant increase in programme expenditure, which has doubled since 2014. This was mainly due to large increases in expenditure in Iraq and Yemen in 2018. In Asia and the Pacific, the majority of expenditure was in Afghanistan, and in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States most expenditure was in Ukraine. In Latin America and the Caribbean, there has been a 40 percent decrease in expenditure since 2014.

FIGURE 11. Annual expenditure by region and top spending countries in each region

US $ Billions

Legend:
- ECIS (Ukraine)
- Lat. Am. & Carib. (6)
- Zimbabwe
- Africa (excl. Zim) (15)
- Iraq
- Arab States (excl. Iraq) (6)
- Afghanistan
- Asia & Pacific (excl. AFG) (4)

Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

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[73] Fiduciary role played by UNDP entails support to managing programme finances of other agencies, or facilitating disbursal of funds, where there is no substantive programmatic engagement.

[74] DRC, South Sudan, Sudan, CAR, Afghanistan, El Salvador and Guatemala.

FIGURE 12. Programme expenditure in Africa

■ Conflict-affected African countries (excluding Sahel)
■ Sahel conflict-affected countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria)

US$ Millions
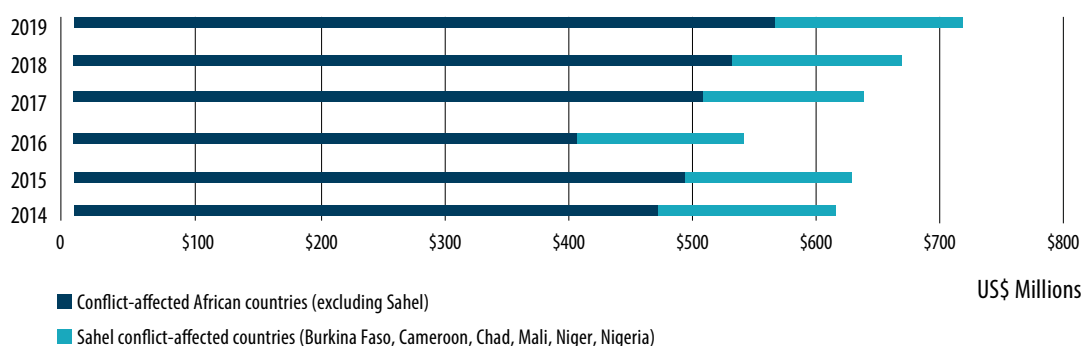
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

Despite complex contexts, not all country programmes could mobilize the same level of programme resources over the years. For example, South Sudan and Somalia had very little variation in funding between 2014 and 2019. On the other hand, there has been a rapid increase in expenditure in Ukraine, Iraq, Yemen and Syria. Afghanistan, the largest programme of the portfolio in absolute terms, has experienced a significant decrease in expenditure (-42 percent) from 2014 to 2019, partly due to the reduced UNDP role in the LOTFA programme. The largest decrease in expenditure has been in Venezuela, dropping from $41 million in 2014 to $2.7 million in 2019.

FIGURE 13. Programme expenditure in the Sahel

— Sahel - core   — Sahel - non-core   — Sahel - total
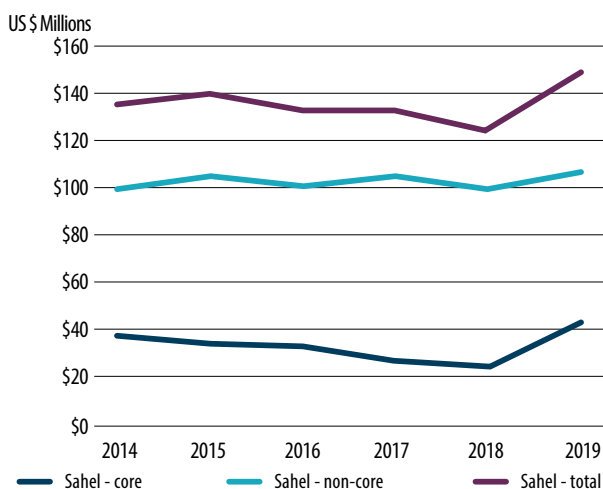
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

FIGURE 14. Top five donors by expenditure in Lake Chad Basin countries

— ODA from TOP 5 Donors to LAKE CHAD BASIN countries
— Total UNDP Expenditure in LAKE CHAD BASIN countries
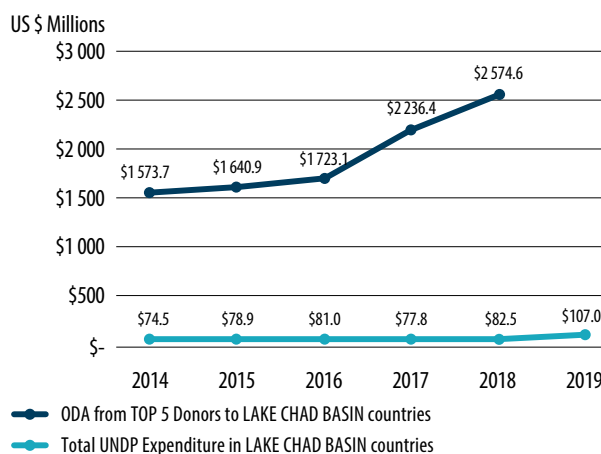
Trends in UNDP resource mobilization in conflict-affected countries do not reflect the broader ODA trends of the main donors in the areas of UNDP support. In the Lake Chad Basin, which is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian and security crises in the world, there is a significant gap between contributions from the main UNDP donors[75] and the resources mobilized by UNDP (see Figure 14). While the trend among the top five UNDP donors has been a 60 percent increase in ODA between 2014 and 2018, UNDP expenditure has remained at an average of $80 million a year for all Lake Chad Basin countries.

FIGURE 15. UNDP funding sources 2014-2019
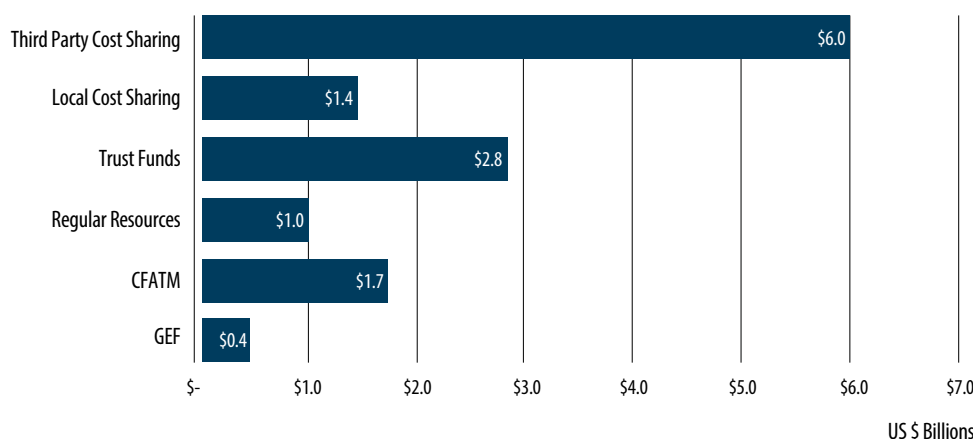
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

FIGURE 16. Annual funding from Peacebuilding Fund
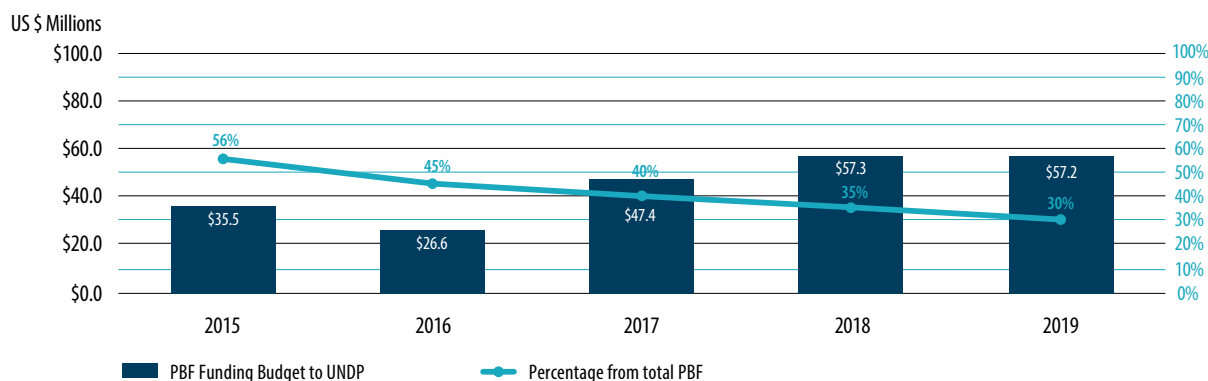
Source: IEO with Atlas/PowerBI Data. August 2020

A major source of funding in conflict-affected countries (about 45 percent) are funds categorized as third party cost sharing, which is largely funding from bilateral donors, international financial institutions, the private sector, and in some instances government cost-sharing (see Figure 15). Additionally, multi-donor UNDP programmes accounted for $2.7 billion of expenditure. UNDP is the largest implementer of the PBF (see Figure 16).[76] Among vertical funds, conflict-affected countries received substantial resources from GFATM, and a smaller proportion of Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funds (see Figure 15).

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75   The top five donors to UNDP in 2019 were Germany, Japan, European Union, United States of America and Sweden.
76   Multi-Partner Trust Fund PBF Gateway, http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/PB000

FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings on UNDP support to conflict-affected countries. The analysis acknowledges the diversity of conflict contexts, the range of issues on which UNDP programme responses are sought, and variations in the scale of UNDP responses. Patterns of UNDP contribution are examined across different contexts such as countrywide conflict (armed conflict, armed violence and social unrest), subnational conflict, conflict and multiple crises, countries with international responses (such as United Nations, NATO and regional missions), post-conflict transition, and conflict-related fragilities. Also, a distinction is made between countries that are more advanced in the development process and those with evolving institutional and development processes.

This chapter is organized as follows. Section 4.1 analyses the overall positioning and comparative advantage of UNDP. Section 4.2 assesses UNDP engagement in, and contribution to, global policy and advocacy in accelerating peace and development and the HDPN triple nexus. Section 4.3 analyses UNDP support to economic revitalization and inclusive growth, and Section 4.4 looks at enabling basic services and related infrastructure restoration and rehabilitation. A common theme of sections 4.3 and 4.4 is stabilization programmes, which are analysed in Section 4.5. UNDP efforts to strengthen different areas of core governance functions are analysed in Section 4.6, and Section 4.7 presents prevention and peacebuilding initiatives. Section 4.8 presents an analysis of support to the MDTF, and Section 4.9 looks at gender equality and women's empowerment. Lastly, Section 4.10 presents an analysis of cross-cutting programme dimensions, including programme approaches, addressing multiple crises, youth development, private sector development and innovation.

The evaluation does not validate quantitative UNDP results reported at country and global levels, but presents evidence that is validated by evaluations. In the present form, quantitative country-level results reporting poses challenges for global-level aggregation of UNDP support in conflict-affected countries, given significant variations in the timeframes, scope and scale of interventions. Areas such as prevention, peacebuilding and core governance engagement need nuanced approaches to quantification, which are beyond the scope of this evaluation. The analysis here does not cover the UNDP COVID-19 response in conflict-affected countries as these activities have just commenced and it is too early for assessment.

4.1 Programme positioning and comparative advantage

Finding 1. UNDP programmes sought to address the most intractable challenges in conflict-affected countries. Across conflict contexts and different streams of programme engagement, UNDP demonstrated the value of its support in enabling peace and accelerating development.

During the two strategic plan periods, UNDP has supported a range of interrelated interventions to support response, stabilization, recovery and prevention in a diverse range of conflict and post-conflict contexts. A large component of UNDP programme areas has remained fairly consistent over the past decade, though UNDP strategies and approaches have taken a more holistic perspective since 2014, reinforcing the importance of humanitarian-development-peace linkages and resilience-based peace and development. UNDP responded to conflict contexts where: there has been external intervention resulting in regime change (for example in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya); the conflict is structural with deep roots (for example in CAR, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen); there is a strong and sometimes

overwhelming regional dimension (DRC, Lebanon, Mali and Yemen)' and where there is local-level conflict (Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka). In countries where peacekeeping and stabilization missions have been deployed, UNDP collaborated with them in the areas of rule of law, elections, security sector and gender equality.[77]

FIGURE 17. Performance score for UNDP programme positioning

		Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Level of emphasis given to programme support in conflict countries (financial and human resources)	20%			●	
Extent to which specific conflict context is taken into consideration by UNDP in developing its programmes / a more customised approach to conflict prevention and response	25%		●		
Extent to which UNDP responded to key priorities in conflict and post-conflict countries	25%			●	
Positioning UNDP to promote gender-informed conflict response and stabilisation	15%		●		
Extent to which UNDP engagement in global andregional debates / advocacy is commensurate with its presence globally and long-term engagement in key development support	15%			●	
Total score	100%			●	

Source: IEO analysis

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[77] Peacekeeping mission by regional multilateral institutions such as the African Union (e.g., in Somalia and Sudan) and in some cases jointly with United Nations peacekeeping forces (for example in DRC, CAR, South Sudan, Mali, Lebanon).

EVALUATION OF UNDP SUPPORT TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

While there are common streams of UNDP programmes across different conflict contexts, certain patterns were evident. Stabilization or early recovery support in 11 countries and the Lake Chad Basin[78] involved large programmes within a United Nations peacekeeping operation under a Security Council mandate, to support sustainable transition from conflict to peace. These stabilization programmes entailed both short-term rehabilitation of basic services and economic infrastructure, economic revitalization (in Libya and Iraq), as well as efforts toward structural changes (for example in Iraq). In countries with active conflict but a restricted programme mandate, UNDP supported recovery efforts (for example in Syria), and reconstruction and institutional capacity development (for example through assistance to the people of Palestine). The resilience approach was more pronounced in some programmes, particularly in contexts with political violence marked by intermittent escalation of conflict (such as Zimbabwe and Yemen), and the complex interface of conflict, the refugee situation and drought (in the Lake Chad Basin and more broadly the Sahel). In some countries, core institutional capacities were newly built (Somalia and South Sudan), while in countries in transition, UNDP supported institutional reforms (for example in Afghanistan and DRC) and sophisticated public service reform (for example in Ukraine). Conflict mitigation and peace and reconciliation have been areas of support in conflict and post-conflict contexts, as well as those with subnational conflicts and related fragilities (for example Sri Lanka, Colombia, Nigeria and Ukraine), although the scope of such support was limited.

Programme positioning is a necessary condition for more effective programmes. UNDP strengths that add significant value when operating in conflict-affected environments are its long-standing and trusted relationships with governments, its geographic reach in countries, and its programming across the spectrum of humanitarian, development and peace areas. UNDP has long-standing relationships with governments in conflict-affected

countries, which often provide it with a positive brand. By maintaining a focus on developmental processes even during humanitarian crises, UNDP support bolsters national confidence. Strong government partnerships have meant that UNDP could work with national and local authorities as an enabler, rather than imposer, of solutions.

In the large majority of conflict-affected countries, where the reach of central government to local levels is limited, the UNDP local presence is an added value. Field presence is essential, particularly in the context of local violent conflict or where the State seeks to (re)impose control in an area formerly controlled by opposition groups, and where States struggle to provide security, justice, governance and services. Often the local or territorial presence of UNDP has been an important enabler in its support for stabilization, early recovery and development (for example in Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Colombia, DRC, Ukraine and Libya). Conversely, where UNDP had not invested in localized programming, as in Yemen before 2015, it was harder for it to add value.

The overall performance score for UNDP programme positioning is good (see Figure 17). While UNDP scored well on the level of emphasis given to programme support in conflict-affected countries (financial and human resources) and on prioritization of complex multiple crisis contexts, there is scope for greater prioritization of key areas in livelihoods and governance support. UNDP positioning was average with regard to context specificity in programming, particularly a more customized approach to conflict prevention and response.

Finding 2. UNDP has played the role of programme implementer and enabler of technical expertise effectively. It is, however, yet to play the role of connector and accelerator of progress on peace, prevention and development.

UNDP programmes often fell short of needs for economic revitalization, inclusive growth and core governance functions in conflict-affected

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[78]   Afghanistan, CAR, DRC, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Lake Chad Basin and Yemen.

countries. UNDP is yet to streamline its approaches to inject thought leadership into national and subnational level programme support. UNDP strategies and approaches did not always respond to evolving capacity and often rapidly changing needs and conditions. UNDP ability to provide thematic thought leadership remains weak in the absence of substantive engagement in key areas of support. A lack of sector-specific capacity development strategies or a systematic approach to strengthening core institutional capacity reduced the UNDP contribution. One challenge is the delayed development of national capacity to take and direct responsibility for development and ODA, often reflected in a degree of frustration and resentment at national level. UNDP programme investment in statebuilding did not always correspond to the level of need for long-term institutional capacity development support. Comprehensive governance engagement is required if the UNDP goals of peace and development are to be achieved. Evidence from different conflict contexts points to the need for a more comprehensive approach to strengthening public sector administration, for synergies across various governance objectives, and more strategic use of citizen participation. Although specific measures have been taken in terms of developing programme models, UNDP is yet to address the challenge of balancing its support to immediate institutional needs and strategic engagement in select areas of governance.

UNDP has a unique position and significant role in the delivery of humanitarian economic revitalization support in conflict-affected settings. UNDP presence on the ground, and close cooperation with United Nations missions where they are deployed, has enabled the effective delivery of employment and income-stabilization efforts. For employment and livelihood support, the UNDP contribution to short-term income generation has been important. Long-term livelihood and employment generation efforts are, however, in early stages. UNDP has adopted appropriate programme models, such as the 3X6 and Area-based Development approaches,

though there has been a lack of sustained effort to provide viable models to inform policy or wider efforts in conflict-affected countries. UNDP used a three track approach (Track 1- livelihoods stabilization; Track 2 – local economic recovery; and Track 3- long-term employment and inclusive growth) in its livelihood support, which underpins the 3X6 approach.

The broad scope of programmes has enabled UNDP to combine work across the spectrum from infrastructure to local development, short-term income-generation to employment livelihoods, developing civil service institutions and supporting community peacebuilding and counter-extremism processes. This breadth of scope has also been challenging at times, in terms of integration even within UNDP, and there is a tendency for UNDP projects to become siloed, resulting in a fragmented response. A broad definition of different areas of support and approaches has enabled UNDP to be more flexible in its country support and minimized programming predisposition. At the same time, this broad approach undermined programme depth and long-term focus. While the signature solutions of the current Strategic Plan emphasized an integrated approach, UNDP did not outline the areas where such an approach would be consistently prioritized in conflict contexts. Leaving this open for different possibilities did not enable an integrated approach where it was most needed to accelerate peace and development.

UNDP is yet to find a good balance between its conflict response and prevention support, an issue which the Crisis Bureau is in the process of addressing. This was also noted in the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017.[79] For instance, macro-level work on peace policy requires programmatic investments in terms of resources and capacity. With the establishment of the Crisis Bureau, prevention capacities have been strengthened with in-house technical expertise. The Crisis Bureau is finalizing a new offer for prevention, which includes addressing risks to

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[79] IEO (2017) UNDP Strategic Plan Evaluation http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/sgrp.shtml

sustainable development that increase fragility and disruptions, and enabling solutions for proactive investment in reducing those risks. The success of such strategies will lie in providing well-tested programme models for easy application by country offices. More importantly, this should not replicate development programmes which are already supported by UNDP.

Country offices are often incentivized to generate well-funded projects, and inevitably UNDP teams devote a large proportion of their time to project management. The difficult tasks of undertaking quality analysis, convening stakeholders and generating shared contextual understanding leading to comprehensive interventions can be subordinated to this projectized focus. Where UNDP can convene analysis and planning, as with support to national development plans or national security reform plans, it can add real thought leadership value that translates into tangible results.

Finding 3. UNDP has had to constantly navigate the differing interests of donors and partner governments to maintain a neutral stance. UNDP is yet to ensure that its country teams are supported to exercise diplomatic judgement while making necessary trade-offs.

Working on conflict response and peace is always politically fraught, and a well-coordinated stance by country offices and headquarters has been challenging for UNDP. The traditional DAC partners influence where and how UNDP works, for example, funding rule of law support in Iraq and Afghanistan or infrastructure and resilience support in Libya. There are issues on which UNDP is yet to take a position to guide its country programmes when there are multiple positions on international assistance or political standoffs in partner governments.

UNDP has strived to remain politically neutral in circumstances where United Nations Member States are on opposing sides of conflicts. UNDP has managed some areas extremely well, for example engaging the right donors, taking into consideration

political funding constraints. It was often less successful in making clear the organization's core mandate which informs its support. This is more so in the case of multi-country conflict contexts where the UNDP stance is not made explicit. UNDP lacked a nuanced strategy to navigate through conflicting interests, whether the competing geostrategic interests of countries or funding constraints that make it challenging to fulfil its mandate.

A constant dilemma for all United Nations organizations, including UNDP, is the political space for United Nations country teams (UNCTs) to raise issues that contravene international human rights standards, without direct engagement of the Security Council in the affairs of that Member State. This issue featured predominately in the independent inquiry into the involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018, which found that the United Nations response to the Rohingya crisis was a dysfunctional and systemic failure.[80] It found a situation where the United Nations human rights organizations sought public condemnation, while the remainder of the UNCT advocated for quiet diplomacy to protect their relationships and programmes. Following the report, the United Nations undertook reforms to address this issue, but this is not yet resolved and, according to interviews, still requires guidance to develop a more uniform approach within the United Nations and UNDP.

Finding 4. Since its establishment in 2019, the Crisis Bureau has made a significant contribution to UNDP global positioning and providing technical support, policy and practice tools to country offices. The success of the Crisis Bureau in enabling policy coherence largely rests on the uptake of their policy support by regional bureaux and country offices.

The reconstitution of the Crisis Bureau has been an important step in efforts to strengthen UNDP conflict response and prevention support. With a dedicated bureau focusing on crisis prevention and response, the consolidation of UNDP conflict-related support has improved, technical support to

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[80]   Rosenthal, G. (2019) A brief and independent inquiry into the involvement of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018.

country offices has been streamlined, programme approaches rationalized, and steps taken to move beyond immediate response-related programming towards a more substantive role in prevention. There has been an array of tools and strategies to strengthen country programme responses in key areas of conflict prevention and response. For example, the areas of prevention, reinforcing core governance functions, and enabling private sector development received renewed impetus. The Crisis Bureau facilitated efforts to respond to COVID-19 in conflict-affected countries through the Global Policy Network and Global Programmes, as well as support from the corporate team. A significant step to enable knowledge facilitation, learning and policy support is the revival of communities of practice, and country offices have found the eight well-coordinated communities have enabled them to tap into the knowledge base of the organization.

Although progress has been slow, global programmes have the potential to position UNDP in global policy discourse and also promote new practices to more effectively respond at country level.[81] For example, the Global Programme on Rule of Law is not confined to conflict contexts, but tailors and delivers its preventive responses across all development settings in the UNDP Strategic Plan. There is scope for identifying other key areas for developing well-resourced global programmes, for example, on the climate-security nexus or youth development, to provide the necessary impetus for country offices.

Concerted efforts are required to translate the consolidation of the Crisis Bureau prevention offer into practice. While UNDP has been active in contributing to United Nations efforts and reports of the Secretary-General,[82] country programme efforts are still emerging. UNDP is well-positioned to provide leadership in this area, but the pace of efforts has been slow. UNDP is also yet to assert its comparative advantage in country programmes in key areas of conflict and development response through HDPN.

While policy bureaux at headquarters often responded to country office requests for support, there is scope for greater engagement in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region. Headquarters is often more preoccupied with large stabilization programmes. The Crisis Bureau is yet to bring a focus to regions such as the Sahel, where well-conceptualised solutions are needed.

Measures have been taken to address policy coherence to maximise the contributions of the two policy bureaus and regional bureaus. Cross-cutting issues are housed in one of the two policy bureaux, but the policy function is split across both. For instance, the Crisis Bureau hosts the human rights function for both bureaus. The share of responsibilities between BPPS and the Crisis Bureau in areas such as governance is evolving. Further clarity in the functioning of the two bureaus would avoid duplication and build on synergies and coordinated approaches for a more comprehensive response in conflict contexts. In prevention programming, where the overlap between the two policy bureaux is greatest, there is scope to consolidate their approaches to programme support. Clarity of roles and responsibilities between policy and regional bureaus is also fundamental, to better leverage the various UNDP programme units, and there are areas yet to be clarified. The extent to which policy support has transformed country programmes largely depended on uptake by regional bureaus and country offices.

Finding 5. While it is too early to assess the implications of the delinking of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative roles, there are indications that the transition process has not been easy for UNDP positioning in conflict-affected countries.

The delinking of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative positions came into force in January 2019. This has, to some extent, freed UNDP from the main United Nations political advocacy role, reducing

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81   For example, the Global Programme on Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions.
82   For example, UNDP contributed substantially to the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace.

