

Chad is amongst the poorest countries in the world despite its natural assets, demographic dividend and other potential. Over 85 percent of the population is considered multidimensionally poor, and 46 percent live below the national poverty line. Progress in human development has been hindered by years of socio-political instability, conflict and humanitarian crises stemming from regional instability and climate change. In 2020, about a third of the country's population was estimated to be affected by food insecurity. The country experienced an economic and financial crisis following a drop in oil prices in 2014, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has placed a further burden on the economic development and recovery of the country.

UNDP implemented a country programme strategy as outlined in its Country Programme Document (CPD) for 2017-2021. This was defined around the United Nations Cooperation Framework for the same period, and aligned with the national development priorities of Chad as outlined in its 'Vision 2030' and first five-year National Development Plan (NDP) 2017-2021. The UNDP programme in Chad planned to contribute to four outcome areas: (i) inclusive growth and sustainable development; (ii) democratic governance, rule of law and social cohesion; (iii) environmental resilience and disaster risk reduction; and (iv) human capital (through support to the health sector).

Findings and conclusions

The evaluation found that UNDP has been a long-standing development partner of national authorities, enabling continuous support to key government sectors. This is notable through its support to critical dimensions of the national development agenda, such as development planning processes, local economic development, electoral assistance, national malaria response plans, and peace-building in response to the various human security crises faced by the country. During this country programme period (2017-2020), UNDP repositioned its support to strengthen the resilience of local authorities and communities to radicalization and violent extremism, and support State consolidation and stabilization in the areas

of Lake Chad affected by the presence of Boko Haram and other armed groups. UNDP continued to support national electoral bodies and political dialogue around the election in a context of heightened social tension. In the area of inclusive growth, through its policy advice and programme management capabilities, UNDP facilitated the implementation of local economic development programmes, considered a flagship initiative of the NDP. UNDP is recognized as a key interlocutor on environmental and climate change adaptation issues, but its positioning has been weak relative to the severe climate vulnerabilities faced by the country. Through its operational and managerial support, UNDP has enabled national authorities to pursue and scale-up access to health financing and expand coverage of malaria prevention measures.

However, these contributions and support did not translate into transformational change during the period reviewed. Implementation of the country programme under review was marked by important changes in the institutional landscape, including two constitutional reforms, frequent government-wide reshuffles and prolonged strikes in the private and public sectors. This has caused delays, and has also resulted in gaps in the institutional anchoring of UNDP interventions, affecting long-term planning, and limiting the potential uptake and scale-up of the technical assistance and policy advice delivered.

UNDP Chad operates in a challenging funding environment marked by the predominance of humanitarian financing and limited opportunities for in-country resource mobilization, on which UNDP programming depends. While UNDP was successful in leveraging various funding opportunities, the fragmented and small-scale nature of this affected the ability of UNDP to sustain and deepen its community-level interventions, anchor its activities in long-term programme engagement, and adopt a portfolio approach to its programming. The launch of large programmes during this period constitutes significant progress in light of the funding context, but financing for other important outputs of the country programme did not materialize during the period reviewed.

While acknowledging the challenging operating environment, the evaluation found several shortcomings affecting UNDP performance, including: a lack of clarity and differentiation in some aspects of its programmatic offer; the absence of a knowledge, monitoring

and evaluation system to support the learning and adaptation required in such a complex development setting; an uneven level of strategic partnerships and collaboration across its portfolio; and insufficient synergy across its interventions.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: UNDP should seek to bring conceptual clarity to key areas of its programming offer and strengthen differentiation between them, to formalize concrete intervention models that reflect regional differences in context, conflict dynamics and economic opportunities.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should continue to strengthen synergies across the different interventions of its portfolio and seek to consolidate its various programme interventions through an area-based and integrated programming approach.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should seek to expand its strategic partnerships and programme collaboration with other development actors across all areas

of its portfolio to optimize the potential of its technical assistance, advocacy and community-level interventions for sustainable development results.

Recommendation 4: The country office should strengthen its conflict-sensitive programming in the design, implementation and follow-up of its interventions, to ensure that they effectively contribute to sustainable peace objectives and support learning and adaptation for future interventions.

Recommendation 5: The country office should consider integrating data as a cross-cutting dimension of its next country programme, and leveraging its project implementation and field presence to invest in knowledge production with a view to strengthening the

technical underpinning of its interventions, advocacy and resource mobilization efforts.

Recommendation 6: UNDP should update and prioritize the implementation of its office-wide gender strategy, with a view to expanding its support from gender-targeting towards more gender-responsive and transformative interventions.

Recommendation 7: UNDP Headquarters and the Regional Bureau for Africa should continue their support to the country office and consider deploying expertise to reduce reliance on project funding and enable the country office to internalize specialist expertise to support strategy development and positioning.