EVALUATION OF UNDP SUPPORT TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

the obligation to deal with sensitive issues that governments might not want raised. UNDP still plays an active technical and advocacy role and engages in programme-related policy discussions and quiet diplomacy on key reform issues. While some country offices considered that delinking had not significantly affected the UNDP position, a predominant view was that delinking has had consequences for programme implementation and access to coordination forums and resources.

In Security Council-mandated countries, there were immediate implications for UNDP in terms of access to technical expertise and the use of mission infrastructure for programme implementation in remote and conflict-affected areas. Some areas need to be renegotiated, such as programme arrangements where the Resident Coordinator office is also involved, including sharing the services of peace and development advisors (PDAs), or on common areas of engagement with the mission, such as elections, security sector and some areas of rule of law. Despite these initial challenges, UNDP has sought to retain its unique position, but this has sometimes been a struggle in the face of institutional rivalries or where UNDP does not have strong and credible leadership. Country offices considered that UNDP had also lost programme space due to the realignment, in terms of the allocation of resources in areas of UNDP core mandate. While this claim could not be fully validated, part of the reason for such a perception is that there is less consideration of the domain expertise of agencies in resource distribution, which has impacted UNDP.

The cadre of PDAs is a strategically significant UNDP programme arrangement, specific to conflict contexts.[83] These advisors have been integral to help UNDP improve its contextual understanding, focus its programming on conflict, bring together United Nations agencies and work with national authorities. With 49 PDAs in conflict-affected countries, the further harnessing of this cadre is necessary, particularly to further the nexus agenda at country level. The United Nations Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs (DPPA) and UNDP have ensured the smooth coordination of PDA functioning, which assumes importance post-delinking of the Resident Coordinator function.

Greater clarity on the division of labour with DPPA in mission contexts was achieved even before delinking. UNDP has worked in mission contexts for decades and this working relationship has been clarified over time, after evaluations found duplication of work and parallel efforts from UNDP and DPPA in the past. Now, missions use an integrated concept and undertake more joint efforts. At the same time, there are instances where UNDP is used more for implementation and resource management. A common issue in the areas of security sector and rule of law is that UNDP seeks to promote a long-term institutional development approach, whereas the mission wants to adopt a shorter-term "train and equip" approach. There are examples of more equal collaboration, as in Afghanistan, where UNDP provided capacity-building support and project management with the United Nations Assistance Mission as the political lead, working as a joint team. This was reflected in the large LOFTA project, described as a channel to pay the police, although its role has expanded slightly into justice sector support. In Haiti, on the other hand, there was an unequal partnership and division of labour in the context of a large mission, where UNDP risked becoming a subcontractor rather than programme partner. The situation in Haiti seems to have improved, with a mission staff member now embedded in each UNDP team, enabling them to work in a more integrated and coordinated manner. The extent of this problem seemed to depend in large part on the mission and the personalities involved.

UNDP support to the COVID-19 response and the preparation of socioeconomic assessments at country level was an opportunity to demonstrate its integrator role. Several country offices noted

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[83]   The PDA cadre is a joint programme between DPPA and UNDP, founded in 2004, to help countries and UNCTs more effectively address. conflict. See https://dppa.un.org/en/peace-and-development-advisors-joint-undp-dppa-programme-building-national-capacities-conflict

that the COVID-19 crisis had brought United Nations agencies to work together. The UNDP coordination of socioeconomic assessments opened up entry points for reengagement with the Resident Coordinator office in some cases. As reform had still not taken place at national level, UNDP was able to facilitate a coordinated COVID-19 response in the area of socioeconomic assessment. UNDP is yet to reinvent itself to find a niche in the United Nations system based on its strengths.

4.2 Global policy and advocacy

Finding 6. The current and previous UNDP strategic plans were implemented within an enabling global policy environment which gave renewed impetus to the humanitarian development peace interface, including a host of intergovernmental agreements. While the UNDP contribution to these global policy processes has been important, UNDP has not asserted its expertise in development and peace and its unique advantage of country-level experience, to provide leadership to the global- and country-level HDPN agenda.

UNDP strategic plans were implemented within the context of major intergovernmental agreements, including Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in 2015, the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, and the Stockholm Declaration on Addressing Fragility and Building Peace.[84] Each of the agreements provided renewed impetus for HDPN and strengthened international commitment to joint efforts and flexible financing to pursue the nexus agenda in crisis contexts. NWoW[85] called upon humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively, based on their comparative advantages, towards 'collective outcomes', using a multi-year programme framework that enabled durable solutions, addressing risk and vulnerability.

The Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) made humanitarian-development collaboration a strategic priority for 2018-2020, focusing on operationalizing HDPN in United Nations responses.[86] This context assumes importance for UNDP positioning, as well as its contribution to furthering global efforts for sustainable peace and development. Through its policy frameworks, UNDP outlined its commitment to act collectively through NWoW, to take a longer-term approach, leverage comparative advantages through collaboration, and focus on achieving collective outcomes.[87] While it made important contributions to governmental agreements and global policy processes, UNDP has not always taken strategic advantage of its country programme strength for more assertive engagement.

As the development agency of the United Nations, UNDP has a longer-term development perspective at country level which crosses the peace, security and humanitarian interventions of the United Nations system. This puts it in a position to facilitate multi-dimensional and integrated responses. This unique advantage placed UNDP in leadership positions within the United Nations system, and provided opportunities to inform United Nations deliberations on HDPN. For example, the UNDP Administrator is co-chair of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, as well as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, which was created under the initiative of the Secretary-General. UNDP is also co-chair of the Interagency Platform on Supporting Core Government Functions in Fragile and Crisis-Affected Settings, with the DPPA, and works closely with the World Bank to strengthen the basic functionality of core government institutions and other sectors. UNDP also co-chairs the Preventing and Countering

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84   United Nations (2015) Transforming Our World, The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2016) Realization of the SDGs in Countries affected by Conflict and Fragility: the Role of the New Deal, Conceptual Note.

85   NWoW calls on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively, based on their comparative advantages, towards 'collective outcomes' that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years.

86   IASC Results Group 4: Humanitarian-Development Collaboration https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-4-humanitarian-development-collaboration

87   UNDP (2018) Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021, p 9. Collective outcome is described by the Agenda for Humanity as the result that development and humanitarian (and other relevant actors) contribute to achieving at the end of three to five years in order to reduce needs, risk and vulnerability.

Violent Extremism working group with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilization, within the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism working group.

UNDP has made considerable progress in its global partnerships with humanitarian agencies, international financial institutions and donors. UNDP and the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) took unprecedented measures to forge a partnership in response to protracted refugee crises. UNDP collaborates with the World Bank and the European Union to harmonize collective assistance and develop common tools, training and evaluation mechanisms, building on its expertise as the largest development agency in the United Nations system. UNDP efforts contributed to the development

of the United Nations-World Bank Humanitarian Peace Initiative, Pathways to Peace report, and joint UNDP-World Bank programming in Yemen. The European Union has a strategic partnership with the United Nations for peace operations and the Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance with UNDP. Partnerships are also evident in joint knowledge products, such as UNDP contributions to the United Nations-World Bank Pathways to Peace report.[88] UNDP contributed to the European Union, United Nations and Word Bank Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments, co-leading assessments in several countries.[89] UNDP is the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law and actively engages in the partnership to support national human rights institutions with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCHR) under the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, and the Universal Periodic Review with OHCHR.

FIGURE 18. Performance score for UNDP contribution to global policy and advocacy
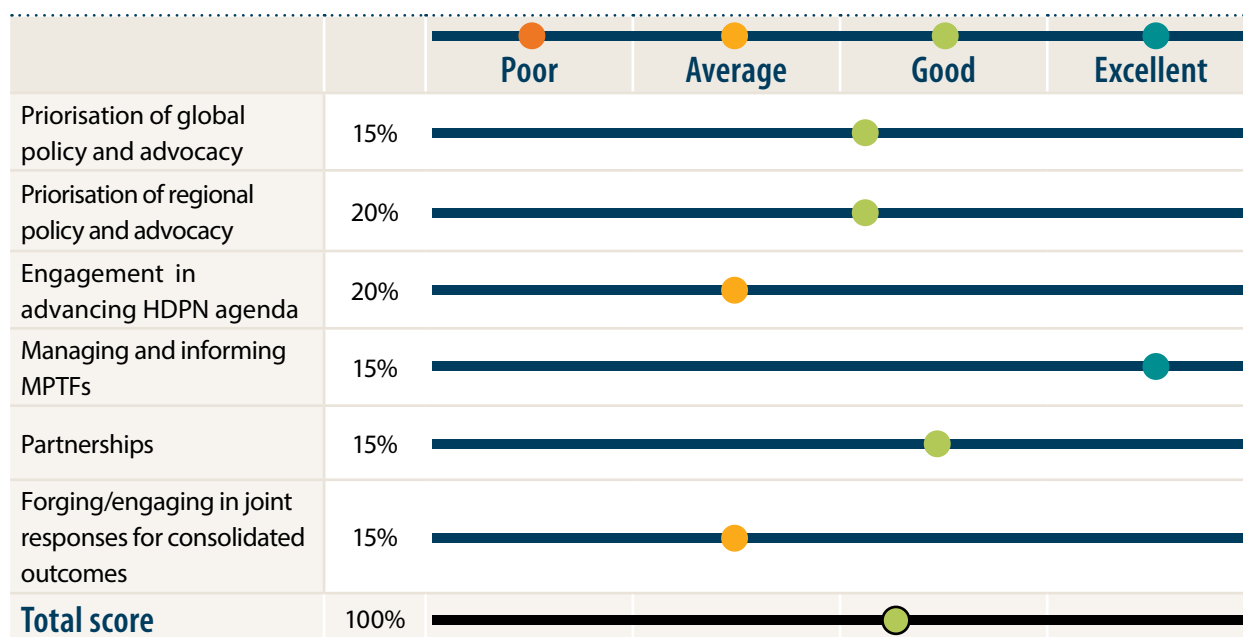
Source: IEO analysis

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88   World Bank (2018), Pathways to Peace.
89   For example, co-led assessments in Nigeria, CAR, Cameroon, and engaged in joint assessments in Liberia and Zimbabwe.

UNDP is an active member of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility of the DAC, ensuring the engagement of conflict-affected countries in network activities and sharing best practices on nexus programming with members. When completed, UNDP promotion of the guidance on collective outcomes of the common Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration and the International Network on Conflict and Stability has considerable potential to strengthen nexus efforts, by promoting a common understanding of the concept and its application among donors.

The overall performance score of UNDP in global policy and advocacy engagement is above average (See Figure 18). UNDP performance was comparatively better in establishing partnerships and in MDTFs, and lower in forging partnerships for joint responses (see Annex 6 for scoring methodology).

Despite inter-agency efforts, challenges remain in addressing peace across the HDPN trio and enabling more concrete solutions for a stronger humanitarian-development interface. At global level, more formal processes are required to pursue interface issues more strategically. While important, the UNDP role in advocating for the implementation of global commitments to the nexus approach, particularly within the United Nations system, does not match the urgency of the issue. Almost two decades after its conceptualization, HDPN has gathered momentum since the adoption of Agenda 2030, promoting shifts in the approaches of agencies and informing funding decisions. But the pace of change is slow. International recognition of the importance of HDPN is yet to be seen in practice.

There is an increasing trend of a prolonged humanitarian phase in crises which, beyond a certain point, does not contribute to the peacebuilding agenda. The average inter-agency humanitarian appeal now lasts seven years, an increase of nearly 400 percent in the past decade, and about 80 percent of funding to the United Nations system is for humanitarian efforts.[90] The issue is not only about funding, but also the time lost for peace and development which cannot be fully pursued during a humanitarian phase, particularly in the current context where HDPN is yet to gain momentum. For agencies working on development and peacebuilding, given that the most intractable drivers of conflict need development and peace solutions, this further underpins the need for close collaboration with humanitarian actors. UNDP is yet to proactively engage in global deliberations to enhance humanitarian-development collaborations within the IASC. Acceleration of the nexus agenda requires stronger thought leadership on the development side within United Nations humanitarian and peacebuilding systems and processes. It also needs closer coherence beyond the United Nations system, as over 80 percent of development finance and investments in fragile contexts comes through bilateral donors or international financial institutions without passing through the United Nations system. The nexus requires interaction with a much broader range of actors, as yet not the UNDP strategy. Although responsive to addressing nexus issues and open to collaboration, UNDP did not assert itself to claim and lead the development interface of the nexus agenda, despite being well-positioned to do so.

Regional engagements on conflict-related issues helped to drive policy discussions on the SDGs, the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) and refugees, enabling joint efforts. UNDP was credited as the first United Nations entity to link PVE with the SDG 16 agenda,[91] which contributed to the ongoing shift in how PVE is conceived and addressed by development agencies. UNDP has maintained a focus on PVE-related issues and continued its development through knowledge products, research and global and regional conferences and events.[92] A related advocacy effort in 2017, significant for its reach, is the Facebook campaign

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[90] OCHA (2019) Global Humanitarian Review.
[91] Brookings Institute (2019) Order from Chaos, The silo problem: Connecting the UN's efforts to promote sustainable development and prevent violent extremism.
[92] These include the 2016 Annual Global Meeting in Oslo, the 2019 Global Amman Forum on Measuring, Monitoring and Assessing PVE and the 2019 regional conference on PVE in the Arab States, Beyond Security Solutions.

#ExtremeLives, whereby Facebook Live interviews put a human face to extremism in Asia. The campaign explored issues of recruitment, gender and extremism and radicalization, and how people can counter extremist narratives, and reached 12 million Facebook users. UNDP also founded the Youth4peace platform, which shares knowledge and promotes youth participation in peacebuilding processes. This is a multi-stakeholder initiative with the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace, civil society and youth-led organizations. The UNDP Frontlines report was a foundational document for the United Nations system on how to invest in youth-led initiatives for PVE, with multi-country/ territory research.[93]

One area where UNDP did not consolidate its SDG global methodology has been its work furthering SDG 16 data efforts at country level. There have been significant efforts by the Oslo Governance Centre to promote SDG 16 data methodology work. The Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies (SDG 16 Alliance) is a coordinating platform for Member States, private sector and civil society organizations to work together for peace, justice and strong institutions. SDG 16 is particularly challenging in terms of data, and progress at country level is very slow. UNDP supported initiatives such as SDG Voluntary National Reviews,[94] which highlight the efforts needed to strengthen development data. UNDP is part of global efforts on SDG data, and the SDG 16 assessments need further rigour at global level to strengthen data uniformity at the country level.

Finding 7. UNDP regional initiatives in the Sahel contributed to galvanizing support to address complex and multiple crises. Given the severity of challenges in enabling sustainable solutions for peace, security and development in the Sahel, a strategic and concerted engagement on the part of UNDP is lacking.

Advocacy efforts with other agencies, such as pledging conferences and briefings in donor forums, have brought global and regional attention to the need for stabilization efforts in some conflict-affected countries in Africa. UNDP joint engagement with UNHCR in the Regional Refugee Response Plan 2019-20 for the Nigeria/ Lake Chad Basin crisis was an important step forward for stabilization. Notwithstanding such efforts, there lacked a coherent and well-coordinated response to address the drivers of multiple crises and the significant burden on host communities. The Regional Stabilization Strategy, adopted in 2018 by the Council of Ministers of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, was comprehensive and timely in addressing key challenges of the areas affected by Boko Haram, though it is too early to make observations on its implementation and outcomes. UNDP leads the governance pillar of the 2013 United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and is a founding member of the Sahel Alliance.

This technical lead role enables UNDP to convene both national and international partners around efforts to address governance capacity challenges in the Sahel. While critical in networking and inter-governmental efforts, translating the commitments of regional institutions and ministerial forums to country level continues to be a challenge.

UNDP launched the Integrated Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) for Lake Chad Basin in 2019, to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Stabilization Strategy. The RSF is modelled on the successful UNDP experience in Iraq. In Nigeria, UNDP focused its 2018 national Human Development Report on the causes and consequences of the Boko Haram-instigated conflict and violence in the region. This report is used for transboundary security advocacy purposes, and to improve programming. Such efforts are essential to more holistically and coherently address transboundary issues, and help raise UNDP profile. There are ongoing efforts to establish a

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[93]   https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/frontlines.html
[94]   In 2019, VNRs were presented by seven of the conflict-affected States assessed for this evaluation (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC, Guatemala and Palestine), See United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Voluntary National Reviews Database.

similar facility for the Liptako Gourma area (on the border between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). The success of initiatives such as the RSF depends on how partnerships are leveraged to ensure that the facility does not end up as a series of disconnected projects. Notwithstanding the significance of ongoing efforts in the Lake Chad Basin, streamlining of the strategies of different agencies would be critical to ensure a comprehensive response to complex and multiple crises.

UNDP regularly partnered with the African Union to strengthen regional policies. Examples include support to the African Union's Office of the Special Envoy on Women for implementation of the Secretary General's PVE Action Plan and to develop and roll out the Results Framework on Women, Peace and Security to fulfil commitments under UNSCR 1325. In partnership with the Special Envoy's Office, UNDP has facilitated regional consultations with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States and the East African Community on the rollout of the framework. UNDP supports the capacity of the African Union Commission, civil society, faith-based groups and Regional Economic Communities (such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Lake Chad Basin Commission and ECOWAS). The initiative also provides technical and financial support to 21 countries.

There have been efforts at regional level to integrate the risks of climate change into conflict response and prevention policies. The 2018 Climate Security Mechanism, with DPPA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), aims to improve synergies and coherence between development, climate change and peace and security efforts. The mechanism aims to promote the recognition of climate change as a root cause of conflict and more systematically integrate climate change considerations into development programming and joint risk assessments and strategies. As part of such efforts, UNDP launched a regional SDG Climate Facility in the Arab States to promote solutions and improve regional-level coordination for climate-related work with the League of Arab

States, the Arab Water Council, UNEP, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Food Programme. Given the high GEF-related engagement of UNDP, there is scope for more concrete engagement to address the climate-conflict nexus.

4.3 Economic revitalization and employment

This section analyses UNDP support to economic revitalization and inclusive growth across different typologies of conflict settings. The analysis makes a distinction between programme support and the fiduciary role.

Finding 8. Across country programmes, UNDP was consistent in its support to revive local economies and strengthen local and national plans and strategies. UNDP has an array of adaptable approaches to incorporate economic revitalization in conflict contexts. While the programme approaches are pertinent to enable medium- to long-term change processes for economic revitalization, their application has been inconsistent. Evidence on how households or communities can build resilience to conflict and humanitarian crises through resilient livelihoods is light.

In both strategic plans, economic recovery and revitalization cut across the different areas of support. UNDP support primarily comprised short-term emergency employment (as part of infrastructure rehabilitation and local works and labour-intensive cash-for-work jobs), employment (skills development, job placements, grants and microfinance development for micro, small and medium enterprise [MSME]), and sustainable livelihoods (agricultural production and value chains and renewable energy for livelihoods). UNDP also supported institutional and policy processes for economic recovery and poverty reduction, to improve planning and financing mechanisms for safety nets like public works schemes. In countries with stabilization programmes, economic revitalization comprised a small component, and predominantly focused on short-term employment in infrastructure rehabilitation. Although not
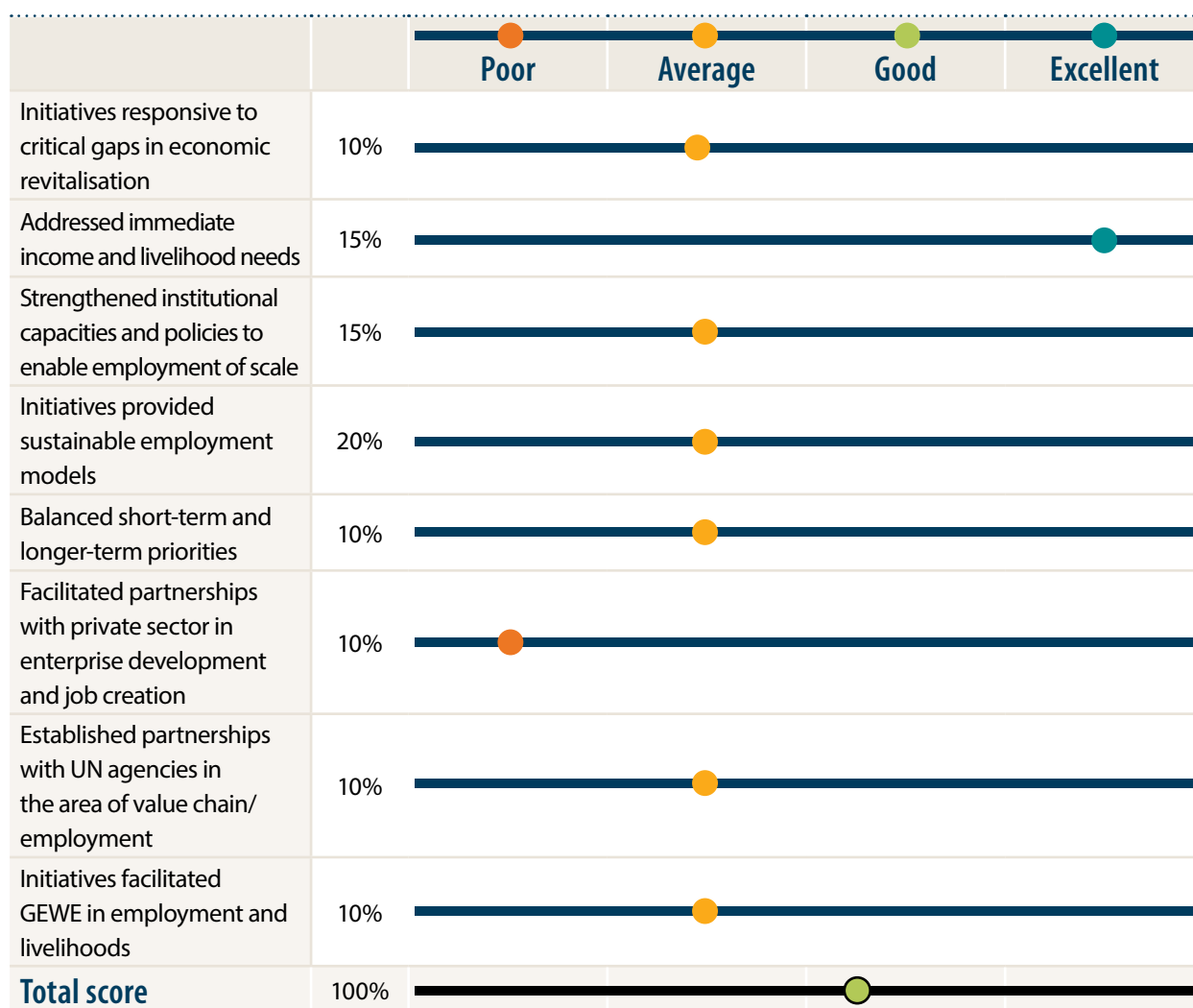
an extensive area of support, UNDP provided macroeconomic policy support in post-conflict contexts. Overall expenditure for economic revitalization and inclusive growth for the period 2015-2019 was less than $1 billion of the total $4.9 billion spent on economic revitalization and basic services. UNDP used different approaches in its economic revitalization support, either oriented towards stabilization or resilience of livelihoods.

Medium-term economic revitalization programmes at subnational level provided opportunities for sustainable livelihoods approaches. The scale of such support is small and, in the absence of strategic linkages with government programmes and policies and interventions by other actors, had limited outcomes. In the case of localized conflict contexts such as Pakistan, Mali and Myanmar, UNDP economic recovery efforts have largely been oriented towards community-level service delivery, rather than strategic policy support to governments to design and implement new programmes and strategies. The limited scale of projects also meant that the effects were highly localized, extending to a handful of communities in a few districts.

UNDP has prioritized inclusive business and markets to integrate communities as consumers, suppliers, employees and entrepreneurs in value chains and markets. However, UNDP is yet to use its comparative advantage deriving from its country presence and credibility to scale up work in this area in conflict-affected countries. While the complexity of conflict contexts is part of the reason for slow progress, UNDP has yet to systematically prioritize support to inclusive businesses. There are well developed value chain and market facilitation initiatives in Africa, but rarely in conflict contexts. UNDP value chain interventions in post-conflict contexts are scattered and small in scale, and face challenges in balancing micro-, meso- and macro-level aspects, and thus achieve limited results. To be successful, inclusive market development initiatives need to operate at different levels, linking small-scale producers, policy, infrastructure and incentives. There were limitations in combining downstream support with upstream policy and fiscal incentive components, which is central to the sustainable development of value chains in key sectors. Also, in most cases, value chain initiatives at different levels were pursued in isolation or parallel, and lacked proper sequencing to achieve results. This requires well-formulated and -resourced sector-level strategies and action plans. It has been difficult for UNDP to link its interventions through a well-coordinated strategy spanning the full range of value chains. Too many actors are involved in enterprise development in conflict contexts, with multiple donors and numerous implementation arrangements. UNDP is yet to find its niche, both in providing viable programme models for use by various actors, or facilitating a comprehensive response by connecting different actors.

		Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Initiatives responsive to critical gaps in economic revitalisation	10%		●		
Addressed immediate income and livelihood needs	15%				●
Strengthened institutional capacities and policies to enable employment of scale	15%		●		
Initiatives provided sustainable employment models	20%		●		
Balanced short-term and longer-term priorities	10%		●		
Facilitated partnerships with private sector in enterprise development and job creation	10%	●			
Established partnerships with UN agencies in the area of value chain/employment	10%		●		
Initiatives facilitated GEWE in employment and livelihoods	10%		●		
Total score	100%			● (between Average and Good)	

Source: IEO analysis

Rehabilitation of social infrastructure, predominantly labour-intensive, provided emergency employment through cash-for-work, delivering much needed temporary employment opportunities. However, in transitioning from short-term emergency employment to support for medium- to long-term employment, the scale of UNDP interventions was markedly reduced. For example, in CAR and Libya, only 14 and 6 percent respectively of those targeted through emergency employment were supported for medium- to long-term employment and livelihood development.[95] In stabilization programmes, the number of temporary jobs was often larger, though without linkages to medium-term livelihood options. In the majority of conflict-affected countries, there was a lack of sustained effort to continue programmes after the initial short-term employment response phase, to support an enabling environment for longer-term employment creation at scale. Even when comprehensive longer-term solutions were pursued, avenues for ensuring scalability, such as de-risking the policy space for engaging the private sector, were not prioritized. Furthermore, in the case of value chain interventions, partnerships are crucial, as UNDP cannot support the full range of a value chain. As

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95   UNDP (2017) Evaluation Finale Cadre Strategique De Cooperation.
      UNDP (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP's Strengthening Local Capacity for Resilience and Recovery Project in Libya.

evaluations from the last eight years highlight, this has been a persistent issue for UNDP. Efforts remain uneven in forging strategic partnerships, reducing duplication of efforts and building on complementarities with key partners such as the ILO, amongst others. The 3x6 approach was developed by UNDP as a livelihood resilience programme model, to support the creation of sustainable livelihoods to help build the resilience of affected communities and facilitate a rapid return to sustainable development pathways.

The 3x6 approach includes support for generating immediate income, followed by measures to inject capital into the local economy and provide opportunities for diversified livelihoods. This approach was used regularly in different conflict contexts such as Iraq, CAR, DRC and Yemen. The growth and sustainability of businesses developed through the 3X6 approach were constrained by lack of access to credit or finance. In conflict settings where investment risk is high, UNDP supported microfinance institutions, or linked value chain groups with village savings and loans associations.[96] However, such initiatives, when supported for a short duration, reduced sustainable outcomes. There was not a sustained focus on measures to address constraints in the local economy, such as market linkages and access to markets and diversified livelihoods. In contexts where UNDP applied the Area-based Development approach, integrated programming could not always be facilitated. For example, in Afghanistan, the National Area-Based Development Programme, while investing heavily in much-needed local infrastructure development, made little contribution to reducing poverty or increasing livelihood opportunities. Neither did UNDP adequately invest in natural resource management or disaster risk management, which are crucial to address the vulnerability of communities.[97]

Economic revitalization efforts were based on an integrated approach, incorporating social cohesion, peacebuilding, environment and renewable energy objectives. Livelihoods were used as an entry point to improve community social cohesion and facilitate

dialogue to promote peace, security and development. In CAR and DRC there was evidence of more direct efforts to integrate economic revitalization, social cohesion and peace through the application of the 3X6 plus approach. This was initially through emergency employment initiatives to build community infrastructure, and later through support to MSME development. These efforts facilitated processes for armed groups to return to regular economic activities, but sustainability was precarious.[98] Such examples also demonstrate the importance of integrated approaches in large stabilization programmes.

Considering UNDP commitment to an inclusive business and markets approach, private sector engagement in conflict-affected countries is in early stages. At the corporate policy level, there has been a drive for private sector development and engagement, but this has not translated into programming support. Conflict contexts require a catalytic impetus given the lack of enabling environment for private sector investment. Notwithstanding some transformative examples of facilitation of private sector investments, such as in Sudan (see Box 2), private sector collaboration was limited, even though several interventions of UNDP had potential for such collaboration. UNDP facilitated private sector linkages for MSME support, which included initial capital investment, business incubation and in some cases marketing and network development, but the scope of such engagement was often limited. For example, in Libya, UNDP worked with the Tatweer Entrepreneurship Campus to provide training on business development (including web and app creation) and incubation, as well as capital funding for start-ups. But only a small number of grants were provided,[99] and in the absence of programme collaborations this could not be further pursued or scaled up. UNDP focused on easy to accomplish tasks, such as expo events and workshops to support business development and networking opportunities. While such initiatives kept up momentum and enabled networking and information sharing, efforts are yet to be made to address fundamental challenges for private sector investment.

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96   UNDP (2018) Evaluation of Darfur Livelihood Recovery Project.
97   UNDP (2020) Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
98   UNDP (2017) Evaluation of the Country Programme Document, CAR.
99   UNDP (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP's Strengthening Local Capacity for Resilience and Recovery Project in Libya.

The performance score for UNDP contribution to economic revitalization and inclusive growth is between average and good. As shown in Figure 19, UNDP scored high for addressing immediate income and livelihood needs, while the score was average for balancing short- and long-term priorities (see Annex 6 for scoring methodology). Both short- and long-term programmes are necessary for effective programmes. Only short-term interventions had outcomes for promoting sustainable livelihoods, which were limited.

UNDP corporate policies acknowledge the importance and urgency of youth employment, particularly in conflict contexts. The strategic plans appropriately emphasized the need for the inclusion of youth - who are deprived of income, education, voice and health - through access to development opportunities. One of the areas highlighted in the first UNDP Youth Strategy (2014-2017) was increased economic empowerment.[100] Despite this recognition, UNDP efforts tended to be short-term, small-scale, stand-alone and lacking integration with sectoral strategies. Lack of partnerships further undermined the UNDP contribution to youth employment. Reconstruction projects provided youth employment and skills opportunities. Youth were targeted for cash-for-work, given their vulnerability to negative coping mechanisms. This provided short-term income, kept them constructively engaged in the reconstruction of their communities, and ensured their participation in complementary peacebuilding and reconciliation. However, UNDP programmes did not address huge unemployment among youth in conflict-affected countries. Although UNDP participated in the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, and co-chairs the sub-working group on protection of rights, civic engagement and political inclusion with UN-Habitat, this did not translate into collaboration with United Nations agencies at country level. Partnerships with ILO on vocational training for youth, or with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for value chain improvement, were *ad hoc*, small-scale and short-term, resulting in youth development programmes that were unsustainable.

Economic recovery and revitalization interventions paid specific attention to including women as beneficiaries, without explicitly seeking to address the differential needs of women and men. Temporary work involved debris removal, infrastructure rehabilitation and/or solid waste management, which are not preferred by women in some contexts. While there were some positive outcomes, for example in Afghanistan, the success of UNDP efforts to promote women's engagement in microenterprise development varied in enabling sustained engagement in Libya, Iraq, Syria, South Sudan and Somalia. Lack of gender and conflict sensitivity analysis undermined efforts in microenterprise development support for women.[101] Across a range of contexts where cultural constraints restrict women's participation in economic activities, enterprise development initiatives did not address the underpinning challenges of women's work and livelihood preferences, or the additional impact of security concerns. Gender stereotyping of options for men and women was often unproductive. Conflict and conflict-sensitivity analysis were not usually the basis for programme decision-making and design. Often humanitarian needs assessments are used to inform programming in recovery phase, leading to suboptimal programme decisions rather than actionable insights on how to respond to an evolving situation. In addition, support to enterprise development in conflict settings was not based on good market analysis, which is critical in designing economically viable enterprises. Most enterprises supported were supply- and not demand-driven. This was often associated with a lack of capacity within UNDP offices to conduct such analysis.

The breadth of UNDP economic revitalization programming required strong programmatic partnerships to inform national programmes. There is scope for more programmatic partnerships in the area of agriculture value chains and enterprise development. There are several multilateral actors in the inclusive growth and economic revitalization space, including United Nations agencies, some of whom (such as FAO, ILO or the United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO]) have specialized expertise in areas including

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[100]   UNDP (2014) UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017.
[101]   For example, UNDP (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP's Strengthening Local Capacity for Resilience and Recovery Project in Libya.

agricultural value chains, enterprise development, vocational training and trade. While in several cases UNDP partnered with United Nations agencies such as FAO and ILO, these partnerships were not often leveraged to their potential, due to a lack of common strategies or willingness to build on comparative advantage and share credit. The UNDP partnership with the World Bank is notable, and there is scope for strategic engagement beyond this implementation partnership. The corporate-level Joint Framework of Action between UNDP and ILO for the COVID-19 response points to the potential of such engagement in other crisis contexts.

Finding 9. When humanitarian and development programmes were simultaneously pursued they had the potential to address significant drivers of economic revitalization and peace in conflict contexts.

UNDP has a comparative advantage in its ability and mandate to work across different government ministries, distinguishing it from specialized agencies with a more sectoral focus. Where integrated livelihoods approaches were pursued as part of environment, energy and climate change adaptation initiatives at community level these had tangible outcomes. Examples such as micro hydro-generators in Haiti, or wind and solar energy for crop irrigation in Sudan (see Box 2), significantly improved the livelihoods of communities. UNDP integration efforts in environment and renewable energy were evident throughout fragile and conflict contexts.

In Sudan, UNDP has played a lead role in translating HDPN on the ground. UNDP adopted a people- and community-centric approach, embedding livelihoods, economic recovery and stabilization components into humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes, alongside efforts to revive local development institutions for basic service delivery. There are economic revitalization and livelihoods interventions across flagship programmes, namely the Darfur Livelihoods Recovery Programme, the Darfur Community Stabilization Programme and the Community Security and Stabilization Programme. The success of these initiatives has enabled UNDP to encourage donors to revisit their rationale for not providing assistance to livelihoods promotion and create an enabling environment for longer-term development linkages in Sudan (See Box 2).

BOX 2. Addressing poverty-conflict linkages in Sudan through persistent and innovative community engagement

UNDP support to Sudan's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Strategy addresses poverty-conflict linkages through transformative community livelihood initiatives (involving youth, ex-combatants and other groups). The results have been significant, with over 55,000 fighters disarmed and 44,000 rehabilitated, 80,000 weapons collected, and 100 agriculture cooperatives supported with economic revitalization packages. More than 210 communities are actively engaged in community-based reconciliation, management of community infrastructure and implementation of customary mediation and reconciliation practices for peace and stability. The impact is far beyond these results in terms of the number of people whose lives have been normalized, for example, through the resumption of small trade, transport services, or reopening of schools. Women are involved extensively in these initiatives in the spirit of UNSCR 1325, and account for more than 40 percent of membership of the community structures.

An example of the transformative use of vertical funds to catalyze livelihood outcomes is the initiative providing solar-powered pumps for groundwater irrigation. Besides providing a substitute for fossil fuels and emissions, the programme has expanded agricultural livelihoods, including the addition of a second (summer) cropping cycle in rainwater-dependent areas. An implementation ecosystem has also been created, to facilitate the installation and maintenance of the systems. The impacts on food security and livelihoods have been significant, and the initiative is being scaled up in all rain-dependent areas of Sudan. To give farmers easy access to financing for the solar pumps, a Photovoltaic Fund has been instituted, in a tie-up with financial institutions and microfinance organizations. Solar energy has also been deployed in the healthcare service sector in Darfur.

A key feature of the UNDP approach has been the nurturing of traditional and customary institutions to ensure social cohesion and confidence among conflicting communities. Community management committees are recognized as model local institutions and have filled a vacuum in the absence of functioning state institutions in conflict-affected regions. Over time, there has been increasing government recognition of community management committees as local institutional structures for settling interpersonal and inter-group disputes and resolving conflicts through mediation and dialogue.

Major factors in the success of economic revitalization initiatives in Sudan have been the close engagement of the community in designing initiatives, and community ownership of assets that resulted in their good upkeep and condition, in contrast to many less successful interventions by other agencies. UNDP has a large field presence, which ensured effective implementation and timely troubleshooting.

Source: UNDP Support to poverty reduction in least developed countries

All flagship programmes in Sudan implement different degrees of value chain interventions, focusing on market linkages, product value addition, and access to finance and services. Some of these initiatives have secured private sector involvement in community-initiated ventures. UNDP also made good use of the poverty-environment nexus to access GEF funds to build a pipeline of innovative 'environment-linked' solutions to livelihoods and poverty reduction. The GEF portfolio has increased from less than $1 million to more than $60 million in two programme cycles, and has played a vital role in UNDP poverty reduction programming. Among the most innovative is a solar power initiative that, as well as substituting fossil fuels and reducing emissions, has expanded agricultural livelihoods, including the addition of a second cropping cycle in rainwater dependent areas (see Box 2).

4.4 Restoration and strengthening basic services

Basic services and infrastructure-related initiatives cut across UNDP support to economic revitalization, local development and governance. This section analyses UNDP service delivery and infrastructure support under various streams of activity.

Finding 10. UNDP support to infrastructure restoration, ranging from large stabilization programmes to small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation, contributed to the operationalization of basic services. UNDP comparative advantage lies in its integrated approach to the restoration of basic services, connecting reconstruction with recovery, development and peacebuilding.

Key areas of infrastructure support included the rehabilitation of public buildings, livelihoods infrastructure (construction of markets, irrigation and transport networks), energy infrastructure (restoration of electricity and renewable sources of energy), and social services (construction of health centres, schools and wells). Besides

small- to medium-scale infrastructure rehabilitation support across conflict-affected countries, the UNDP portfolio includes large-scale infrastructure projects in post-conflict contexts, for example in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. These are undertaken to restore destroyed infrastructure and accelerate basic services as part of stabilization or early recovery interventions. Overall expenditure on support to the restoration of basic services and related infrastructure for 2014–2019 was over $3 billion, of a total $4.5 billion for economic revitalization and basic services.

Reconstruction efforts in post-conflict contexts delivered more than physical infrastructure, strengthening community and national recovery efforts and helping to reduce tensions. Lack of services is one of the underlying causes of conflict. UNDP efforts to restore basic services including electricity, water and food security (through water provision) helped to address some of the root causes of conflict and reduce tensions around absent or scarce resources. This was especially notable in terms of access to water in dry and drought prone areas, where UNDP efforts to ensure potable water, irrigation and water conservation increased availability. Evaluations from Myanmar, Eritrea, Sudan and Yemen showed that this increased the area under cultivation and allowed for diversification of crops and improved production, benefiting local populations.[102] Scaling up these efforts and ensuring that they are maintained are key challenges given the limited level of community resources and the size of the need.

A development approach to the restoration of infrastructure has resulted in a substantial ripple effect for recovery across sectors. Support to debris removal cleared access for emergency services and provided safer and healthier spaces, as well as emergency employment. Removing the explosive remnants of war and demining opened access to transport corridors and markets, increased public safety and reduced health hazards. Solid

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102   UNDP Myanmar, Addressing Climate Change Risks on Water Resources and Food Security in Dry Zone of Myanmar, Terminal Evaluation,; UNDP Eritrea, Final Evaluation, UNDP Eritrea Country Programme Outcome 4: "Selected government institutions have the capacity to effectively and efficiently provide services to all"; USAID-funded SFD Components of Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project.

waste management was consistently supported in several conflict-affected countries, through initiatives which strengthened the capacity of local government, introduced more efficient practices and promoted recycling. In Yemen for instance, debris removal eliminated the cause of 29,000 reported cases of dengue.

Support for community and social infrastructure strengthened national efforts to improve health, education, the environment and energy. This improved health outcomes, reduced the prevalence of waterborne and communicable diseases and supported a cleaner environment. UNDP support in these cases included the restoration of public buildings, power, water and sanitation facilities.

Partnering with UNCT members such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), FAO and ILO provided technical and specialized support to strengthen the quality of services. For example, for increasing school attendance in Syria[103] and South Sudan, and facilitating girls' education in Afghanistan and Chad.[104] In large stabilization programmes such as in Iraq, the return of services to pre-war conditions facilitated the spontaneous return of around 4.2 million IDPs. UNDP provision of water for consumption and irrigation freed time for women and girls who had been fetching water from long distances in Syria, Sudan and Chad. Solar pumps provided cleaner water and improved opportunities for hygiene and small businesses in Sudan and Chad.[105]

FIGURE 20. Performance score for UNDP contribution to basic services infrastructure
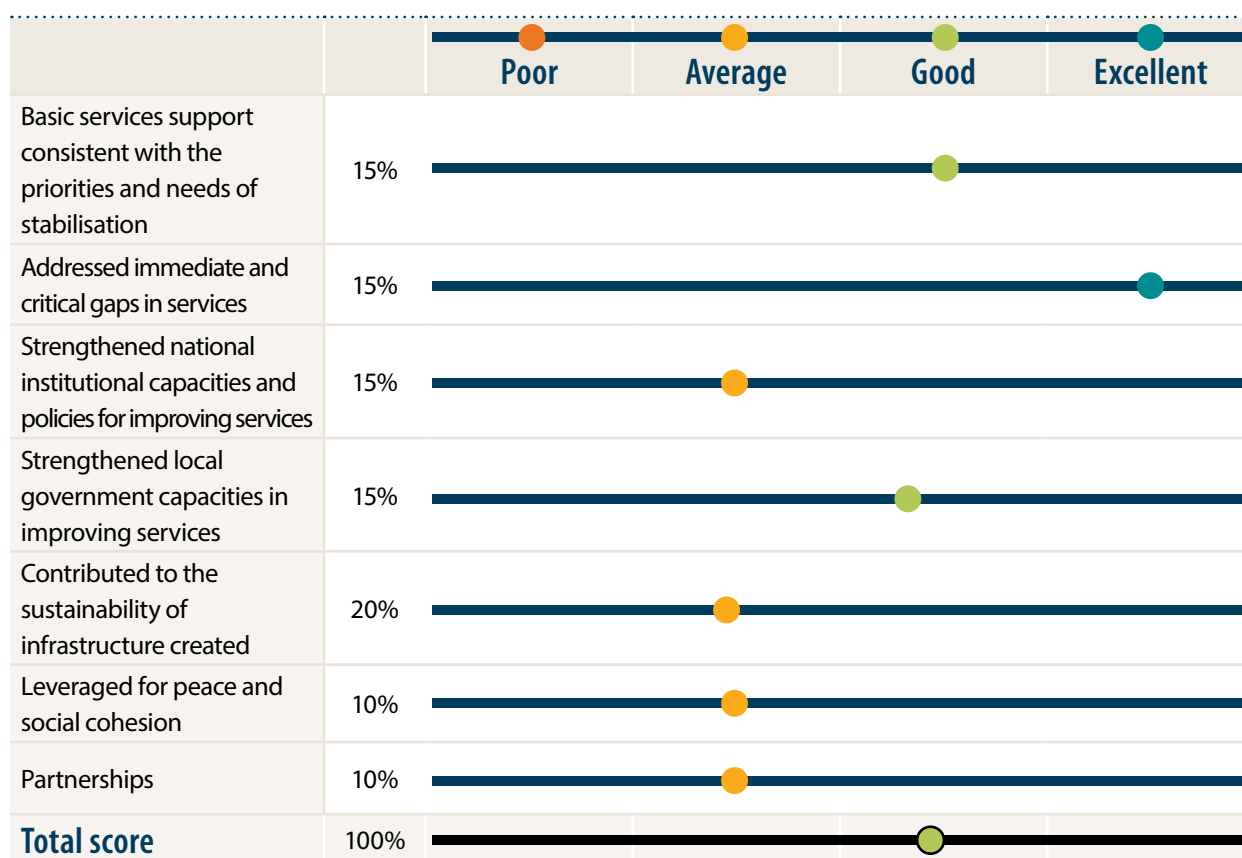
Source: IEO analysis

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[103] UNDP Syria, Outcome II Evaluation.
[104] UNDP (2016) Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme, Final Evaluation.
[105] UNDP Sudan, Project Terminal Evaluation Report: Implementing Priority Adaption Measures to Build Resilience of Rain-fed Farmer and Pastoral Communities of Sudan, Especially Women Headed Households to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change.

UNDP efforts to (re)establish energy supplies supported a critical element of the recovery process, and the extensive use of solar energy made a notable impact on the use of renewable sources in conflict-affected contexts. This was especially useful to restore or provide power quickly to areas where power grids were destroyed, or which had never had these services. This provided cost savings for users and positive outcomes for the environment. In Sudan, the provision of solar-powered water pumps and energy generation reduced the demand for diesel, saved an estimated $7.2 million in fuel costs and reduced emissions by an estimated 2.5 million total carbon dioxide (tC0$_2$).[106] Significant results were also noted in Syria, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, among others.

Maintenance of the assets created remains a critical issue, despite UNDP efforts to engage community members and local authorities. In the case of renewable energy initiatives, elements of scale, sustainability elements such as software upgrades, repairs and replacement parts for solar energy, and the safe disposal of batteries, still need attention. Unusable wells, unused facilities and non-functioning solar systems were reported in many cases, highlighting the importance of engaging and improving the capacities of local government or authorities. UNDP support for reconstruction, along with support to local planning, contributed to improving local government functioning for service provision and public works, but the extent of capacity varied widely. There were several challenges to strengthening local capacities, such as the security context, lack of human and financial resources, weak public administration capacity, lack of authority for local offices, and systemic issues such as corruption and political will. Besides, UNDP did not consistently prioritize capacity development.

As shown in Figure 20, the performance score for the UNDP contribution to basic services and infrastructure was above average. While UNDP addressed immediate and critical gaps in services

very well, performance on other parameters such as strengthening national and local capacities, linking with peace and development initiatives, establishing partnerships, and the sustainability of infrastructure created was average. In terms of leveraging peace and social cohesion, although the overall score was average, smaller infrastructure programmes better integrated social cohesion compared to larger stabilization programmes and infrastructure efforts. The analysis also shows that a stronger UNDP role at subnational level is a necessary condition for more effective programmes.

There remain challenges in the execution of infrastructure programmes, particularly in dealing with siloed, scattered and incomplete efforts in some places, and limited visibility and links with government service systems. There was insufficient attention to conflict-sensitive aspects of infrastructure, in targeting, monitoring and mitigation efforts, especially in the stabilization and early recovery context where security remains a major concern. In addition, though the design of stabilization programmes was based on in-depth conflict-sensitivity and needs assessments, these were not consistently applied for the targeting of infrastructure to be rehabilitated. This could have avoided some of the security-related problems encountered later, strengthened UNDP positioning for a catalytic role in social interaction and cohesion, and contributed towards building connections between divided communities.

UNDP is yet to leverage the potential of the private sector for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and services. Any focus on the private sector has been largely as a funder, rather than a potential investor in the service sector. At national level, large-scale public-private partnerships are not a domain expertise of UNDP, but there was considerable potential to enable subnational partnerships and private sector development processes, which UNDP is yet to utilize. In Somalia, for example, private sector provision of services is well-established, and UNDP

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[106]   UNDP Sudan (2018) Outcome Evaluation in the Practice of Environment and Energy Outcome Evaluation , UNDP Sudan CPD 2013 – 2017, Final Report.

engagement in the promotion of private sector investment in the renewable energy sector, while important, missed several untapped opportunities.

The UNDP performance score for contribution to basic services and related infrastructure is above average (see Figure 20). With a high score for addressing immediate and critical gaps in services overall, performance on other parameters such as strengthening national and local capacities, the sustainability of assets created and partnerships, has been average. UNDP had better success in forging funding partnerships, but challenges in programmatic partnerships and private sector engagement remain, and are yet to be addressed.

Finding 11. Partnerships expanded UNDP reach and contribution to sustainable outcomes in reconstruction and service provision.

One of the UNDP comparative advantages in post-conflict contexts is its long-term presence within countries and existing relationships with national and local actors, institutions and governments that it can use to facilitate its efforts for reconstruction and service delivery. UNDP is also able to work through existing structures and agreements with other United Nations agencies and peacekeeping and special political missions to provide joint responses and programming. This allows for a more comprehensive and predictable solution to infrastructure and service needs, such as in health, education, demining and energy. These partnerships facilitate quick and effective responses that are appropriate to the needs of the country, avoid duplication of efforts and work with and/or transfer responsibilities to local officials and government.

The partnership with the World Bank in Yemen enabled the restoration of basic services, supported community-level rehabilitation needs and pursued resilience approaches. The UNDP programme partnership with the European Union, especially in the Sahel and Horn of Africa region, resulted in European Union funding for several UNDP infrastructure projects as well as European Union programmes that complement UNDP efforts. This includes the European Union Emergency Trust Fund

for Stability and Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa, which includes a UNDP-implemented component for infrastructure. At policy and global coordination level, UNDP is a member of the Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership, which promotes and supports integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure planning and development, and the recognition of the centrality of infrastructure to achieving the SDGs. UNDP is yet to go beyond the programme implementation role in partnerships, and opportunities for longer-term programmatic collaboration remain untapped.

Finding 12. Community infrastructure and service projects were used as a tangible symbol to promote peace and as a means to strengthen community participation in the rebuilding and reconciliation of their communities.

The importance of the infrastructure-peace dividend was evident across the spectrum of UNDP efforts, including promoting the reintegration of IDPs and ex-combatants. In many places, UNDP supported community mechanisms such as user committees to prioritize reconstruction efforts and manage assets. This was an indirect way of engaging communities in highly sensitive topics, as the primary motivation for most participants (at least initially) was improving service delivery. For example, in Darfur these interactions were especially useful to reduce potential conflict around the use of scarce resources, such as water, that could aggravate intercommunal conflict and lead to violence. The reconstruction process was an effective entry point for social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. While there are examples of community-level successes, opportunities to enable linkages with peacebuilding initiatives were not fully used. Community interactions and processes were most effective when done within a specific social cohesion framework or peacebuilding programme to address the root causes of conflicts, but opportunities to enable this were missed. Disconnected social cohesion efforts did not result in a critical mass to enable change processes for social cohesion.

UNDP was effective in providing the local infrastructure needed for public administrators to return and fill the vacuum resulting from conflict, for example in Mali and CAR. Where local administrators were able to remain and work, this did lead to an affirmation of State authority evidenced by the increased number of public service requests received. The evaluation of efforts in DRC illustrated the gradual return of trust and the social compact between the government and people.[107] A lack of close collaboration with peacekeeping operations to address continuing security concerns in these contexts undermined the efficacy of some initiatives, for example, impacting the continued presence of the administration in conflict-affected areas.

The UNDP integrated approach is designed to improve outcomes and their sustainability, but there were limitations in putting this into practice, including contextual and programming factors. This required a longer-term approach, which could not be ensured in most early recovery and stabilization programmes (for example in Haiti, Iraq, Guatemala, Libya or DRC). Sustainability issues were found across all programmes, although most notably in early recovery and immediate stabilization programmes which did not fully complete all of the rehabilitation work and/or lacked connections with government or other agencies for maintenance and sustainability (for example in Iraq and Libya). UNDP has been addressing this issue in recent programme design, to reflect lessons learned over the past decade. These are better grounded in integrated programmatic efforts that use a more concentrated area-based approach and more frequent conflict/ risk assessments and vulnerability mapping to identify and mitigate conflict vulnerabilities.

4.5 Stabilization programmes

Finding 13. UNDP played a major role in the establishment and successful management of large stabilization facilities and enabled the restoration of services in highly risky environments. This has served to create a clear niche for UNDP in complex post-conflict responses.

Since 2015, UNDP has managed one of its largest single programmes, the Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS) in Iraq. Budgeted at $1.3 billion over its duration, the programme dwarfed most other UNDP work on conflict. FFS was designed to help the Iraqi Government rapidly restore State authority and presence to areas liberated from the Islamic State. FFS was supplemented by the (also extensive) Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme (ICRRP), worth $183.3 million since 2014. As the principal vehicles of the Government and international community for the delivery of immediate post-conflict development assistance in newly liberated areas, the FFS and ICRRP were successful in delivering significant results to a large population in a highly risky environment. They achieved intended objectives in large measure by facilitating the spontaneous return of displaced populations.

The programmes worked with the Iraqi central and provincial governments to undertake planning, organise mine and rubble clearance, reconstruct government infrastructure and basic services, and provide livelihoods to enable IDP return. Smaller elements of the programme also supported social cohesion. By all accounts, UNDP gained recognition from donors and the Iraqi authorities for the way it designed and ran the massive effort, in a very short timescale, with tangible positive results both in terms of building public trust and supporting vulnerable and traumatized populations. Some of the critical factors that enabled rapid implementation included: strong national ownership at federal and provincial levels; a simple implementation modality by a single implementer; a well-conceptualized operations framework where the stabilization programme had autonomy; and strong political and military commitment from international partners.

Notwithstanding their significant outcomes, successful elements of FFS and ICRRP have risked being translated into weaknesses. Despite government ownership, the Iraqi Government has been slow to fund and deploy staff to populate the governance structures (e.g. teachers, doctors and other government staff) and has

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107   UNDP DRC, Evaluation Finale du Projet Réponse rapide pour la cohésion sociale et la relance économique dans les provinces du Sud Kivu et de l'Ituri en République Démocratique du Congo.

not yet met its obligations for maintenance funding for reconstructed infrastructure. Furthermore, while small projects relating to social cohesion were carried out, these were not prioritized by the programme and not systematically coordinated with work on infrastructure. These two tendencies were perhaps inevitable flip sides of a programme focused on rapid physical project delivery, but do raise questions over the sustainability of impact.

The Iraq experience has come to be emblematic of UNDP work on stabilization, and the model has been exported to a wide variety of contexts and modalities. Stabilization has emerged as a concept for time-bound and geographically-focused work, planned with local authorities and communities to win the population to the side of government and provide for immediate needs. While not on the same scale, UNDP has used the stabilization approach in other contexts. In Somalia, Libya, Yemen, the Lake Chad region and Mali, context allowed for the development of similar models, albeit on much smaller scales and without such a heavy infrastructure component, though the nature of UNDP engagement varied.

In Somalia, UNDP Support to Stabilization (S2S) was part of a joint Somali Government and international partner effort to bring areas liberated from al-Shabaab back to the State, consolidate security gains and build trust in the Government. S2S focused on building the capacity of federal and state governments to plan and manage stabilization activities. Working through the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, S2S used the National Implementation Modality to build the capacity of Somali authorities, who were struggling to coordinate and integrate a wide range of civil and military stabilization activities by diverse national, local and international actors. This model meant that UNDP took more of a backroom approach, leaving the funding and delivery of stabilization projects on the ground to others. In Mali, UNDP support to the extension of State authority to the north of the country, partially occupied by insurgents, involved a more extensive role on the ground, supporting the refurbishment of government buildings and local development initiatives. In Yemen, as the implementing agency, UNDP was extensively

involved in the early recovery programme as well as in the establishment of the Yemen Peace Support Facility in 2019. The Peace Support Facility, made possible by the Stockholm agreement for access to Hodeidah port, was specifically designed to work *on* the conflict, not just *in* conflict, and to build confidence at local level through small project interventions. It also pioneered approaches to conflict-analysis informed adaptive management.

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BOX 3. Learning and adapting on stabilization

Rapid learning and adaptation is important for work in crisis environments, as seen in UNDP stabilization work. UNDP had been involved for many years in aspects of stabilization programming in a range of contexts, but the UNDP stabilization programme in Iraq made such work an important dimension of UNDP portfolio. This programme sought to help restore government authority to "liberated" areas after 2015 and, in response to conflicts in Yemen, Libya, Somalia and the Sahel, UNDP made explicit efforts to export the model. Where the challenge was similar, i.e. supporting the restoration of State authority in the face of insurgents, a similar model of working through national and local authorities could be applied, as in the Lake Chad region and Somalia. However, in Libya and Yemen there was no central State authority to support and no areas "liberated" from insurgents. Hence, UNDP adapted the stabilization model and focused on working at the local level, addressing local conflict drivers and providing bespoke sets of programmatic interventions at a fairly small scale. In both cases, it took UNDP some time to adapt the Iraq model and design context-specific interventions but, in the last couple of years, programmes have moved in the right direction.

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UNDP envisaged short- and longer-term stabilization models, though the latter are yet to manifest in practice. UNDP had limitations in the coordination of different streams of stabilization support in Libya, and in establishing synergies with other programmes in the Lake Chad Basin (although the programme is still in early stages). Given the significant challenges in the Lake Chad Basin, synergies with other programmes of UNDP and other agencies are critical to enable a comprehensive response. In Libya, one of the two stabilization programmes aims to strengthen the governance process, while the other was entirely on infrastructure rehabilitation. Although the two programmes were seeking to achieve very similar things, coordination was weak, and the infrastructure

work was not sufficiently conflict-sensitive.[108] Lack of synergy between the two programmes could reduce the outcomes for both.

4.6 Strengthening institutional capacities and rule of law

This section analyses the UNDP contribution to enhancing core governance functions. This includes support to public administration capacities (institutional structures, processes and capacities at the national level, local governance, civil service, accountability and transparency), rule of law (justice sector, police and security sector reform), and democratic political process (inclusive political processes such as elections, parliament, civil society and human rights institutions). The overall performance score for the UNDP contribution to core governance functions is presented in Figure 21.

Public administration and inclusive governance

Finding 14. UNDP made extensive contributions to strengthening government capacities in conflict-affected countries, to advance reforms, deliver services and engage citizens, in ways that increased the responsiveness and accountability of institutions. Lack of longer-term engagement in key areas of core governance functions reduced the UNDP contribution to promoting fundamental institutional change processes.

A central UNDP programme assumption is that strong and accountable institutions, able to promote inclusive economic growth and social cohesion, are central to both development and lasting peace. The 2018-21 Strategic Plan set the framework for a more integrated approach to governance, albeit recognising that there may be particular approaches and modalities more appropriate for conflict or crisis settings. UNDP has worked on a fairly consistent set of governance areas over the years, focusing on strengthening core governance functions and rule of law, promoting
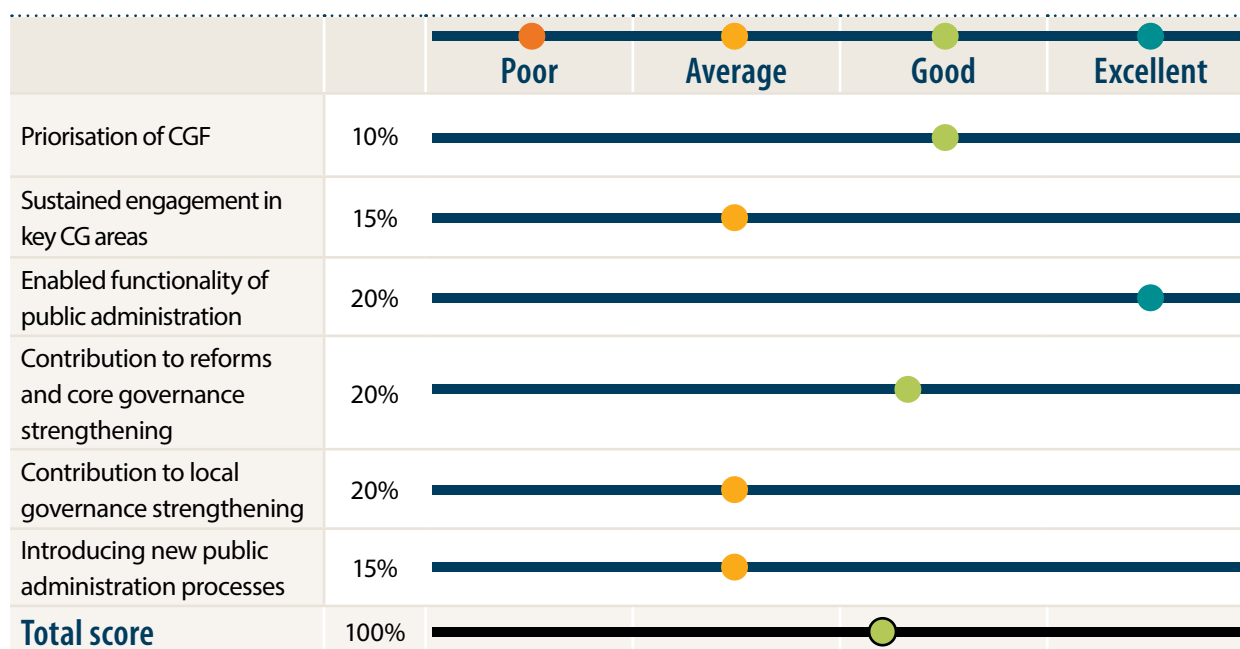
democratic governance, enhancing accountability and transparency, and supporting measures to consolidate the rights of vulnerable populations.

UNDP demonstrated adaptability in supporting the governance agenda in different contexts, carrying out interventions through various modalities. The UNDP role has varied from implementing fairly small, discrete projects such as security sector reform or the parliamentary project in Iraq, to running a countrywide field programme on local governance jointly with other United Nations agencies in Somalia, or managing a very large MDTF complemented by a technical assistance facility, LOTFA, in Afghanistan. Key assets in UNDP contributions were its long-standing national partnerships and common approaches that enabled the sharing of lessons between countries.

UNDP programmes have supported national governments and local authorities to build structures for local planning and budgeting, and engaged civil society in ways that increase participation and accountability. Some of the contributions included: laying the foundations for participatory and accountable local government in Mozambique; capacity support to municipal and district councils to strengthen public oversight in Afghanistan; and linking the Government's overall peace and reconciliation strategy to local governance processes in Mali. A common issue across countries is the lack of an enabling political and policy environment for more technical engagement on local governance. Progress was often constrained by the lack of a framework to link local development interventions to local governance processes. UNDP, though successful in building local capacity, lacked a coherent approach to local governance. While the reform trajectories of conflict-affected countries vary, the complexity of the public administration agenda requires consistent support as well as political economy tools to enable UNDP and partners to find ways to accelerate reform processes and adapt to changing dynamics.

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[108]   UNDP (2018) The Stabilization Facility for Libya: An independent strategic and operational review.
    A Mid-Term Review of the Resilience programme stressed a number of steps to be taken to ensure the programme was run in a conflict-sensitive manner.
    UNDP (2019) Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP´s Strengthening Local Capacity for Resilience and Recovery Project in Libya.

		Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Priorisation of CGF	10%			Good	
Sustained engagement in key CG areas	15%		Average		
Enabled functionality of public administration	20%				Excellent
Contribution to reforms and core governance strengthening	20%			Good	
Contribution to local governance strengthening	20%		Average		
Introducing new public administration processes	15%		Average		
Total score	100%			Good	

Source: IEO analysis

UNDP effectively supported capacity to enhance inclusive politics, strengthen institutional performance and support emerging federal systems. These programmes provided capacity substitution where required, as well as capacity building. For example, UNDP contributed to strengthening institutions in Ukraine, in particular for the promotion of human rights and public sector transparency, through building the capacity of the Office of the Ombudsperson.

Given the impetus towards joint initiatives within the United Nations system and with United Nations missions, there exist many country-level partnerships and some joint programmes in areas such as local governance, rule of law, and transition. Somalia provides examples of mixed success. The Joint Programme on Local Governance was successful in bringing together donors, United Nations agencies and Somali Government partners to deliver subnational governance capacity building. The Joint Rule of Law project, in contrast, was not successful due to an overambitious sector-wide scope that attempted to integrate too many varied United Nations and Somali actors, and the lack of a clear governance structure. Poor formulation and management of joint programmes limited UNDP impact. The project was replaced with a radically revised and slimmed down rule of law programme.

UNDP has forged partnerships at global level with relevant United Nations bodies. Notable examples include, on elections with DPPA, and on human rights with OHCHR and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Significant collaboration with the United Nations DPO was the establishment of the Global Focal Point on Rule of Law in 2012, which provides a One United Nations approach to rule of law issues. UNDP and UNHCR also have a Global Partnership on Rule of Law and Governance. Other examples include inter-agency task forces on HDPN and the United Nations Inter-agency Platform on Core Government Functions in Countries Impacted by Fragility and Conflict. Global partnerships are yet to be fully leveraged at country level. UNDP partnerships on national human rights institutions (a tri-partite partnership) and the Global Focal Point are considered good examples. Specifically, the UNDP role in support to national human rights institutions

in General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions is widely acknowledged.

Discussions for this evaluation indicated that the implications of United Nations reforms will be more evident in the area of core governance functions, although it is too early to make concrete observations on this. In the case of United Nations mission countries, the mission often takes the lead on areas otherwise led by UNDP, such as policy engagement on national development or national security plans, elections, constitutional support or rule of law. Where the mission and UNDP have forged constructive working relationships, outcomes have been enhanced. For instance, in many cases the mission took a lead on sensitive political advocacy, leaving UNDP to work as a trusted insider with the government. Missions also often mobilize a large number of technical personnel such as police and justice advisers or political analysts, who add value to UNDP efforts.[109] However, in several cases (including Somalia and Libya) there have been tensions with the mission, with UNDP feeling that its technical developmental expertise is undervalued by the short-term focus of mission advisers.

Opportunities were missed to position governance as central to the conflict prevention agenda by establishing UNDP as an evidence-driven thought leader and exploring innovation. Rightly, UNDP makes the case that work on governance institutional strengthening helps to prevent conflict and promote peace. However other entities, such as the World Bank, have gained domain recognition in this space and major donors also make extensive use of commercial or non-governmental options to implement governance programming. UNDP conceded some of its position, in part because it was doing less governance work in conflict contexts, but mainly because it did not exercise thought leadership and focus on solutions that would enable long-term governance processes.

The sustainability of governance outcomes was more difficult to achieve in least developed countries and lower-capacity policy contexts, compared to middle-income or local-level conflict contexts. In many lower-capacity, conflict-affected States, UNDP support included funding and deploying technical specialists to public sector entities. Often such technical support enabled the government's strategies to be delivered and programmes implemented. The UNDP record is mixed in building sustainable capacity, as many such technical staff positions ended when projects closed, unless there were ongoing civil service reform processes which created technical and other staff positions. There have been some positive examples where a long-term perspective enabled the institutionalization of outcomes. In Nepal, UNDP set up a peace trust fund that was moved onto the Government's budget, and UNDP technical assistance enabled the Ministry of Peace to progress interventions in a sustainable manner. In Sierra Leone, long-term UNDP support to the rule of law sector ensured that justice and police institutions became embedded in national budgets. In CAR, the special criminal court established by UNDP became part of the national government architecture. Over the past decade, UNDP has managed to move from a humanitarian modality to developing sustainable governance structures in Puntland and Somaliland. In Somaliland, the Government has seen the benefits of programmes and cost-shared from its budget.[110] A challenge for UNDP is short-term funding for complex governance issues, which is not such a constraint for agencies such as the World Bank.

A contrasting model is seen in countries like the Philippines, Colombia and Guatemala. With greater public sector revenue and higher-capacity government administrations, these Governments have used UNDP to help deliver functions in areas where they lack capacity. For the Philippines, the Government lacked the capacity to deliver at local levels. In Colombia, government authorities lacked reach to remote parts of the country. In the

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[109] In CAR, UNDP and MINUSCA worked together with PBF funding to rehabilitate eight police stations and equip three gendarmerie brigades.

[110] Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa programme is another illustration that sustainability is not just about government institutions. UNDP post-conflict interventions helped to build the capabilities of local private sector contractors and non-governmental organizations, who have since been able to provide services to the Government, for instance for construction projects.

EVALUATION OF UNDP SUPPORT TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES

Philippines, government contributions amounted to $29m in 2018 and in Colombia $45m.[111]

Finding 15. UNDP has contributed to strengthening processes for a more structured and transparent engagement of parliaments, and has effectively supported electoral processes. UNDP is yet to fully build on the comparative advantage it has in promoting democratic processes through medium- to long-term support.

In the area of inclusive governance, whether through parliamentary strengthening or electoral capacities, UNDP is one of the few agencies with the comparative advantage of earned trust and engagement of national institutions in conflict contexts. UNDP has effectively built the capacity of parliaments to pursue legislation, transparently engage citizens and promote the rights of women. UNDP support has enabled engagement between federal and subnational levels, boosted opportunities for citizen engagement (including voter education programmes, civil society forums and toll-free numbers for the public) and instituted parliamentary rules and procedures (for example, in Afghanistan, Mali, Iraq and Somalia).[112] For example, the Institutional and Capacity Support to the Parliament of Afghanistan programme successfully raised the capacity of parliamentary staff, put in place guidelines on conflict of interest, and assisted transparency. However, the outcomes of parliamentary support have often been slow, given the politically challenging nature of conflict contexts.

UNDP is widely perceived as an experienced and impartial provider of electoral support, with notable examples of effective assistance in several conflict-affected countries. Over the past decade, UNDP has moved away from supporting elections as events, and towards aiding the electoral cycle as a whole. UNDP contributions have been important:

in improving the capacity of national election commissions (for example in Mozambique, Somalia, Haiti and Afghanistan);[113] in conducting peaceful elections, whether presidential, parliamentary or municipal (in Afghanistan, Chad, Mali and Somalia); in promoting civic voter education; in supporting voter registration and results-management systems; in enabling the electoral participation of women, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups; and in addressing election violence (in Sierra Leone, Mali and Somalia). In Mali, support to elections was not only significant, but also more complex, as it entailed finalizing the census.

Election support not only comprises technical inputs but also has a political dimension. In a conflict environment, UNDP technical assistance alone is not enough to ensure that elections contribute to building peace or bringing about democratic governance.[114] On a broader level, United Nations political missions have key roles to play in political negotiations that often form part of such processes. But in non-mission countries, the limited engagement of UNDP in the advocacy dimension of elections reduced its contribution to fair elections. Project evaluations often found that UNDP did not make the best use of its comparative advantages or target the most critical elements needed for credible, inclusive elections.

Rule of law: Support to the justice sector, human rights and the security sector

Finding 16. UNDP has successfully built physical and organizational infrastructure and technical capacity, ensuring functioning police forces and courts and promoting access to justice for women. There is scope for improving the UNDP role and contribution in addressing the sustainability of institutional capacity. Where it was successful, UNDP has struggled to demonstrate the strategic impact and long-term outcomes of its rule of law support.

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[111]   UNDP (2018) Funding Compendium.

[112]   The picture is of course not universally positive and good programme design and monitoring remain crucial. UNDP supported the Mozambique Parliament to strengthen its oversight of government budgeting, but a UNDP evaluation found no evidence of impact beyond funding study tours for parliamentarians.

[113]   For example, in Haiti, UNDP support for the electoral process included technical support and services to the Provisional Electoral Council to better manage the elections and standardize systems in a very contentious and prolonged electoral process that spanned six different Councils.

[114]   For example, in Guatemala, UNDP work to strengthen the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and civic education programmes was not sufficient to increase voter turnout among women and indigenous peoples.

Support to the rule of law, human rights and the security sector is a major area of UNDP work. UNDP has funded and trained police, supported physical and functional infrastructure for police and the judiciary (buildings, vehicles, uniforms, computers and forensic equipment), trained judicial personnel and prison officers, developed legislation, regulations and procedures governing the criminal justice sector, and built the capacity of ministries and other oversight bodies. Such support, in the ECOWAS region as well as in Libya, Afghanistan, and South Sudan for example, has directly contributed to stability, increased trust in government and improved access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups such as women. Globally, corrections tend to be the neglected part of the criminal justice chain, as donors tend to be reluctant to fund such work, and the UNDP portfolio reflects this. However, UNDP did contribute where issues were extreme, for example in Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Haiti.[115] Support for traditional justice mechanisms was especially important in areas emerging from conflict. There was less success connecting traditional justice mechanisms to formal systems, a reminder of the intensely political nature of this issue in many societies.

Extending formal state justice into areas where it had previously been absent was an important contribution of UNDP. Technical and material support was provided to chief justices, ministries of justice, mobile courts, legal education programmes, legal aid groups and established traditional justice mechanisms. In several conflict-affected countries, justice sector programmes built the organizational capacity of the justice ministry and courts, undertook awareness-raising, supported legal aid clinics, and in general improved access to justice and justice for women. In Colombia, this approach succeeded in extending formal justice to 13 municipalities with a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) presence. An important feature of UNDP work was to strengthen the capacity of the Chief Justice and Ministry of Justice to inspect courts and ensure consistent standards of probity and quality.

Despite the vast scope of UNDP engagement, its strategic impact has at times been undermined by challenges of sustainability and the lack of a comprehensive strategy informed by robust political economy and conflict analysis. Concrete outcomes were undermined by a lack of sustained engagement and partnerships to build on project interventions. The problem with not adopting a comprehensive capacity development strategy, supported by rigorous results reporting, was illustrated in Mozambique. Although UNDP work on justice and human rights was fairly extensive, including constructing courthouses, updating the penal code, training personnel and raising community awareness, there was limited impact. Awareness campaigns did not effectively reach target audiences, training was not coordinated, and courthouses were plagued by poor construction and gaps in the staffing and maintenance provided by the Government. Lack of effective political economy analysis as a basis for engagement is a common feature of rule of law programmes. Outcomes were also constrained by being too narrowly focused on justice institutions, rather than addressing the structural causes of injustice in the context of a broader social cohesion approach. This broader challenge was illustrated in Haiti, where despite UNDP progress in supporting the Haitian police, the country is trapped in a negative political dynamic in which donors have rebuilt the Haitian police several times over, and UNDP technical work has been unable to address the underlying drivers of instability.

When sustained over the multiple country programme cycles, support to legal aid providers, law schools and law clinics has had a tangible and sustainable impact on access to legal aid for vulnerable populations. UNDP provided support to vulnerable and poor citizens otherwise unable to access justice. Such efforts also served to raise awareness of rights and hence the demand for legal services, and successive classes of graduating law students went on to populate public and private sector institutions, raising their capacity and creating a self-sustaining pull for further change.

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115   Globally, corrections tends to be the neglected part of the criminal justice chain as donors tend to be reluctant to fund such work.

Transitional justice is an especially sensitive area, connecting justice reform with peacebuilding. UNDP assisted in several such processes with mixed results. While technical progress was usually achieved, the political sensitivity of such mechanisms made achieving results difficult and put sustainability in question. In Guatemala, UNDP played a pivotal role in setting up the transitional justice architecture known as the Sistema Integral de Verdad, Justicia, Reparación y No Repetición (Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition), and in delivering reparations for over 15,000 victims. Similarly, UNDP facilitation of transitional justice processes in Colombia was significant. Elsewhere, UNDP was able to make progress on transitional justice support, but had to operate cautiously in highly-charged political environments (such as in Sri Lanka). The Guatemala and Colombia examples both highlight the importance of ensuring conflict sensitivity and the "do no harm" principle. One of the consequences of the peace processes in general, and transitional justice processes in particular, has been a rise in assassinations of human rights defenders. These are often farmers and local leaders who have been encouraged to speak out for their communities on issues of justice and human rights and have come under attack from vested economic interests (such as mining or narcotics) and political actors. UNDP should be credited for its support to this crucial area of peacebuilding. UNDP implemented the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy for work with non-United Nations security actors through a framework adapted to UNDP risk management approaches. Although the Policy applies in all settings, it is particularly relevant in high-risk and conflict contexts.

Confining itself mainly to technical engagement, rather than advocacy, reduced the UNDP contribution to promoting human rights. UNDP has successfully provided technical support to governments seeking to progress human rights plans and put in place human rights mechanisms, and raised awareness. One notable area of UNDP contribution has been its support to national human rights institutions and ombudsperson offices. But

where a government is not strongly committed, UNDP technical assistance can only go so far. For example, in Somalia, UNDP addressed human rights in programmes such as police training. However, after the Somali Federal Government expelled the Special Representative of the Secretary-General following his criticism of human rights abuses committed by security forces, it became harder for UNDP, OHCHR and the United Nations Assistance Mission to push for change in the Government's approach to human rights.

Finding 17. UNDP support to managing police programmes in conflict-affected countries has enabled tangible outcomes. UNDP police work is yet to move from building the capacity of the police to building strategic institutional capacity.

UNDP has succeeded in several areas in building the operational capabilities of police forces. In Somalia, Afghanistan, Haiti and Iraq, where low capacity was combined with active conflict and frequent political upheaval, UNDP built police infrastructure, supplied equipment, and provided training on management, human rights and gender-related issues. Community police stations and family units contributed to enhanced trust and better services for women. In Haiti, where UNDP worked for years with integrated United Nations missions, successive rule of law programmes built the capacity of the police not merely in terms of the number of police trained and infrastructure built, but more importantly by empowering the Haiti National Police Inspection Unit with analytical and information technology (IT) capabilities. Sustaining these gains, however, has been difficult through cycles of political instability in Haiti. Smaller programmes in other contexts, such as DRC, had similar results.

In Somalia and Afghanistan, UNDP has overseen large-scale policing programmes for years. In Somalia, the UNDP fiduciary role of paying police salaries was shifted to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which donors regarded as being more able to administer the payroll and provide equipment. In Afghanistan, this role has remained with UNDP through the LOTFA programme. During the 2015-19 period, LOTFA comprised some 85 percent

of UNDP programme expenditure in the country, funding 149,000 police and nearly 6,000 corrections officers. Caught between the push from the Afghan Government to move towards budget support, and donor concerns about large-scale corruption, UNDP focused LOTFA support to the Payroll Management Project on building the capacity of the Ministry of the Interior to administer the payroll and reduce corruption. This involved complex IT integration, an electronic payments system, identification systems for the police, and an extensive verification and monitoring process. Despite complaints from donors about poor reporting, and frustration from the Government at the pace of localization, UNDP was able to keep payments flowing to the Afghan police and worked towards reducing the number of unaccounted workers on the payroll. The institutional development strand of LOTFA aimed to build the Ministry of Internal Affairs as an institution able to oversee the police. This did not progress well and was closed down in 2018. In late 2018, LOTFA was transitioned into a UNDP-administered MPTF, tasked with taking a broader sectoral approach to rule of law reform and anti-corruption.[116] In Somalia, UNDP supported the national policing framework, within which member federal States could work together on policing. A new joint programme is now in place, with a tighter focus on the police and clearer division of roles between United Nations agencies. It remains to be seen whether the new models for UNDP support to policing being tried in Kabul and Mogadishu will do better at driving forward the more strategic aspects of police reform.

Sector-wide approaches implemented by multiple agencies across the security and justice chain tended to achieve limited results. Where UNDP has had long-term engagement in a politically stable environment, not crowded with other agencies, it has been able to promote sector-wide approaches that achieved some coherence across police and justice institutions. The smaller and newer UNDP policing programme in Iraq, which grew out of the security sector reform programme, has faced similar issues. While the project is delivering credible results for the Iraqi local police, it

has struggled to ensure strong enough integration with bodies such as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq and the International Organization for Migration.

Security sector reform, including ensuring democratic control of security forces and right-sizing forces, is a critical contributor to good governance and peacebuilding. UNDP has contributed effectively to technical security sector reform secretariats (in Burkina Faso, Iraq and Somalia), but sustainable reform is dependent on strategic political calculations by powerful domestic and international actors, usually outside of the control of UNDP. A complex political and donor environment, in which there are many interested actors in a fragmented security sector, limits what UNDP can achieve. When there are numerous political and institutional interests and many interested international actors, UNDP technical work can only contribute to enabling institutional capacities. The security sector often tends to be seen as something outside of the wider public administration reform agenda. This is in part because different agencies from international partners tend to be involved, e.g. military, police forces and intelligence services. Where security sector reform can be brought within the remit of a national development plan, there is a greater chance of making a sustainable impact. UNDP is yet to take stock, learn lessons and see how it can leverage results at the level of institutional reform of police forces in complex environments.

4.7 Building national capacity for conflict prevention

This section analyses the UNDP contribution to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. UNDP support under the themes of conflict prevention, reconciliation, social cohesion and peacebuilding have common activities and objectives. In practice, it is often hard, and perhaps unnecessary, to distinguish whether an activity should be classified as conflict prevention or peacebuilding. Most conflict-affected contexts in which UNDP operates are protracted

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116   The MPTF has four windows – security, justice, anti-corruption, and the Ministry of the Interior payroll. The intention is for funds to be channelled via UNDP to the relevant United Nations implementing agency.

conflicts where prevention and peacebuilding merge into one another. Even where there is a formal break in a conflict, such as a peace agreement, interventions need to remain focused on preventing further conflict. The analysis below, therefore, combines some of these areas of support. The overall performance score for the UNDP contribution to prevention is presented in Figure 22 (see Annex 6 for scoring methodology).

Finding 18. UNDP work on prevention and peacebuilding has been dominated in recent years by work on physical infrastructure and services, rather than on building governance capacities and dialogue and enabling timely conflict analysis. Further consolidation of work on policing will enable UNDP to move from building the capacity of the police to building strategic institutional capacity.

The slow evolution of UNDP programmes in conflict prevention in many ways reflects international trends. The international community has not found an appropriate mix of solutions for conflict prevention. In the past five years, let alone the past decades, there have been numerous efforts to address and solve drivers of conflict. This area has seen increasing efforts to bring together instruments, agencies and approaches to take a more holistic approach. Although aid architecture is predisposed to certain areas of support such as security, the United Nations has largely followed most major international organizations and Member States in trying to tackle conflict with multidimensional tools. The 2020 United Nations Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture is the latest step in this evolution.[117]

FIGURE 22. Performance score for UNDP contribution to prevention

Source: IEO analysis

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117   https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/2020-review
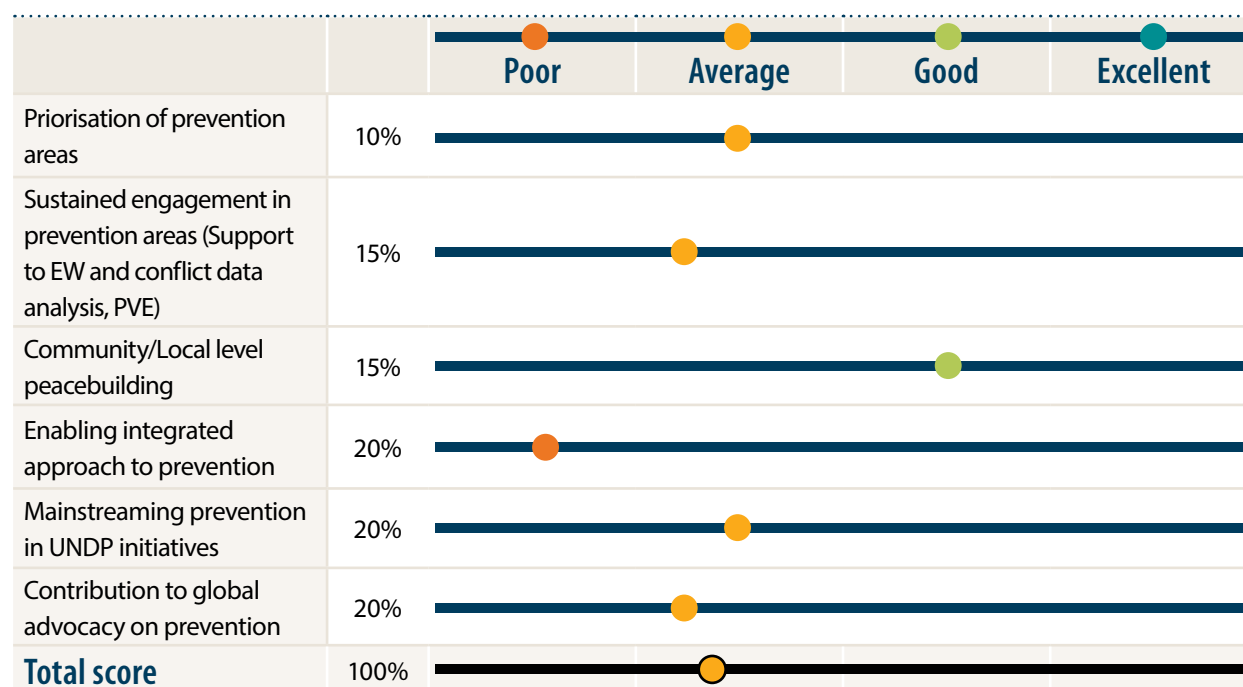
In line with broader United Nations efforts, UNDP adopted an integrated and comprehensive approach to sustaining peace, working simultaneously across all phases of conflict and with all relevant actors. This approach was informed by reviews of United Nations work on peace, which shaped the direction of United Nations policy calling for more investment in conflict prevention,[118] Pathways for Peace,[119] a renewed emphasis on HDPN,[120] and structural rationalization within the United Nations system (the creation of a single peace and security pillar within the United Nations in 2018).[121] The UNDP approach was set out in more detail in its input to the Secretary General's 2020 review of peacebuilding.[122] UNDP stressed the importance of fulfilling SDG 16 by helping to build responsive, inclusive and accountable governance and rule of law institutions. This is centred on public sector institutions, but also includes community institutions and dialogue mechanisms.

UNDP has adopted numerous conceptual definitions and programme themes, such as conflict prevention, sustaining peace, countering violent extremism and prevention of violent extremism. Despite this proliferation of concepts since 2015, the UNDP portfolio has not made many programmatic changes, regardless of conflict context. Irrespective of concept, UNDP has implemented similar project activities, and the concepts served to confuse rather than clarify. In both strategic plans, prevention-related support is spread across the outcome areas. The bulk of programme expenditure is concerned with economic revitalization activities in early recovery or stabilization phases (infrastructure, livelihoods and basic services), followed by support to governments at national and local levels to plan and deliver local recovery. Investments in mechanisms for dialogue, reconciliation and community-based peace processes were smaller in scale. The proportion of the UNDP portfolio devoted to prevention and peacebuilding has grown steadily since 2014 and, within this portfolio, the previously equal balance between prevention and recovery has shifted in favour of recovery.

UNDP, along with the rest of the United Nations, has worked to develop a strong partnership with the World Bank, which has strengthened its focus on fragility and conflict.[123] The 2017 United Nations-World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Situations provides the framework and secretariat structure for this collaboration.[124] At operational level, the partnership has led to the production of several common tools and approaches including recovery and peacebuilding assessments, guidance on (re)building core government functions in fragile and conflict-affected settings,[125] and guidance on public expenditure reviews in the security and defence sector.[126] At a more programmatic level, UNDP has produced broad framing guidance,[127] as well as guidance in particular areas such as social cohesion[128] and civil service reform.[129] UNDP has also stressed its commitment to the concepts of 'Infrastructures for Peace'[130] and 'Stabilization'.

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118 High-Level Panel on Peace Operations, Peacebuilding Review, Review of the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.

119 World Bank (2018) Pathways for Peace.

120 UNDP (2018) The Humanitarian Development Peace Nexus.
     United Nations Economic and Social Council (2019) Enhancing the humanitarian development peace nexus.

121 United Nations: Vision of the UN Peace and Security Pillar https://reform.un.org/sites/reform.un.org/files/vision_of_the_un_peace_and_security_pillar.pdf

122 UNDP (2020) Governance for Peace: Strengthening Inclusive, Just and Peaceful Societies Resilient to Future Crises.

123 United Nations Peacebuilding: World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Countries https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/policy-issues-and-partnerships/partnerships/un-worldbank-partnership

124 World Bank Partnership Framework for Crisis-Affected Contexts https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/un-wb_partnership_framework_for_crisis-affected_situations_signed_april_22_2017.pdf

125 UNDP (2017) (Re)Building Core Government Functions in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings.

126 Harborne et al. (2017) Public Expenditure Reviews in the Defense Sector.

127 UNDP (2016) The Social Contract in Situations of Conflict and Fragility.

128 UNDP (2020) Strengthening Social Cohesion, Conceptual Framing and Programme Implication.

129 UNDP (2018) Supporting Civil Service Restoration and Reform in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings.

130 Berghof Foundation and UNDP (2016) Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned.

Youth engagement featured in a variety of conflict prevention, PVE and peacebuilding programming. Activities included peace education and PVE attitudinal change initiatives to encourage young people to champion peace and counter the influence of extremists and spoilers. Albeit small in scale, youth employment and training was a major element in many local development and livelihoods programmes. Several other youth initiatives had indirect impacts on promoting peace at the local level, for instance, youth voter education programmes, or community mobilization through initiatives such as the Sri Lanka Youth Leader programme and the Arab region Youth Leadership Programme. The UNDP Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace sponsored research on the drivers of extremism, though the cumulative impact of such initiatives is difficult to demonstrate. Similar to youth initiatives in economic revitalization, prevention-related programmes were short-term, lacked policy linkages, and remained micro-level. UNDP had limited success in promoting government-driven youth programmes at scale.

Social cohesion and peacebuilding

Finding 19. UNDP has put considerable effort into community-level peacebuilding. The bulk of its work involved local development and livelihoods which enabled engagement with communities to promote dialogue processes. These interventions have been important in stabilization, reducing community tensions and laying the foundations for trusted government and inclusive development.

The overlap of peacebuilding initiatives with what is classed as stabilization is considerable. Across countries of support, in eastern DRC, Ukraine, Iraq, Guatemala, or Mindanao in the Philippines, UNDP used post-conflict livelihood recovery and infrastructure rehabilitation initiatives as an avenue for peacebuilding and promoting social cohesion. Such initiatives helped to create jobs,

rehabilitate infrastructure, establish local peace committees, public councils and community security working groups, support legal aid provision, and train community police. In eastern DRC, the programme worked with returning refugees and host community members and ensured, *inter alia*, improved access to basic social services through rehabilitation of community infrastructures. The programme was also closely linked to national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration efforts, to support the reintegration of ex-combatants.

UNDP support in the area of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration has reduced since 2014, although it has continued work on weapons collection in West Africa, and reintegration and livelihoods programmes targeting former fighters have remained part of the peacebuilding portfolio. Another area of UNDP work, although not as common in the past five years, is in reconciliation and transitional justice processes. UNDP championing of the concept of insider mediators is worthy of note. Political or diplomatic negotiations for peace enforcement are led by other agencies, but UNDP has provided technical support where appropriate.

Where UNDP has been able to scale its work to the broader national peace architecture, it has demonstrated greater impact. However, it has sometimes been challenging to reach agreement with national authorities.[131] For example, UNDP was a key player in the peace process in Colombia, successfully balancing stabilization and development priorities, and building platforms for community engagement. UNDP was well positioned to provide a development-centred stabilization and sustainable peace approach, and played a key role in implementing the Peace Accord priorities for transition to peace and stabilization, such as dialogue in FARC-affected communities. A notable contribution of UNDP was the implementation of government and international community

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131   Although not framed directly as peacebuilding, UNDP support to the Somali Constitutional Review Project was important in helping the federal Government and federal Member States progress towards agreement on a constitution sharing power across the country. UNDP helped set up the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission and to produce a draft constitution in 2019. In the event, political disagreements prevented agreement on the draft, but the process provided a basis on which to build.

programmes in areas with FARC presence. Through its bridging role between the government and affected communities, UNDP contributed to reincorporation and community dialogue processes critical for peace in Colombia. UNDP support to the peace negotiations enabled the effective presence and engagement of citizens and victims in the peace talks, which was highly significant for the legitimacy of the Peace Accord and citizen ownership of the process. UNDP successes included: the engagement of 13,000 citizens in peace talks, including the participation of 60 victims in peace negotiations; the construction of social reincorporation mechanisms to help persuade FARC adherents to support the Accord, including economic support and trust-building activities; dialogue platforms at both national and local levels, including one with a specific focus on extractive industries; and peace education processes with the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace.

UNDP had effectively addressed local-level conflicts in the Pool region of DRC with multi-sectoral local development and reintegration initiatives, but a resurgence of armed violence around the disputed election renewed conflict in cities and between the Government and Ninja rebels in Pool. Though a ceasefire was agreed in 2017, UNDP was unable to focus sufficiently on conflict issues due to objections from the Government. As UNDP programmes in Pakistan, Iraq and Mozambique show, scaling up to national level has not always been easy and is dependent on UNDP having well-established partnerships to make this work, besides political will. It can take time to learn how to move from local to national.

UNDP interventions around the infrastructure for peace can be useful in themselves, but are not always relevant to the wider conflict-prevention or peacebuilding context. The limitation of pursuing an infrastructure for peace approach alone, amidst the significant structural challenges of conflict, was evident in most countries. Mali is a case in point, where UNDP supported religious, community and peace volunteers to work on social cohesion and livelihoods, and support the national Truth Justice and Reconciliation Committee with its transitional

justice strategy and engagement with victims. These focused interventions were supplemented by wider efforts to bring capable and accountable state institutions to the north of the country. However, overall, the conflict worsened as measured by casualties and numbers of IDPs. A review of UNDP work suggested that this context required UNDP to work with multiple United Nations agencies and donors on a much more ambitious effort to address the structural drivers of conflict, and to advance transformational governance and economic change. Undertaking the analysis and facilitating multi-stakeholder consensus on these broader approaches to conflict prevention is difficult, time-consuming, and does not show rapid results. Similarly in CAR, UNDP work on infrastructures for peace was not successful. There have been multiple "peace agreements", and multiple resurgences in violence in recent years. If UNDP wants to play a larger role in advancing conflict prevention, then it will need to take more of a lead in such processes.

Preventing violent extremism

Finding 20. UNDP work on PVE has been partially effective, but UNDP has to more coherently conceptualize its programme support, based on its added value, and clarify the linkages between PVE and conflict prevention.

UNDP laid out its position in relation to PVE in the 2016 report: "Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance, and Respect for Diversity". This report defined violent extremism broadly as any extremist ideology. The 11 *building blocks* outlined in the paper included promoting the rule of law, anti-corruption, gender equality, working with youth, promoting human rights and, in general, building State capacity. Like most agencies who have been asked in recent years to address violent extremism, UNDP frames the issue as encompassing much of its traditional work, and has been seeking to devise PVE programming in line with its institutional and community-based approaches to conflict and development.

UNDP has positioned itself to undertake policy work, research and support country-level initiatives

that would constitute a developmental approach to PVE. At global policy level, UNDP co-chairs the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) Working Group with UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in the framework of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. In terms of research, UNDP has sponsored thematic and geographic research projects aiming to elucidate the drivers of extremism. In Africa, for instance, a programme on Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa has, since 2016, undertaken research and policy support, and provided technical advice to regional governments to address the issue,[132] and the 2017 report "Journey to Extremism in Africa" was a major two-year study into the drivers and pathways of extremism. More recent global research by UNDP included the 2019 study with the International Civil Society Action Network, "Invisible Women", which addressed the topic of *"Gendered Dimensions of Return, Rehabilitation and Reintegration from Violent Extremism."*[133] UNDP has also sponsored the development of toolkits to assist in designing and running PVE interventions.[134]

PVE, as outlined in United Nations policy documents, has the potential to encompass the entirety of development and conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In recent years, United Nations agencies and donors have labelled work on government reform, livelihoods, education and peacebuilding as PVE. This is understandable, given the amount of donor funding that has gone into this area, but there has been limited evidence of the linkages between many of the proposed interventions and PVE results. UNDP PVE programmes have been similar to programmes that were carried out before under different themes, or differ little from traditional UNDP work. UNDP is yet to demonstrate its thought leadership, building on some of the good research work it has done, to target violent extremism more directly and link this very closely to work on conflict prevention. The

drivers of violent conflict and violent extremism are often closely intertwined, though not identical.

At country level, support was provided to national authorities to set up structures and processes to implement national action plans (in Somalia and Chad), build government capacities, generate knowledge products (in Pakistan), and implement community-based activities. Also in Chad, UNDP worked with the International Organization for Migration to reintegrate Boko Haram fighters, and has examined why women become suicide bombers. Recognising the transnational nature of the threat, UNDP has also crafted regional programmes, working with the African Union, Regional Economic Communities such as ECOWAS and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to strengthen their capacities to plan and deliver PVE programmes.

UNDP country-level PVE programming often lacked coherence, was poorly conceptualized and faced challenges in coordination. Barring policy support, the interventions are often small, scattered, micro-level and not linked to an overall strategy or understanding of the drivers of radicalization. UNDP did not draw from its research and policy work to ensure that interventions are strategically coherent and targeted.

It is not at all clear that UNDP PVE programmes operate with a consistent set of concepts that distinguish this work from other prevention programming. Where analysis does underpin PVE programmes, it is almost indistinguishable from wider conflict analysis, and most of the projects implemented could just as easily be labelled conflict prevention or peacebuilding. For instance, a project on the Chad-Cameroon border to encourage social dialogue among youth to reduce extremist influences has been discussed both as a PVE project and one about peacebuilding, cross-border

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[132]   UNDP (2017) Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach.
[133]   ICAN and UNDP (2019) Invisible Women.
[134]   UNDP (2018) PVE Indicator Bank.

confidence building and youth engagement.[135] Conversely, in Burkina Faso, UNDP supported the National Observatory of Religious Facts to monitor religious media content and undertake awareness campaigns in vulnerable areas of the country. This project was focused on peacebuilding, though in this context religious intolerance was identified as a conflict-driver, and such a project could easily have been captured under the PVE label.

Coordination within the United Nations architecture remains a work in progress. The United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), set up in 2017, defines its role in PVE as "*the main focal point of the United Nations System for preventing and countering violent extremism.*" UNOCT coordinates and complements the work of United Nations agencies in countries where they are supporting Member States to develop PCVE strategies and plans of action or related legislative and policy frameworks.[136] In particular, UNOCT provides "*capacity-building support to the Member States and regional organizations*" on a broad range of PCVE issues, such as national and regional PCVE action plans, strategic communications to promote alternative and counter-terrorist narratives, empowering youth, strengthening the role of parliamentarians in PCVE, or leveraging sports and their values for PCVE. UNDP works with UNOCT both within the overall United Nations governance structures on counter terrorism and PVE, and in particular projects. Current collaboration is defined in the UNDP and UNOCT strategic partnership action plan for 2020-21.[137] However, to reduce overlaps and add coherence to its work on PVE, UNDP did not clearly define its role as integrating PVE within the framework of a long-term approach to conflict prevention and development, but rather than as stand-alone activities.

4.8 Support to interagency pooled funds and UNDP multi-donor programmes

Finding 21. UNDP has played a significant and positive role in managing large multi-donor programmes in conflict contexts, which have made a strategic impact on timely conflict responses particularly in the areas of justice, local development and employment.

In recent years, UNDP has served as the administrator for large conflict-related funds (see Annex 5 for list of funds). The UNDP role in such funds has varied from fiduciary management to active programme management and implementation of funded projects.

UNDP has been the largest recipient of PBF funding. In 2019, PBF reported $191,304 million in project approvals and cost extensions, comprising 100 projects in 34 countries. Overall, as of December 2019, PBF reported having net-funded $981,401.9 million in total, with UNDP having received $438,229 million.[138] PBF had the largest number of donors (57), which included private sector organizations and the United Nations. The top three funds in terms of number of donors (PBF, Ebola Response MPTF and Haiti Cholera Response MPTF) have all been United Nations Secretary-General funds. The others included five United Nations Development Group MDTFs, six United Nations Secretariat humanitarian funds and five United Nations One Funds (see Annex 5). Since 2016, non-United Nations organizations have been included in the PBF without having to go through a United Nations entity as a managing agent.

Engagement with PBF is important for UNDP. PBF has not only funded UNDP conflict programming but also encouraged a greater degree of analytical

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135   Agora Consulting (2019) Evaluation finale du projet "Soutenir les mécanismes de consolidation de la paix au niveau communautaire et l'inclusion des jeunes dans les zones situées à la frontière entre le Tchad et le Cameroun".
136   See https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/preventing-violent-extremism
137   UNDP and UNOCT (2020) Strategic Partnership Action Plan for 2020-2021.
138   UNDP, Bureau for Management Services (2020) Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the Administrative Agent for the Peacebuilding Fund for the Period 1 January to 31 December 2019. The PBF allocates money through two funding facilities, the Immediate Response Facility and the Peacebuilding Recovery Facility.

rigour in programme design. The PBSO and OCHA have created standard project templates (with results frameworks) that compel project proponents to more carefully consider results while developing proposals.

PBF is generally considered by the United Nations and other stakeholders as important for a more coherent response, and responsive to programme needs. However, there are missed opportunities to break down silos between agencies, and between humanitarian, peace and development programmes, although this is beyond the scope of UNDP as fund manager. Whether or not pooled financing is associated with increased donor coordination and United Nations coherence varies from country to country, and depends in part on the nature of the specific fund. Interviews suggest that global funds with strong secretariats, such as PBF, contributed more to United Nations coherence at country and global levels. Well-defined funds with clear political priorities brought greater donor coordination and United Nations coherence. An evaluation of inter-agency pooled funding pointed out that PBF, the United Nations Trust Fund in Colombia, the Sudan Humanitarian Fund and the Iraq Fund, for example, contributed to greater donor coordination and United Nations coherence, providing focused support to the humanitarian coordinator based on the humanitarian response plan.[139]

The two major in-country funds, Iraq FFS and Afghanistan LOTFA, which are multi-donor UNDP programmes (in Afghanistan this was before constituting LOTFA as an interagency pool fund in 2019), operated in extremely difficult political and institutional environments, amid active violent conflict, with massive corruption risks. FFS was tasked with rapidly reinforcing the military successes of the Iraqi Government and the international coalition, with stabilization interventions focused on restoring basic infrastructure, facilitating IDP return and enabling core government functions. By adopting an efficient delivery modality, the

programme achieved many of these objectives. UNDP has had a substantive fiduciary role with regard to LOTFA, whose aim was both to ensure payments of salaries to the Afghan police and build the institutional capacity of the Ministry of the Interior to take on the payroll function, and which managed to achieve a lot of its goals. Both programmes had weaknesses in their design and delivery. The stabilization programme in Iraq arguably did not pay sufficient attention to the softer aspects of stabilization such as social cohesion and infrastructures for peace. The LOTFA programme failed to build real institutional capability inside the Ministry. Nonetheless, both played a vital function in peacebuilding and provide useful lessons for UNDP more widely. It is positive that the Lake Chad Regional Stabilization Facility, launched by UNDP in 2019,[140] drew on lessons from the Iraq experience.

UNDP played an effective role as a managing agent of OCHA humanitarian pooled funds in Sudan, South Sudan, CAR and DRC from 2006, until it handed over these functions at the beginning of 2019. However, in relation to other MDTFs established in the humanitarian and transition sectors, some of these funds have faced frequent challenges and criticisms from donors. For example in Somalia, donors shifted responsibilities for channeling funds for police salaries and equipment from UNDP to UNOPS. At the other extreme, the United Nations MPTF for Colombia, hosted in the Resident Coordinator's office and for which UNDP also acts as managing agent, is well-regarded for its governance and faster implementation compared to similar funds run by the World Bank and European Union in the country.

4.9 Furthering gender equality and women's empowerment

This section examines the UNDP contribution to furthering GEWE, taking into consideration its GEWE policies, institutional strengthening measures, programmatic contributions within the

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139 UNDP IEO (2018) Evaluation of UNDP Inter-Agency Pooled Financing Services.
140 UNDP (2019) Press Release: UNDP Launches Regional Stabilization Facility for Lake Chad.

context of strengthening national capacities, and engagement in joint United Nations programmes.

Finding 22. UNDP has made GEWE a strategic priority, developed sufficient institutional guidance and tools to mainstream gender in the programme cycle, and established an accountability system to track its performance. The sum of these efforts, however, does not culminate in tangible gender-responsive programming, much less gender-transformative results on the ground. There is a distinct gap between UNDP corporate policy commitments and the operational reality, with consequences for programme outcomes in conflict-affected countries.

UNDP has ensured that corporate structures are in place to support GEWE in crisis prevention and response. Gender equality is included across its Integrated Results and Resource Framework. Both strategic plans are accompanied by a gender equality strategy for the corresponding period, which outline a series of mandatory requirements. This includes specific measures by programme units to address gender inequalities, track gender- (and sex-) disaggregated indicators, report on spending on GEWE using gender marker ratings, regularly report to the Executive Board and management oversight mechanisms such as the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee, and track progress towards the 15 percent GEWE-related spending target.[141] The Gender Steering and Implementation Committee is chaired by the UNDP Administrator and is meant to be the main UNDP gender equality oversight mechanism.

UNDP was one of the first United Nations entities to explicitly require an allocation of resources to gender equality. In 2008, UNDP rolled out an Eight-Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery which called for, amongst other things,

a 15 percent allocation of all crisis prevention and recovery funds to gender-specific projects. This has been the framework for gender programming in crisis prevention and recovery, and contributed to the Secretary General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan.[142] In line with the latter, resource allocation for GEWE was established at 15 percent of UNDP resources for the strategic planning period 2014-2017. At least 15 percent of UNDP funding in peacebuilding should be allocated to women's specific needs, advancing gender equality and/or empowering women and girls as their principle objective.

Despite organizational- and United Nations-wide commitments, UNDP found it challenging to fulfil its 15 percent spending target on women-specific programmes. A 2013 baseline study by UN Women, UNDP and PBSO demonstrated that, in 2012, 6 percent of UNDP funding in six post-conflict countries was allocated to projects whose principal objective was gender equality. However, this was based on self-reported ratings, and an independent review of those project documents indicated that the true figure was only 1 percent.[143] Since the baseline study, there has been limited improvement in the allocation of funding for GEWE in general, and in conflict-affected countries in particular. GEWE expenditure has consistently been the lowest relative to all other outcomes. Of the $85 million spent on GEWE between 2018 and 2019, $41 million was utilized for conflict-affected countries.

UNDP still does not have a robust gender architecture to support efforts in crisis response and recovery. The 2014 restructuring process resulted in a leaner organization and relocated more staff to regional levels to provide greater support to country offices. There was a reduction in staff positions in headquarter bureaux, including the closure of the BCPR in 2015. These changes had significant implications for GEWE

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141   The gender marker, a self-reporting tool, was introduced in 2009 and requires managers to rate projects against a four point scale indicating its contribution towards the achievement of gender equality. In principle, the gender marker monitors how gender-responsive each financial allocation and expenditure is, and enables managers to analyse trends by region, outcomes, and focus areas.

142   United Nations Secretary-General (2010) Seven-point Action Plan on Gender-responsive Peacebuilding. This included a commitment for the allocation of at least 15 percent of peacebuilding funds to projects with GEWE as a principal objective.

143   Sudarshana Kundu (2013) Budgetary Baselines and Methodology Development for Strategic Results Framework and Seven Point Action Plan.

programming capacity. The gender unit in the BCPR was disbanded, and senior gender advisors in crisis countries lost. Funding for the deployment of gender advisers to crisis countries remained a challenge. The overall capacity and resources of the gender team in BPPS are not large enough to accommodate all work on GEWE. The crisis and recovery focal point in the gender team only spends a portion of their time on this portfolio. The team experienced a decrease in GEWE technical and programming support at headquarters and regional hubs, from 29 staff in 2015 to 22 in 2020.[144] At country level, of 22 countries with high crisis severity, only seven country offices have dedicated in-house gender staff. High crisis severity countries straddle the middle to lowest ranks of the Women Peace and Security Index (or third to fifth quintiles), and experience complex or multiple crises. The Crisis Bureau is in the process of constituting a gender facility to strengthen GEWE policy and practice support to the country offices.

Despite its comprehensive mandate, UNDP has had difficulty in mobilizing resources for gender-related work since the creation of UN Women. In reality, the mandates of both organizations overlap in GEWE, and donors have allocated funding in line with a desire to support specific areas of work based on the perceived comparative advantages and expertise of each organization. There are efforts to strengthen collaboration at global and country levels.

FIGURE 23. Performance score for UNDP contribution to GEWE
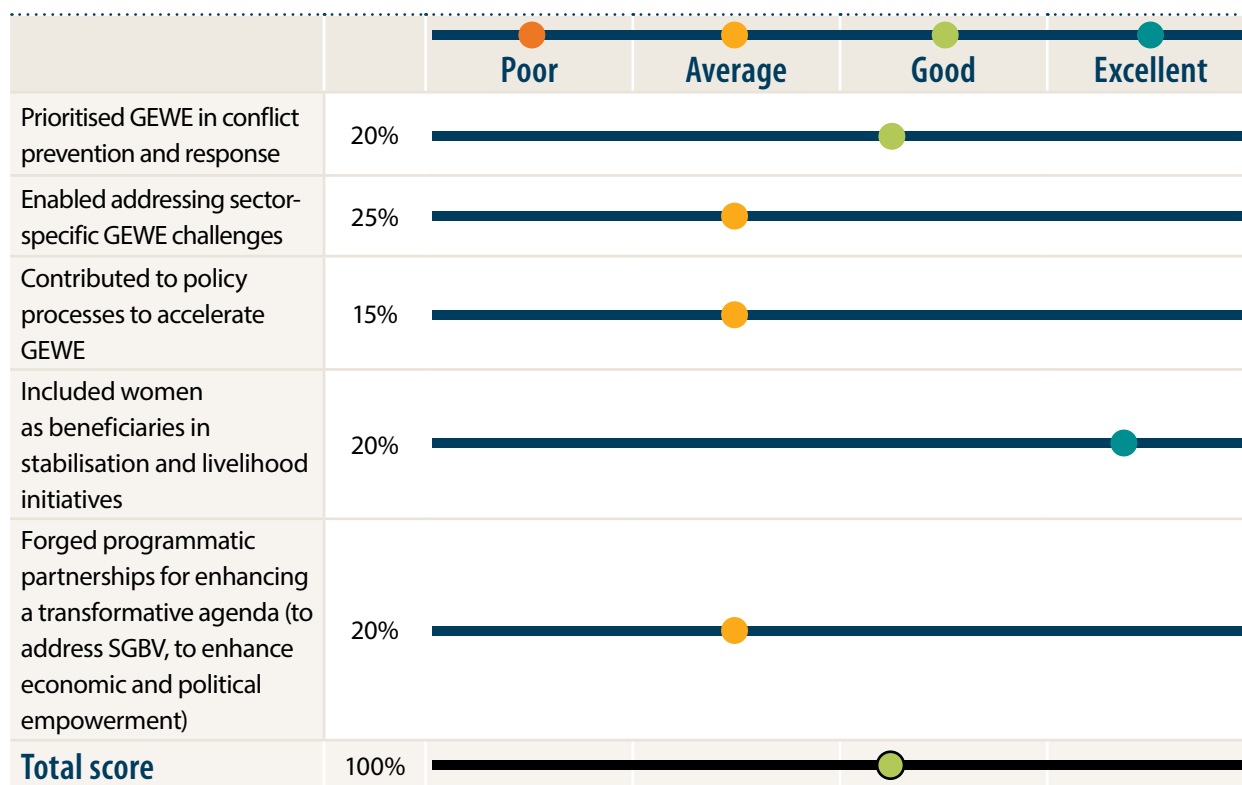
Source: IEO analysis

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144   DP/2020/11; data from the Gender Team as of July 2020.

Finding 23. At country level, UNDP has barely adopted an intersectional perspective. This further discounts the multiple intersecting forms of discrimination and violence experienced by women, girls and LGBTQ[145] people in conflict-affected situations, and subsequently continues to reinforce deep-rooted inequalities and undermine efforts towards sustainable peace.

Many of the country office projects and programmes reviewed complied with gender-targeted and/ or gender-responsive programming guidelines, but with very few gender-transformative results.[146] In conflict-affected countries, despite guidance on gender mainstreaming and integrating gender perspectives, staff often select outcomes and indicators focused on gender-targeting as opposed to gender-responsiveness (responses to the differential needs of men, women and transgender persons) and gender transformation (shifts in norms, power, institutions and relationships). A meta-synthesis of evaluation reports, carried out for this evaluation, indicates that the UNDP approach to peacebuilding does not address the drivers of gender inequality and gender stereotypes, or issues of male vulnerabilities or women's agency in reproducing violence. Moreover, gender inequalities are often not analysed in relation to other social, economic and political inequalities. The categories of men and women are dealt with as if they were static and homogenous. Issues of sexual and gender minorities (such as intersex or transgender) are virtually absent from advocacy and crisis programming. The only exception has been in Malawi, where UNDP successfully advocated for the recognition of LGBTQ groups.

Within the countries examined, UNDP performs well on women-targeted approaches, especially in the areas of political participation, economic empowerment, livelihoods and access to justice.[147] Within the 34 country sample for this evaluation, 17 had programmatic or outcome evaluations, and of

those 17, nine were assessed to have weak gender equality design and implementation. A significant missed opportunity was that outcomes achieved were often not informed by a gender analysis, rather by the numbers of women or beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because a gender-relational approach to gender analysis enables a sharper focus on the particular groups of people *most* vulnerable, often overlooked when it is assumed that vulnerability is mainly associated with women and children.

The overall UNDP performance score for contribution to GEWE is above average (see Figure 23). The programme scored high for including women in programme interventions, but average in addressing sector-specific GEWE challenges. UNDP has a formidable presence in democratic governance, promoting women's political participation in public institutions (such as elections or gender quotas), and providing parliamentary support by strengthening the capacities of women's parliamentary caucuses and networks. UNDP has, for the most part, regarded gender-based violence (GBV) as a women's issue. In the nine countries with GBV projects or programmes,[148] UNDP programming has focused on access to justice and legal reform, in the form of adopting and implementing gender equality laws and policies and preventing GBV. While country offices report impressive successes in individual behavioural change, notably reducing levels of GBV, these projects also highlight that underlying patriarchal values may be difficult to dislodge if broader social, political and economic dynamics are not addressed, particularly when a deep understanding of how violence is constructed by society as a whole is lacking.

UNDP supports the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its related resolutions at a variety of levels. At country office level, UNDP contributions have been important to develop institutional frameworks such as national action plans, and through work on women's political participation and GBV prevention

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[145]   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer.

[146]   Given this is a very limited sample size, one should not extrapolate any further generalizations from this statement.

[147]   Based on an analysis of results-oriented annual reports 2018-2019 success and challenges results, compared against findings in 2018-2019 evaluations.

[148]   In Afghanistan, Colombia, Burkina Faso, DRC, Haiti, Malawi, South Sudan, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

and legislation.[149] UNDP provided data on trends for select indicators in rule of law, access to justice, security sector reform and public administration for the Secretary General's Annual Report on Women Peace and Security. Support was provided to prepare the global study on implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the High-Level Review in 2015, and inter-agency meetings were convened to ensure gender mainstreaming in the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture. UNDP also collaborated with UN Women in the creation of a Global Acceleration Instrument to channel financial and technical resources for women's participation in humanitarian and crisis contexts.[150]

UNDP has consistently worked to advance GEWE with governments and in joint programming with United Nations agencies such as UN Women, and to some extent UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and with the gender units of United Nations missions. Engagement with other partners has been mixed, depending on the region. Notably in Latin America, some country offices have partnered with more diverse actors such as civil society organizations and public institutions. Despite such collaborations, there remain concerns that country-level competition between UNDP and UN Women in GEWE has led to strategic and operational challenges. The 2015 IEO evaluation of GEWE determined that UNDP lacked clarity on its comparative advantage for gender equality work, and that this had limited its capacity to engage strategically in meaningful partnerships. Over the past five years there has been little change to this finding.

4.10 Cross-cutting themes

Programme approaches

Finding 24. The New Way of Working provided a much-needed common direction in conflict contexts. While there are good examples of joint efforts and programme synergies among agencies, overall there lacked a committed collective impetus to enhance peace and development outcomes.

There has been a noticeable shift amongst humanitarian and development actors to strengthen collaboration since the adoption of the SDGs, with a renewed emphasis on HDPN and NWoW. The latter provided a framework for international and national stakeholders to operationalize and transcend the humanitarian/ development divide, by collectively working toward outcomes based on comparative advantages over multi-year timelines. Notwithstanding ongoing efforts, NWoW and the nexus approach are yet to gather momentum, lacking a deliberate strategy to overcome agency programme silos. The humanitarian-development-(peace)-nexus interface still needs to be more systematically harmonized in programming at country level, in coordination with UNCTs as well as governments. While UNDP prioritized the nexus approach, more concrete efforts were needed to operationalize it. Global thought leadership has been lacking in terms of practical ways to break humanitarian-development-peace silos in country responses. UNDP is yet to assert its programming across the spectrum of HDPN and capitalize on its country-level presence to provide leadership in this area. With the delinking of the Resident Coordinator position, this would require clarifying the UNDP role *vis-a-vis* the Resident Coordinator's office.

UNDP has collaborated with humanitarian agencies on a wide variety of activities within the humanitarian-development nexus, from stabilization, recovery and development to peacebuilding. UNDP has not yet been able to fully leverage its integrator role to work across the United Nations system. In DRC, UNDP and UNHCR committed to pursuing integrated analysis and joint outcomes in local governance, preparedness, peace and justice. In Afghanistan, UNDP successfully engaged with United Nations humanitarian agencies and other partners through the Durable Solutions Working Group to develop an Integrated Action Plan for Return. UNDP made efforts to link humanitarian and development activities under a coherent resilience programme in Yemen, despite a challenging conflict-affected humanitarian

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149   In Afghanistan, DRC, Mali, Mozambique, South Sudan, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.
150   DP/2016/11, para. 76.

environment. Lack of common outcomes limited the contribution of these collaborations to advancing durable solutions.

While country programmes embraced the concept of the humanitarian-development-(peace) nexus, this did not manifest in practical application. As the Syrian refugee crisis and more recent COVID-19 response shows, the possibilities of pursuing humanitarian and development synergies are greater in the case of a rapid-onset crisis, where agencies are more willing to engage in coordinated responses driven by the intensity of the situation. In protracted conflicts, on the other hand, incentives for pursuing a nexus approach, especially for the HDPN triple nexus, are still not common. The acknowledgement of the value of the triple nexus for enhanced peace and development did not automatically translate into programming. Furthermore, there are issues in identifying areas where the nexus approach will be more productive, and a lack of clear transitioning strategies.[151]

The concept of peace, the third component of the triple nexus, does not have a common definition among actors. Moreover, without a government role in defining and driving triple nexus priorities in a crisis-affected country, it becomes problematic for development and peacebuilding actors to mobilize behind a triple nexus agenda. There is limited consensus on how the triple nexus should be operationalized, and actors have not directly addressed these differences. United Nations agencies often operate as separate entities with connected but distinct mandates. While United Nations reform has promoted cross-agency coordination, evidence of operational good practice remains limited. Cooperation, for the most part, has been top-down and confined to joint programmes between a few partners. UNDP, with its governance and peacebuilding mandate and partnerships with humanitarian organizations, is in a unique position to bridge the divide as a convenor, but has not positioned itself to claim this space.

The concept of resilience has been used within UNDP as a vehicle to catalyze the nexus approach. Applied to livelihood support, the 3x6 approach has been used to promote sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable and crisis-affected groups. For UNDP, resilience derives from the capacity to absorb, adapt and transform. However, such an approach to resilience in policy and practice is not distinct from development support which espouses similar objectives. Resilience, as a multifaceted subject that manifests itself across multiple levels to address drivers of conflict and peace at the sectoral level, requires a comprehensive and joint response. Further coherence is needed to rationalize activities taking place at national and local levels. The same can be said for the systematic identification of areas for more holistic intervention to increase resilience in the context of multiple crises and overlapping vulnerabilities. An additional challenge for UNCTs is that resilience is often defined according to organizational mandates.

Finding 25. In its governance support, UNDP made efforts to develop synergies and sector-wide approaches and find mutually reinforcing linkages. These sometimes work in practice, but often UNDP falls back on compartmentalized and projectized responses, which reduce its contribution.

Typically, national development plans, for many of which UNDP has provided technical assistance, take sector-wide approaches in principle. This is certainly true in the governance area, where plans typically cover topics such as 'inclusive politics', 'governance reform', or 'security sector reform'. Often these plans, drawn up by governments and donor partners, are operationalized through a set of coordinating committees or a mutual accountability mechanism. But these coordination mechanisms are far from ideal, and the resulting plans are often overambitious and put in place cumbersome (and at times parallel) management and reporting mechanisms. Some of these structural challenges undermined UNDP efforts to implement holistic sector-wide governance approaches.

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151   New York University Centre on International Cooperation (2019) The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a New Way of Working in Protracted and Repeated Crises.

Commonly, a sector-wide approach is sought in the criminal justice area, since a failure anywhere along the justice chain can undermine improvements in other parts of the chain. UNDP interventions therefore often seek to target various stakeholders (legislators, police, prosecutors, courts, lawyers and victims), and work at multiple levels (national legislation, ministerial capacity, court or police station management, training of police officers or lawyers, and assistance to victims). In practice, UNDP did not have the resources or mandate to address all of these elements, and often worked alongside others. This was a factor in limited efforts by UNDP to address systemic issues. For instance, UNDP work with prosecutors in Guatemala was highly effective in building their capacity to bring cases to trial, and very successful on these terms. However, because similar progress had not been made in building the capacity of the police and courts, the result was to overwhelm the court and police system, meaning that the actual outcome was less than expected.

Synergies were more evident in local development initiatives. Improvements in governance can reinforce improvements in other areas of UNDP engagement, for example, economic growth and livelihoods, services or peace. Concrete synergies are especially tangible with local development approaches, driven by the need to boost community resilience to natural disasters, build peace or social cohesion in response to violent conflict, or build the capacity of local governments to meet citizens' expectations and improve local services. UNDP programmes have enabled synergies between stabilization and local governance in Somalia, and in supporting local governance as part of the peace process in Colombia. UNDP used Local Area-based Development models in some conflict-affected countries to bring improved governance, services and jobs in pursuit of peacebuilding goals.[152] However, it has not invested in promoting Local Area-based Development models to galvanize actors for a coordinated local response.

Synergies between core governance functions and other strands of UNDP work are less evident. In relation to rule of law, for instance, there is an obvious synergy between more effective and transparent rule of law for citizens and commercial actors. Economic growth is held back in many fragile States by corruption, and the inability of commercial actors to enforce contracts. UNDP programmes pay some attention to these issues, for instance through work on anti-corruption. However, the majority of UNDP rule of law work focuses on criminal justice, and in particular interventions aimed at vulnerable groups such as women and youth. There are missed opportunities to expand rule of law interventions to the commercial sector, which would reinforce UNDP work on economic growth.

Youth development

Finding 26. Youth development is an underprioritized area of UNDP support, though youth are included in various UNDP initiatives. Including youth as beneficiaries of various projects did not contribute to engaging youth as key actors in peace and development.

Globally, there has been considerable impetus to youth development in conflict contexts. In 2015, UNSCR 2250 recognized both the impact of conflicts on youth and the important role of youth in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, recovery and resilience.[153] The 2018 United Nations Youth Strategy calls to support young people as catalysts for peace, security and humanitarian action.[154] Several United Nations-constituted forums, where UNDP is a member or serves as co-chair, aimed to provide the necessary momentum for youth development. For example, the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the System-Wide Action Plan on Youth task team, the Decent Jobs for Youth initiative, the Working Group on Youth and Agenda 2030, and the Working Group on Youth Political Inclusion and Civic Engagement. Despite such momentum,

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[152] The programme involved multiple United Nations agencies (UNDP, WHO, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO, ILO, UNOPS, and UNIFEM) working with eight Iraqi ministries.http://www.emro.who.int/irq/programmes/local-area-development-programmes-ladp.html
[153] United Nations (2015) Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015).
[154] United Nations (2018) Youth Strategy.

progress on youth development continues to be slow in conflict-affected countries and often does not reflect the severity of the youth situation. Global commitments and forums are yet to be translated into concerted efforts to strategically promote youth development at country level. A 2020 Secretary-General's report found that, while the essential role of youth in peace and security has been increasingly recognized, core challenges remain, pointing to a participation gap and an opportunity gap for youth in peace and security initiatives.[155]

The UNDP youth strategy (2014-17) is in line with the overall United Nations strategic direction, and promotes inclusive youth participation in effective and democratic governance, the economic empowerment of youth, and stronger youth engagement in building resilience in their communities.[156] UNDP programmes in conflict-affected countries included a range of youth-related initiatives, including livelihoods and skills development programmes (across several conflict-affected countries), youth engagement in local peace processes and social cohesion (in El Salvador, Mali, DRC and Colombia), and rehabilitation programmes (in Afghanistan and Sudan). Strengthening the capacity of young people's organizations, networks and youth advocacy groups has fostered partnerships (for example in Somalia). Notwithstanding some successes, the approach and scope of UNDP interventions in promoting youth employment or livelihoods led to low sustainability, and a lack of linkages to larger programmes of governments or other agencies. In the absence of predictable and adequate multi-year financing, downstream engagements were often small in scale and lacked integrated interventions combining policy aspects and downstream demand-supply interventions in specific sectors or value chains. UNDP national policy engagement on youth development was not consistent in conflict-affected countries, limiting the possibility of sector-level strategies where youth issues are mainstreamed.

A lack of private sector engagement undermined the outcomes of skills training and MSME programmes for youth. A common problem was that skills training did not result in employability or enterprise development. The absence of collateral, a crucial gap in the bankability and financing of youth enterprise initiatives, has not been systematically addressed. Entrepreneurship is offered as a standard solution to unemployment without recognizing the importance of financing.

Linking youth to short-term income-generating activities has been easier in economic recovery and rehabilitation contexts where humanitarian funding is available. UNDP reports large numbers of youth benefiting from employment and livelihoods promotion in conflict responses. Such efforts did not extend to streamlining medium-term youth employment. The same can be said about PVE among youth, which lacked application in programmes, and small-scale employment and peacebuilding initiatives were not sufficient to contribute to this agenda. Youth was a largely unacknowledged and untapped force for peace in UNDP programme support. An exception is the Youth for Peace programme components in the Darfur Livelihoods and Recovery Project and the Darfur Community Peace Stabilization Fund, which were successful in enabling young people's productive capacities and linkages to competitive grants.

There is scope to explore collaboration with the large regional youth-based programmes of the international financial institutions. Efforts to upscale or link UNDP field initiatives with youth employment programmes, especially multi-country World Bank and African Development Bank programmes, were either not given adequate attention in country portfolios or did not gain sufficient traction, although there were a few successes, such as the cash-for-work scheme in Yemen with the World Bank. These missed opportunities also highlight the potential for regional office engagement to supplement country-level efforts under broader

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155 United Nations (2020) Secretary-General's Report on Youth and Peace and Security.
156 UNDP (2014) UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017.

regional cooperation or partnerships. For example, collaboration with the African Development Bank's ENABLE Youth Programme (to create 1.5 million jobs for youth in 25 countries and 300,000 agribusinesses by 2025) was not explicitly evident.[157] Furthermore, UNDP cooperation with specialized agencies such as FAO and UNIDO is important to implement rural and agriculture-related youth employment and livelihoods initiatives. These have been pursued on an *ad hoc* basis, rather than through systematic inter-agency partnerships, reducing impact.

In 2016, UNDP launched its five-year global programme on youth empowerment, the first Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace (2016-2020). Largely, country-level initiatives within global programmes fell into a similar pattern of small-scale youth projects, rather than a set of well-developed signature solutions. UNDP did not build on programmes such as Active Labour Market, YouthConnekt, or the youth leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship project Youth Co:Lab (youth-led social enterprises funded by impact investment) to create viable models in conflict contexts.

Private sector development

Finding 27. UNDP is yet to prioritize private sector development in post-conflict programme support.

UNDP corporate strategies identified the need to scale up public-private initiatives to enhance progress on the SDGs and, more specifically, to create an enabling environment for private sector development. Corporate strategies aimed to increase employment and livelihoods opportunities using sustainable production technologies and inclusive markets. The Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2018-2021)[158] further highlights the UNDP commitment to unlock finance from the private sector for the SDGs, and makes specific mention of this in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Post-conflict contests have significant

capacity challenges and multiple demands for support. This evaluation reemphasizes the challenges and complexities of engaging with the private sector in conflict-affected countries, though UNDP efforts to catalyze private sector development are developing slowly. There has not been sufficient impetus to create enabling environments for private sector funding for government priorities in post-conflict contexts, although sectors such as sustainable energy were identified for sustained focus at national and subnational levels. This evaluation shows that private sector partnerships are a necessary condition for effective employment and livelihood programmes.

Most UNDP interventions did not find the necessary balance between short-term employment, income-generating activities, private sector development and legal and regulatory reforms to create an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth. Access to financial services remains a key limiting factor for private sector development in fragile and conflict settings. UNDP small business grants, while beneficial for MSME start-ups, are unsustainable, and UNDP has had limited success in supporting microfinance institutions in fragile and conflict settings. For example, in Yemen, an impact assessment of the Enhanced Rural Resilience programme identified a gap in the supply of services to developed businesses, notably financial services.[159] Efforts to support microfinance institutions were not successful, with many failing as a result of widespread conflict. In situations where conflict is widespread, investor confidence is unlikely to be high, limiting opportunities for support to microfinance institutions. In CAR and DRC, a lack of funding led to a lack of support for investment and marketing, which meant that the 3X6 principle of sustainability was not addressed in programming.[160]

UNDP is often unable to complete the six steps of the 3X6 approach, faltering on the last two

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[157]   African Development Bank Group (2018) Enable Youth Programme Brochure.
[158]   UNDP (2019) Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP's Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2018-2021).
[159]   UNDP (2019) The Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen Joint Programme, Livelihoods Impact Assessment.
[160]   UNDP (2016) DRC Evaluation Finale Programme Pays Cycle 2013-2017.

which cover investment and sustainability. While some contexts prove that UNDP has the capacity to generate evidence to influence the enabling environment, this has been inconsistent over the evaluation period. In Cote D'Ivoire, UNDP supported groups to implement income-generating activities in the form of loans, with the repayments used to feed a revolving fund. However, a lack of common understanding and communication by different partners meant that there was little prospect of repayment of the loans, needed to replenish the revolving fund which had been designed to continue after the project ended.[161]

In partnership with chambers of commerce, UNDP supported expo events to support business development and networking opportunities (in Ukraine and Somalia). In Somalia, UNDP supported networking events such as the first Mogadishu Tech Summit and the first Somali Technology, Engineering and Mathematics conference, to engage with ecosystems of actors and foster engagement. This resulted in youth beneficiaries in Mogadishu starting the Somali Technology Association Centre to provide IT business incubation and other services. However, these efforts were inconsistent. In Burkina Faso, it was noted that UNDP missed opportunities through lack of engagement with the Chamber of Commerce, which limited the scale-up of efforts.

There are promising initiatives in the context of natural disasters, but engagement of the private sector in fragile and conflict contexts is still in early stages for the most part. Initiatives used to facilitate networks of private sector stakeholders in disaster management, such as the Connecting Business Initiative, have the potential to be replicated for conflict responses. While there are examples of a spill-over effect, for example in Côte d'Ivoire where funds were used for addressing intercommunal conflict, overall the use of the Connecting Business Initiative model has been low.

There has been successful engagement in enabling private sector investments in the sustainable energy sector, an area prioritized in the current Strategic Plan, and there is considerable potential for further work in this area. UNDP potential lies in engaging the private sector in inclusive business, and aligning business strategies and approaches with the SDGs. Such opportunities are greater in contexts where conflict is localized or the country context is fragile, rather than in countries where conflict is widespread and intense. Private sector development did not receive appropriate attention, and greater focus is needed on the enabling environment for business to support the scaling and sustainability of such efforts.

While it is important to support the development of MSMEs, it is equally important to look at the environment in which they operate. Without addressing issues related to the overall business environment, interventions which solely focus on enterprise level are unlikely to achieve sustainable development. Factors in the enabling environment that are likely to impact on the sustainability of MSMEs include: access to credit and finance; business development services; marketing and networking; and legislative and regulatory policies. UNDP lacks a consistent approach to influencing and engaging in the policy environment, likely due to human resource capacity, though recent changes in the Crisis Bureau with a focus on livelihoods and MSMEs should improve the situation. A 'practice area' on private sector engagement within the Crisis Bureau could further support country office engagement with the private sector in fragile and conflict settings.

UNDP programmes in Colombia demonstrate the importance of research and policy dialogue in influencing labour market dynamics and private sector decisions. However, in resource-rich countries such as Colombia and Guatemala, UNDP did not pay sufficient attention to private sector engagement, particularly for employment and the SDGs. In subnational conflict contexts, UNDP is yet to strategically orient itself to enable private sector development and de-risk the policy space for longer-term solutions. While UNDP cannot match the international financial institutions in terms of investment in private sector development,

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161   UNDP (2020) Independent Country Programme Evaluation, Cote D'Ivoire.

it can complement efforts to create an enabling environment and facilitate the private sector at local level. Such efforts were not pursued, even in countries where it was more feasible to engage with the private sector.

Responding to multiple crises

Finding 28. There have been several missed opportunities to comprehensively address multiple crises both within the UNDP programme and at country level. Weak synergies between UNDP initiatives, and the lack of a well-conceptualized prevention programme, undermined efforts to address the interlinking dimensions of conflict and other crises.

Besides high levels of poverty, multiple crises can have interfaces with conflict, climate-induced drought, water scarcity and floods, which have the potential to exacerbate one another and require an integrated response. Similarly, weak governance contributes to poor natural resource management, increases the severity of health crises and intensifies conflict. There are promising examples, such as the 3X6 plus approach used for sustainable livelihoods in Zimbabwe, where communities face drought, cyclone and floods amidst conflict. In most conflict-affected countries, UNDP supported each of these areas individually but did not address the linkages between multiple fragilities. For example, in Mali and South Sudan, the intersection between conflict, drought, internal displacement and food insecurity was missed. UNDP had projects on each of the drivers of conflict and displacement, food insecurity and lack of services, but these were compartmentalized. A lack of processes to support a more integrated approach to planning and programming, that addresses intersecting elements of multiple crises, often resulted in multiple simultaneous responses to different drivers without synergy.

In 2018, UNDP developed a Climate Security Mechanism with DPPA and UNEP, to facilitate data and analysis on climate-related security risk assessments and improve early warning systems to capture climate and development interface issues that can increase conflict. This aimed to improve synergies and coherence between development, climate change and peace and security efforts. The country offices found the toolkits on climate security assessments useful, although assessments are yet to be carried out. A regional SDG Climate Facility in the Arab States was launched to promote solutions and improve regional-level coordination for climate-related work with the League of Arab States, the Arab Water Council, UNEP, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the World Food Programme. Such efforts need consistent engagement to enable sectoral solutions to the intersecting dimensions of climate impacts and conflict. Climate security assessments have the potential to inform government policies and need to be harnessed as an interagency effort.

UNDP is well-positioned to support climate-conflict nexus efforts, given its substantive engagement in both of these areas. A large proportion of major droughts between 2014 and 2018 occurred in Africa, and many of the affected countries are also experiencing conflict.[162] Water is a major factor in conflict, and disputes between upstream and downstream areas are likely to intensify unless proactively managed.[163] UNDP supports climate change adaptation programmes in 16 of the 34 conflict-affected countries assessed, but the siloed approach to programming was a challenge, as synergies were not consolidated. This was also the case in countries where resilience-based approaches were used, as they were confined to certain initiatives and not used across the country programme.

UNDP was proactive and enabled practical solutions during health emergencies, by addressing governance issues in its crisis response. UNDP responded to the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which began in a rural area of south-eastern Guinea, spread to urban areas and across borders

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[162]   IRIN News, 'Drought in Africa 2017'. See: https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/03/17/drought-africa-2017
[163]   World Economic Forum (2020) Global Risk report.

within weeks, and became a global epidemic within months. UNDP had a successful partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on the Ebola worker payments project. In Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, UNDP programme management skills were combined with UNCDF technical expertise and World Bank capital to provide a successful and innovative digital payment solution, in a situation where personal and fiduciary security was at risk. The project was widely recognized as instrumental in maintaining Ebola health worker services at a time when any interruption could have been catastrophic. The Ebola outbreak occurred in the context of emerging violent extremism, and in countries at critical points in conflict recovery processes. This exposed governance deficits on the continent capable of inflicting long-lasting negative impacts on achievement of the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063. While UNDP support ensured that there was no disruption to health services, and introduced practices that have been carried forward, the crisis also points to inadequate focus on governance issues in countries facing multiple crises. As the COVID-19 pandemic shows again, weak governance structures and active conflict in Africa can worsen the effects for people facing complex humanitarian crises, especially health emergencies.

In its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP and its country offices are working under the leadership of United Nations Resident Coordinators, and in close collaboration with specialized United Nations agencies, United Nations Regional Economic Commissions and international financial institutions, to assess the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic on economies and communities. As the technical lead for the socioeconomic response, UNDP has engaged in country-level health system support, such as the purchase of medical supplies and materials, provided support to digital learning platforms for education, and supported recovery. It is too early to judge the impact of UNDP efforts in this regard, as COVID-19 is a recent and evolving

phenomenon. There are concerns in the countries assessed that COVID-19 will divert attention from the conflict response and addressing systemic challenges. Similar to the Ebola response, strengthening health governance, social security and government payment processes are central to the COVID-19 response. The challenge for UNDP and other agencies is to address intersecting issues underlying the pandemic and conflict.

The Sahel region is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters (particularly droughts and desertification), as well as to violent extremism and radicalization. UNDP is yet to update its 2014 Sahel strategy taking into consideration the SDGs, the United Nations Sahel Plan[164] and Africa Agenda 2063. The Sahel strategy assumes significance in addressing intersecting dimensions of conflict-climate crises. The period since 2014 has seen several conflicts as a result of the rise in insurgencies in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions, as well as climate-induced conflict in several parts of the continent, challenging progress on peace and development. An issue that has far greater implications for the Sahel than other regions is the disconnect of UNDP country level programming from regional issues. The predominance of a humanitarian mode of programming has undermined the focus on engaging with the core drivers of development and security. Parallel responses to multiple crises are undermining contributions in the Sahel.

Innovation

Finding 29. There are ongoing efforts to infuse innovative development solutions in peace and institutional strengthening initiatives, but these lack momentum in conflict contexts.

UNDP is committed to driving innovation, exploiting the benefits of new technologies and exploring new ways of working. The UNDP Innovation Facility has been active since 2014 to accelerate SDG progress. UNDP Accelerator Labs, introduced in 2018 including in conflict contexts, are an important

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[164]   United Nations Sahel Plan 2019.

tool to further promote change and innovation.[165] UNDP has explored innovative techniques and approaches to livelihoods and governance, but was not successful in pursuing them over time or at scale. UNDP programmes often appear out-of-date, although there are some efforts by country offices to overcome this.

UNDP has undertaken innovation work in conflict-affected countries, which has often focused on the use of IT to help with decision-making. In Mali, UNDP partnered with the North America Space Agency, UNOSAT[166] and the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology to use drones and satellite imagery to provide real-time monitoring of humanitarian and development issues. The data has been used to support work on community development in particular.[167] Innovations had an immediate impact in the area of operations, adding a level of sophistication to UNDP operational support. In Afghanistan, UNDP has applied sophisticated technologies to understand behaviours and perceptions and collect and analyse data on rule of law issues, especially corruption. This participatory analysis approach is intended to enhance LOTFA's understanding of, and ability to address, corruption.[168] Other popular examples were the use of mobile technology to facilitate access to legal aid and emergency support in conflict-affected areas in Ukraine, the successful use of digital money transfers for salary payments to health workers in Sierra Leone and other countries affected by Ebola; the use of mobile technology to improve access to justice; and electronic accounting and payment systems rolled out by UNDP for the police in Afghanistan to reduce payroll corruption.

In addition to enhancing understanding, UNDP innovators pilot approaches to change policy-making and public sector behaviours. In Zimbabwe, an Accelerator Lab was set up at the request of the President's Cabinet to support the transition phase. The Lab has sought to shift from expert- to experience-driven advice in an evolving policy context. This is a new initiative and it is too early to determine progress or outcomes. One issue concerning support to core governance functions in conflict-affected States is how little traction such innovation has had in the UNDP portfolio. E-government has been established for a long time and, globally, mobile technologies, social media and open data initiatives have proliferated. They have been used to improve public services and accountability by, *inter alia*, putting government online, mapping crime data and police performance, monitoring public spending and corruption, and tracking the behaviour and performance of elected representatives.[169] There is great scope for UNDP work on core governance functions to drive forward innovation much more ambitiously.

Innovation in programming in conflict-affected contexts is in early stages, and current efforts do not match the pioneering solutions that these contexts require. Innovation efforts still aim to readjust programme practices, rather than develop solutions that will connect the right set of actors in a more comprehensive response to conflict drivers and statebuilding needs. As a knowledge organization, to stay ahead of the curve, UNDP needs greater impetus to galvanize programme solutions that can accelerate peace and development. While Accelerator Labs and related initiatives have the potential to identify advanced programme solutions, currently this is at the level of knowledge facilitation, enabling the exchange of information on what has worked and modifying and applying this to other contexts.

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[165] UNDP Accelerator Labs Brochure https://acceleratorlabs.undp.org/content/acceleratorlabs/en/home/library/undp-accelerator-labs-brochure.html
[166] UNOSAT is a technology-intensive programme under the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.
[167] United Nations (2016) Satellite imagery provides clearer picture of Timbuktu reconstruction https://news.un.org/en/audio/2016/11/619932
[168] Using the Cognitive Edge SenseMaker tool. UNDP Afghanistan has also sought to meld technology and youth to address corruption issues, see: https://hack4integrity.org/
[169] See https://theodi.org/projects-services/projects/; https://www.ie.edu/school-global-public-affairs/centers-and-initiatives/publictech-lab/

Chapter 5.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

This evaluation assessed UNDP support to conflict-affected countries for the period 2014 to 2020. Building on the evaluation findings presented in the previous chapter, the conclusions and recommendations focus on strategic issues of UNDP support. The evaluation was conducted at a time when UNDP was defining its new Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 and coincides with the consolidation of the newly formed Crisis Bureau and its strategies. The recommendations take into consideration corporate policy formulation and the change processes now underway.

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. In conflict-affected countries, UNDP has made important contributions to stabilizing, building and strengthening institutions, as well as enabling processes for statebuilding and peacebuilding.

The evaluation period has been marked by major escalations of violent conflict in regions of great strategic geopolitical importance, escalations of both internationalized and localized conflicts, protracted armed conflicts, growing concerns about international violent extremism, the increasing intersection of climate change with conflict and displacement, and politically-sensitive peace processes. UNDP responded to this wide diversity of contexts and complex challenges with effective interventions supporting national and international partners, filling critical gaps across the spectrum of recovery and stabilization. UNDP has been responsive, facilitating core government functions, restoring services and providing temporary employment and livelihoods. Notwithstanding challenges in arriving at the right response in some cases, UNDP should be credited for its contributions to the progress made in conflict-affected countries.

While the programme areas UNDP has supported have remained consistent over the years, the contexts and scale of conflicts have varied, forcing UNDP to learn and adapt rapidly. UNDP has displayed agility in adapting to context, whether swiftly setting up a large stabilization facility in Iraq to deliver at scale, supporting peace processes in Colombia, or promoting resilience-based approaches in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. UNDP has the unique distinction of having operational and strategic capability to mobilize multi-sectoral, whole-of-government responses together with agency-specific expertise to promote peace and development in crisis-affected countries. In line with changing geostrategic trends, the UNDP focus has shifted from post-conflict peacebuilding and disarmament to stabilization and countering extremism across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

UNDP made concerted efforts to strengthen partnerships with other United Nations agencies, particularly humanitarian agencies, and international financial institutions. This assumes significance given the corporate emphasis on furthering NWoW and HDPN. Although there is considerable scope for improvement, partnerships with United Nations agencies enhanced contributions to improving basic services and institutional capacities. Programmatic partnerships for consolidated engagement, in line with NWoW, are yet to be prioritized.

UNDP programme presence in all conflict contexts gives it the comparative advantage to contribute to global policy and advocacy on NWoW and the triple nexus. There is scope for improving its global and regional engagement by identifying areas for consistent participation and optimizing its regional presence. The broad, *ad hoc* nature of

UNDP engagement has reduced its contribution to the global policy space and providing thought leadership to the HDPN agenda. At global level, there is a vacuum in leading the operationalization of HDPN and scope for UNDP to provide thought leadership in translating the HDPN concept into a practical inter-agency approach. UNDP did not strengthen synergies between country programmes and global-level engagement to further consolidate its positioning in global policy discourse.

UNDP is yet to comprehensively address the challenge of the reduction in programme funding for longer-term livelihoods, employment and core governance support in conflict-affected countries, and the implications for the role it can play. Donor funding for these thematic areas has increased in recent years, but UNDP has not been able to tap into this funding. A significant component of the UNDP programme portfolio comprises fiduciary support, and funding for programme support is currently smaller. Although conflict-affected countries comprise a significant proportion of overall UNDP expenditure, actual resources are small. Considering that traditional donor contributions are the primary source of UNDP programme resources, there has been insufficient diversification of funding sources.

Conclusion 2. UNDP made a significant contribution to stabilization efforts. Anchoring stabilization support in peacebuilding and institutional strengthening processes is essential for sustainable outcomes.

Stabilization support in protracted crises is a major component of the UNDP portfolio, laying the groundwork for peacebuilding and preventing the recurrence of violence. UNDP has played a significant and constructive role in the establishment and successful management of large stabilization facilities and enabled the restoration of services in high-risk environments. As such, UNDP has served to create a clear niche in complex post-conflict responses. The Iraq experience has been successfully replicated, globally supporting infrastructure and other early recovery efforts in immediate post-conflict contexts.

UNDP programme frameworks recognize the importance of the stabilization-peace-development interface but, in practice, the approach to stabilization focused on immediate tasks to restore and rebuild social infrastructure. While there are tangible outcomes in terms of improved social services and the return of IDPs, these were not anchored in local institutional processes and peace initiatives, reducing the sustainability of outcomes and opportunities to strengthen institutional capacities. The emphasis of stabilization programmes on the quick restoration of services widened the stabilization-peace-development divide. Treating stabilization programmes as means for quick rehabilitation and restoration of public infrastructure runs the risk of missed leveraging opportunities for peacebuilding and institutional strengthening.

Conflict-sensitive, inclusive processes would have further enhanced the UNDP contribution to stabilization programmes. UNDP is yet to clarify its value addition in stabilization programmes, irrespective of adaptation to different country contexts. In the absence of defined stabilization principles, UNDP is predisposed to comply with different donor requirements, which often do not pay attention to institutional strengthening.

Conclusion 3. Prevention, as an overall framework for UNDP work, is evolving. The UNDP programme response has been predominantly in conflict recovery and stabilization areas, and only a small proportion in conflict prevention. As the largest United Nations development agency, UNDP did not take a proactive approach to develop an integrated prevention offer at global and country levels. Lack of systematic effort to address prevention accelerators reduced the UNDP contribution to peace and development.

Underprioritization of conflict prevention is a common issue in international support, not just for UNDP. At corporate policy level, UNDP acknowledges the significance of conflict prevention for progress on the SDGs and is committed to enhancing synergies between development and peace interventions. But this commitment has not translated into concrete prevention programming support. In conflict and post-conflict contexts, UNDP sought to build institutional resilience through initiatives such as strengthening public

administration, rule of law and the security sector, and community resilience through inclusive economic revitalization and addressing climate impacts. But such efforts were short-term and did not always result in a coherent and critical mass to contribute to conflict prevention. UNDP is yet to clarify its conceptual approach to integrated prevention before, during and after a conflict, and how its conflict and development programming can be leveraged towards this.

Work on identifying the accelerators of prevention for more sustained engagement was limited. This gap is more evident in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, where prevention of violent conflict assumes significance given the interlinked security, humanitarian, political and climate risks. UNDP country and regional programmes have deprioritized systematic support to institutionalized prevention mechanisms. The increase in the climate-conflict interface required systematic efforts to address interlinked dimensions and prevent tensions and conflict. There is scope for further investment in youth as agents of peace and youth-led solutions to the prevention of conflict and violence, including violent extremism.

Conclusion 4. In conflict-affected countries, UNDP programmes are predisposed towards short-term programming, reducing its contribution to accelerating peace and sustainable development. Important contributions were made in enabling temporary employment, infrastructure for basic services and core governance functionality, which form the basis for longer-term efforts. Notwithstanding such contributions, post-conflict contexts require sustained engagement to provide durable livelihood solutions and stronger governance processes.

The rehabilitation of basic services infrastructure contributed to the stabilization of conflict-affected areas. Short-term local- and community-level recovery and rehabilitation efforts have been a useful strategy for restoring services, enabling the operation of public administration and generating temporary employment, encouraging the return of displaced populations. For this progress to be

sustained, linkages between stabilization or early recovery programmes and peacebuilding and institutional strengthening are required, but UNDP was not always successful in enabling these linkages. Similarly, UNDP economic revitalization programme interventions, while appropriate for coping and recovery, fall short of addressing key constraints to durable solutions for employment and livelihoods and the necessary institutional processes. UNDP is yet to balance short-term inventions with medium- to long-term engagement to address key drivers of peace and development.

While UNDP adopted pertinent programme approaches for medium- to longer-term solutions, their application and implementation remain uneven, reducing its contribution to accelerating the transition to development. UNDP introduced sustainable livelihood practices through approaches such as 3X6 and Area-based Development. There were, however, challenges in microfinance and the expansion of markets for the sustainable development of value chains. The concept of resilience is theoretically an improvement in the livelihoods approach, but in practice, did not provide a dynamic model for livelihood change processes at household, community and institutional levels. The Area-based Development approach has been promising in post-conflict contexts, but not consistently pursued.

UNDP has the distinction of supporting the functionality of institutions, responding to public administration needs and providing services. In post-conflict contexts and countries transitioning to development, functionality alone is not sufficient, and UNDP approaches to strengthen government institutions and governance processes are not fit for purpose.

Strengthening governance capacities requires sustained engagement, and there were missed opportunities to position governance as central to the conflict prevention agenda. UNDP, rightly, makes the case that its work on governance and institutional strengthening helps to prevent conflict and promote peace, but is yet to position its support as such. A lack of long-term focus and

demonstration of technical domain expertise are factors undermining UNDP positioning as a key governance actor. Major donors are making extensive use of consultancy firms to implement governance programmes. UNDP did not reposition its governance support in tune with current public management practices and is yet to go beyond technical policy and the substitution of functionality, to consistently pursue the institutional reform agenda. There are pockets of innovation in UNDP work in conflict-affected countries, but these are isolated and limited.

Conclusion 5. Compartmentalized responses to different crises at country level missed opportunities to address cross-cutting and intersecting elements. The cumulative impacts of multiple crises in the Sahel and Horn of Africa required comprehensive strategies.

The current COVID-19 pandemic notwithstanding, intertwined security, humanitarian and climate challenges in the Sahel and Horn of Africa demand a comprehensive approach. Several strategies adopted by regional institutions require operation-alization. Response was needed at multiple levels, through a combination of short-term support and measures to address the strategic issues of institutions and governance to promote peace, stability and inclusive growth. While there have been isolated efforts, such as the Lake Chad Basin facility, the overall UNDP regional and country programmes did not demonstrate the urgency and intensity demanded by the Sahel and Horn of Africa situation. UNDP did not build on programme interventions addressing conflict and refugee crises, climate impacts and poverty reduction, to enable advocacy and coordinated engagement. A common issue in Africa and the Arab States is the lack of comprehensive regional programmes to develop well-tested models to inform country programmes and regional discourse on prevention and response. Similar to other regions, NWoW is yet to manifest in practice in the Sahel. UNDP did not have much success in forging programme partnerships with humanitarian and development agencies in the Sahel for a consolidated response.

Conclusion 6. UNDP commitment to strengthening the role of youth as agents of peace and change is undermined by the lack of a multi-pronged programme in select areas. Given the small scope of UNDP programmes in conflict-affected countries, mainstreaming youth development and extremism prevention has had limited outcomes.

UNDP corporate policies and strategies have consistently emphasized youth as agents for development and resolving and preventing conflict, and thus as key stakeholders in programme support. Youth development is considered a cross-sectoral priority, and addressed in various UNDP interventions, specifically in employment, PVE and social cohesion programmes. With some exceptions, youth programmes had micro-level success, but there is limited evidence of them addressing policy bottlenecks in youth employment and development. In the absence of targeted programmes and collaboration with agencies with large youth programmes to scale up, contributions have been minimal. Furthermore, UNDP is yet to use programme tools such as Accelerator Labs to develop more sustainable solutions for youth development in conflict contexts.

Conclusion 7. Conflict contexts present challenges and opportunities for private sector engagement. While the UNDP strategy for private sector engagement and development prioritizes conflict-affected counties, progress has been slow as concerted efforts are lacking at the programme level. UNDP has not adequately considered the area of global partnerships for private sector development in conflict-affected countries.

Private sector development in post-conflict contexts reflects both the complexity of this important area, as well as a lack of sustained UNDP engagement. With programmes in key areas of development, UNDP has opportunities for private sector engagement. There are examples where UNDP has demonstrated replicable and sustainable private sector models that could be adapted to other fragile and post-conflict contexts. In the sustainable energy sector in Sudan, for example, UNDP enabled private sector investments resulting in transformative

agricultural livelihoods. Such successful examples, while important, are small in number, and private sector engagement was not consistently taken into account during reconstruction and redevelopment. Notwithstanding the enabling environment challenges posed by post-conflict and conflict contexts, opportunities were missed in leveraging UNDP programme areas for private sector engagement. Economic revitalization, inclusive growth and jobs have been constrained by the absence of clearly prioritized and sequenced support for a focused medium- to long-term strategy for private sector engagement.

Stabilization and other early recovery efforts are yet to prioritize private sector development as a solution for financing and sustaining redevelopment. A lack of sustained attention undermined the promotion of the private sector as a legitimate driver of economic revitalization. To succeed, MSME initiatives require business support along the entire supply chain, suggesting that programmatic engagement in private sector development is now a necessity. Opportunities were missed, particularly in countries with localized conflict where engagement in more stable areas could be leveraged for engagement in affected areas. UNDP is in the process of testing various tools appropriate for adaptation to conflict contexts, such as the venture accelerator and MSME action platforms. Constraining such efforts is the lack of prioritization of private sector engagement as integral to UNDP programme support.

Examples of success show the importance of nurturing the enabling environment for private sector development and investment. Supporting the business environment is most challenging in conflict contexts, which therefore require a more collaborative approach. UNDP support to de-risking the policy and investment space has been sparse in conflict contexts and lacked partnerships. Government policies can play an important part in providing a private-sector-friendly environment, but UNDP has not sufficiently used the evidence gathered through its support to business development to engage governments on policy reform.

Conclusion 8. The UNDP contribution to enhancing women's roles in peacebuilding and addressing gender inequality remains weak. Low prioritization of GEWE is reducing the UNDP contribution to conflict-affected countries.

The UNDP approach to GEWE was not commensurate with the severity of challenges for women and gender inequalities perpetuated by multiple crises. While there has been progress on mainstreaming GEWE in UNDP programme support, targeted policy and advocacy contributions in conflict-affected countries are limited. Viewing women as beneficiaries, rather than supporting them as agents of change in areas of early recovery, peacebuilding and statebuilding, undermine transformative outcomes. UNDP support to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 has considerably reduced over the years, more so with the closure of the BCPR. A minimalist approach to GEWE in conflict responses has significantly undermined peace and security efforts. The consequences of this are more severe in the Sahel and Horn of Africa.

Although UNDP has prioritized GEWE as a strategic objective, and there is acknowledgement of the critical importance of support to women, peace and security, this is not reflected in resource allocations for GEWE-related programmes. UNDP was a pioneer in promoting programming solutions to advance GEWE in crisis contexts, such as the minimum 15 percent expenditure for GEWE initiatives which informed the United Nations system-wide policy. UNDP has not been successful in making the case for its potential strategic contribution through support to different thematic areas in conflict-affected countries. The potential of UNDP to strengthen GEWE is underutilized, in part because of the ODA trend for funding specialized agencies for gender-related programming.

Conclusion 9. The reconstitution of the Crisis Bureau has provided a much-needed anchor for UNDP support to conflict-affected countries, and an impetus for consolidating programme responses at global and national levels, and is a significant step forward.

The reconstitution of the Crisis Bureau has been important in positioning UNDP in the evolving context of reforms of the United Nations Development System and peace and security architecture, and the emphasis of the Secretary-General on prevention for peace. Having a dedicated bureau focusing on crisis has improved the consolidation of UNDP conflict-related support, streamlined technical support to country offices, rationalized programme approaches, and ensured steps were taken to move beyond immediate response-related programming towards a more substantive role in prevention. The Crisis Bureau has been successful in repositioning UNDP conflict programming, addressing disengagement issues since the closure of the BCPR, and enabling UNDP to engage in global debates on peace and security and policy discussions with the Secretariat. In line with NWoW and the HDPN agenda, there have been concerted efforts to strengthen global-level partnerships. There is scope for further deepening partnerships with other United Nations agencies such as FAO, ILO and UN Women, and for system-wide partnerships for comprehensive support in the Sahel.

The UNDP business model in conflict-affected countries has improved, in terms of programme management processes and instruments for greater efficiency of country programmes, with the streamlining of surge deployment, fast-track finance processes, and access to advisory services. The recently introduced Global Policy Network is being streamlined to improve technical support to country offices. Technical assistance from headquarter bureaux and regional offices add value to county programmes, and the distributed model of the Global Policy Network is a sensible way to tap UNDP-wide expertise. UNDP was able to respond quickly to the immediate needs of conflict-affected countries, though maintaining that level of response over the long term was difficult. The current structure can promote efficient advisory and technical services, but this also requires investment in technical expertise to support priority areas of programme support.

The division of responsibilities between BPPS and the Crisis Bureau is evolving. Further clarity in the functioning of the two bureaux would avoid duplication and build on synergies and coordinated approaches for a more comprehensive response in post-conflict contexts. In prevention programming, where the overlap between the two policy bureaux is greatest, and particularly in inclusive growth and core governance functions, parallel BPPS and Crisis Bureau programming could reduce the contribution of UNDP. Similarly, clarity of roles and responsibilities between policy and regional bureaux is fundamental to better leverage the various UNDP programme units, though there are areas yet to be clarified.

The delinking of the Resident Coordinator system from UNDP has provided an opportunity for the organization to strategically reposition its programmatic analytical, policy advisory and advocacy work at country level. In conflict contexts, this is particularly important in mission countries, where the change processes have impacted UNDP programmes. Identifying areas for repositioning and strengthening the UNDP response post-delinking is key to the continued contribution of UNDP in crisis-affected countries.

5.2. Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.	**UNDP needs a well-focused corporate policy that responds to the Secretary-General's call for a coordinated and integrated approach to sustainable peace. UNDP should demonstrate global leadership in facilitating and promoting the HDPN agenda.**
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation and is developing a crisis and fragility framework which will align crisis prevention and response strategies with the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustaining Peace Agenda, and guide the strategies, programmes and operations for UNDP work in crisis/fragile contexts.
	UNDP will enhance its learning to deliver on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in practice and channel this into upgraded nexus approaches, spanning both its programmatic role in terms of development effectiveness and delivering results, and its integrator role, globally and in country.
	UNDP will leverage existing global joint programming engagements with the United Nations Secretariat, including the Joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and its extended capacity provided by peace and development advisers, the Global Focal Point on the Rule of Law and the United Nations Transitions Project, among others, to support the resident coordinator system to ensure cross-pillar coherence and promote joint analysis, planning and programming towards collective nexus outcomes.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	**Comments**
1.1. Develop crisis and fragility framework.	June 2021	Crisis Bureau/ Crisis and Fragility Policy and Engagement Team (CFPET)	Initiated	
1.2. Systematize corporate learning and good practices on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; translate into practical policy and programme solutions for country-level application, and into strengthened global policy advocacy and leadership through relevant forums.	End 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET	Initiated	

Recommendation 2.	Prioritize support to conflict prevention at global and country levels. UNDP should develop its prevention offer with a focus on facilitating long-term structural change and a generational transformation agenda in conflict affected countries. Identify areas where there will be a sustained long-term focus. As part of the prevention offer, address the interlinked dimensions of climate and conflict.		

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation and is developing a new prevention offer that covers multiple time frames: short-term, focusing on early warning and early preventive action; medium-term, focusing on building infrastructure for peace and capacities for dialogue, mediation and consensus-building; and long-term, addressing underlying and root developmental causes of conflict, including climate change, which require prioritization in UNDP country programmes. The offer will factor in risk-informed development and integrated approaches in complex crisis environments. Aligned to this, UNDP will develop a new methodology to assess its prevention impact.

As part of this prevention offer and strengthening links between early warning and early action, the work of UNDP on monitoring crisis risks will build on the organization's data strategy and related efforts to strengthen data collection, data literacy and data/evidence-based analysis and programming for scaled-up prevention work. It will feed into internal decision-making support mechanisms for regular horizon scanning to inform early prevention action, both within UNDP and at an inter-agency level through relevant forums (e.g., Inter-Agency Standing Committee and United Nations prevention architecture).

UNDP will further strengthen the links between its new prevention offer and prevention of violent extremism and the inclusion and engagement of youth in line with Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security across the five pillars.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. Prevention offer finalized and rolled out in 30 countries, including development of impact measurement methodology on prevention and peacebuilding.	Offer by December 2021; country roll-out by 2023	Crisis Bureau/ Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI)	Initiated	
2.2. Institutionalize horizon-scanning mechanism to regularly analyse emerging risks for internal decision-making processes, resource allocation and inter-agency mechanisms; analysis based on roll-out of the crisis risk dashboard tool in at least 30 of the 57 fragile States to support data-driven contextual analysis and development of related guidance.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET, CPPRI	Initiated	

2.3. Review of UNDP youth and prevention of violent extremism portfolios, building on stocktaking review, to ensure and promote enhanced coherence and alignment.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CPPRI, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) Governance		

Recommendation 3. **UNDP management should ensure organization-wide policy coherence to address inconsistent conceptual and programmatic responses across regions. Address constraints that are limiting the substantive and long-term engagement of UNDP in core areas of support.**

Management Response: UNDP accepts the recommendation noting it has designed the Global Policy Network (GPN) to bring together all UNDP bureaux to ensure coherence across its policy and programmatic approaches, and that globally distributed capacity and expertise are fully leveraged to achieve organizational objectives.

UNDP is preparing its crisis and fragility framework, which will guide its programmes and support to crisis-affected and fragile contexts, including: UNDP focus areas (identifying major risks and opportunities for transformative change in fragile contexts); UNDP actions (linking to its technical offers in areas such as prevention, peacebuilding, governance, rule of law and human rights, disaster risk reduction, human mobility and recovery); and ways of working (to ensure that UNDP is fit for purpose in complex and difficult operating environments). The framework will be accompanied by a new generation of global programmes on priority themes to provide tested and coherent signature solutions to country offices.

At the same time, UNDP is ensuring that it is "fit for fragility", demonstrating sufficient agility and adaptability to operate in crisis and fragile environments. Revised and upgraded policies, procedures and capacities include: (a) Surge rosters and academy, which enable the right people with the right skills to be in the right place at the right time; (b) ensuring that TRAC3 funding is effectively invested in prevention, early recovery, nexus partnerships and protracted situations; (c) SOPs for crises enable UNDP to use the most agile institutional mechanisms and procedures to respond in a fully coordinated way across its country offices and bureaux; (d) the Surge Delivery Lab supports country offices in crisis situations with additional capacity, analytics and agile solutions in critical areas of delivery and operations; and (e) the Surge digital assessments facilitate country offices to quickly conduct damage, impact and other assessments, collecting critical primary data and translating it into actionable information to support decision-making by managers and partners.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. Launch of crisis and fragility framework.	June 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET	Initiated	
3.2. Launch next-generation crisis-related global programmes on priority themes, including prevention, rule of law, recovery and risk reduction.	2021	Crisis Bureau	Initiated	
3.3. Revised SOPs and upgraded Surge deployment, delivery support and assessment mechanisms.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ Country Support Management Team , Bureau of Management	Initiated	

Recommendation 4.	UNDP should emphasize medium- to long-term livelihood and employment support. It should take measures to put holistic employment and livelihood options into practice for wider use and replication in conflict and post-conflict contexts.
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation and will develop improved context and systems analysis to identify new options for sustainability of livelihoods and economic recovery in conflict and post-conflict settings to reduce economic instability, poverty and conflicts over time in fragile contexts. UNDP will identify common success elements from existing livelihoods and market-oriented initiatives and enhance support to country offices to strengthen integrated programming, better linking livelihoods/economic revitalization support, social cohesion, environmental management and governance, within the lenses of poverty reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals. These evidence-based frameworks will be incorporated in the revision of the UNDP guide on livelihoods and economic recovery in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1. Develop upgraded and gender-sensitive framework for livelihoods and economic recovery in fragile settings.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility (RSHM)	Initiated	
4.2. Develop and roll out guidance on mainstreaming market and demand analysis in the design and implementation of livelihoods and employment support in conflict and post-conflict settings.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ RSHM	Initiated	

4.3. Targeted policy and programme support to country offices' research and documentation of lessons learned and effective strategies to link short-term livelihoods programming to medium- and long-term poverty reduction outcomes, including access to finance and debt-coping strategies, adaptive social protection and other poverty alleviation approaches in fragile contexts.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ RSHM		

Recommendation 5.	UNDP should make long-term governance intervention central to its agenda of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. UNDP governance programmes should invest in new public administration models, with emphasis on planning and analysis, digital technologies and private sector engagement.
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation and will continue to support countries in developing accountable, responsive institutions at national and local levels focused on deepening social contracts, and support the creation of governance systems of the future, including through digitalization and social innovations, reflecting the shifting domain of governance work in fragile and non-fragile settings alike. Special focus will be given to understanding multi-level governance systems and continuing to examine how UNDP can strengthen the social contract in a comprehensive manner. UNDP has recognized the need for a more integrated governance offer that addresses the broader functioning of governance systems, including in managing complexity and multidimensional risk.
	UNDP is undertaking broader reviews of its governance work, including its local governance offer, building on previous frameworks, lessons and evidence. UNDP has also embarked on a research agenda to continue to offer thought leadership as well as practical guidance in this area. Likewise, UNDP has started a process of elevating the work on prevention and peacebuilding including the role of governance institutions. UNDP continues its lead role in this area through partnerships across the United Nations system, including the peacebuilding architecture, the Global Focal Point for Rule of Law arrangement and MOUs incorporating governance priorities with UNHCR, UNICEF and UN-Habitat.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
5.1. Reimagined governance offer articulated along with the next strategic plan, including evidence-based directions for longer-term governance interventions to accelerate peacebuilding and prevention.	2022	GPN: BPPS/ Governance, Crisis Bureau/ CPPRI, Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights team (ROLSHR)	Initiated	

5.2. Renewed local governance offer to provide fresh evidence-based and innovative options for local-level action to deliver sustainable development to people, including those most at risk in current and future crises.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CPPRI, BPPS/ Governance	Initiated	
5.3. With the DPPA Electoral Assistance Division, review funding mechanisms for electoral support to mitigate short-termism in this area.	December 2021	BPPS/ Governance		

Recommendation 6. ✅	**The Sahel programme is considerably underfunded. UNDP should demonstrate the urgency and intensity of the response demanded by the situation in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, recognize the unique challenges faced by the Sahel and prioritise the regional programme to galvanise support. Prioritise partnerships for a coordinated and collective response.**
Management Response: 💬	UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that the UNDP initiative on regenerating the Central Sahel is underpinned by three programmatic offers on governance, energy and youth empowerment, and will strengthen the coordination and delivery of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. Building on this offer, UNDP will continue to play a convening role with stakeholders, including donors, in mobilizing resources to address the multidimensional crises in the region. The Sahel offer is accompanied by a workplan for partner engagement, communications and resource mobilization.
	Likewise, through the UNDP corporate Level 3 response in the Sahel, significant investments are underway to strengthen UNDP capacities in the region, in order to scale up delivery and impact. In late 2020, UNDP adopted a similar approach in the Horn of Africa, which will be further elaborated in 2021 and beyond.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	**Comments**
6.1. Finalization and implementation of partner engagement, communications and resource mobilization plan for the Sahel offer, including high-level strategic dialogues, Member State and inter-agency briefings.	December 2021	Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), Crisis Bureau	Initiated	
6.2. Development and deepening of regional approach to the Horn of Africa.	December 2021	RBA, Regional Bureau for Arab States, Crisis Bureau	Initiated	

Recommendation 7.	Stabilization programmes need further consolidation. Merely focusing on infrastructure rehabilitation and building will not produce the desired outcomes unless combined with capacity development of local institutions and peace initiatives. Building on lessons from ongoing stabilization programmes, anchor future programmes within a peace and development framework.	
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation, acknowledging that stabilization programmes are by necessity context-specific, while informed by good practices from other countries and learning at global level. UNDP will continue to engage in dedicated learning and knowledge development based on its extensive stabilization engagements on the ground, including on links between stabilization and peacebuilding approaches, and strengthening the capacities of UNDP country offices to support these processes within a longer-term peacebuilding and development lens.	

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
7.1. Prepare UNDP guidance and principles on stabilization, based on learning and evidence review, focused on anchoring programmes within a peace and development framework.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau	Initiated	
7.2. Undertake research on stabilization in areas such as links to security sector reform and service delivery in areas of limited state presence.	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ ROLSHR/ CPPRI	Initiated	

Recommendation 8.	UNDP should further improve collaboration with United Nations agencies, the World Bank and bilateral donors for contributions to long-term outcomes in conflict-affected countries.	
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation noting that partnerships for delivering on humanitarian-development-peace nexus commitments with the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF and the World Food Programme have been strengthened and are showing potential for synergies and comple-mentarities, with shared advocacy work, tools and field support packages. Other partnerships will also be reviewed for synergies in pursuit of shared humanitarian, development and peace objectives.	
	The flagship joint UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention deploys peace and development advisors in 60 countries to provide the resident coordinator with cross-pillar coordination and coherence through provision of analytics and planned responses. Included in this engagement is a strong collaboration with IFIs in different settings, including through joint analysis/assessments and dialogue with governments and national counterparts, particularly in fragile and conflict settings.	

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
8.1. Undertake review of partnerships in crisis/fragile contexts, to ensure partnerships are sufficient and fit for purpose following the delinking of the resident coordinator system from UNDP; identify gaps and opportunities.	End 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET, BERA, regional bureaux		
8.2. Ensure continued engagement with United Nations system-wide review of integration and implement its recommendations in order to strengthen collaboration with the United Nations peace and security pillar.	End 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET, BERA	Initiated	
8.3. Build on existing partnerships with IFIs (including tripartite partnership with the World Bank and European Union on post-crisis recovery efforts), to identify thematic initiatives in key areas of prevention and response, leveraging the UNDP comparative advantage.	End 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET, BERA		

Recommendation 9.	**UNDP should make private sector engagement integral to its economic revitalization, inclusive growth and service delivery support. UNDP should accelerate the pace and scale of its engagement, with context-specific tools and interventions.**
Management Response:	UNDP accepts the recommendation and agrees on the need to further prioritize private sector engagement, investment and development as integral to economic revitalization, inclusive growth and service delivery, aligned to its private sector strategy and livelihoods and economic recovery policy and programmatic offer, and with a focus on inclusive business and market development approaches. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, UNDP will strengthen partnerships with United Nations entities and IFIs to design finance strategies and programmes that are conflict-sensitive, complement ongoing peacebuilding efforts, focus on gender-transformative interventions and are inclusive of youth, women and other marginalized populations.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
9.1. Establish corporate practice area and offer on private sector development and engagement in fragile and conflict-affected countries to support regional bureaux and country offices in their private sector engagement, including tools and guidance on inclusive market development, financing and risk management.	End 2021	Crisis Bureau/ RSHM, BPPS/ Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development		

Recommendation 10.

UNDP should prioritize support to GEWE for enabling gender-inclusive prevention, response and peace solutions.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation and will launch a gender and crisis Engagement Facility in 2021, informed by the relevant findings and recommendations from the evaluation, to serve as a one-stop-shop to consolidate, coordinate, communicate and bring coherence to UNDP support to gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and crisis-affected countries.

UNDP will prioritize gender considerations in crisis contexts by ensuring: increased deployment of gender-related technical and programmatic capacities on the ground in crisis-affected countries; allocation of the 15 per cent target of TRAC3 for gender-dedicated programme activities; and developing a specific Gender Seal certification track for county offices in crisis settings. UNDP will specifically develop its programmatic offer and sectoral strategies to enhance women's productive capacities and livelihoods in crisis contexts.

UNDP will continue to deliver its partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), implementing the crisis section of the 2018 MOU between UNDP and UN-Women, and through new gender--responsive conflict analysis initiatives to contribute to country-level planning processes and identify priorities for joint programming in crisis/fragile contexts.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	**Comments**
10.1. Creation of gender and crisis engagement facility.	March 2021	Crisis Bureau/ CFPET, BPPS/ Gender team	Initiated	
10.2. In coordination with regional bureaux, launch Gender Seal track for crisis countries.	December 2021	BPPS/Gender, Crisis Bureau/ CFPET	Initiated	
10.3. Development of a sectoral strategy on economic recovery with transformative gender equality outcomes.	December 2021	BPPS/Gender /Inclusive Growth, Crisis Bureau/CFPET		

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the IEO at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12441

Annex 1. Concepts used

Annex 2. Evaluation country programme sample

Annex 3. Key programme areas

Annex 4. Strategic plan outcomes and outputs included for assessment

Annex 5. UNDP programme expenditure

Annex 6. Weighted scoring

Annex 7. Qualitative comparative analysis

Annex 8. People consulted

Annex 9. Documents consulted

EVALUATION
OF UNDP SUPPORT TO
CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES