United Nations Development Programme

UNDP Somalia Management Response
Partnership Evaluation by Adam Smith Institute

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An evaluation of UNDP Somalia’s partnership agreements with 6 donors (DFID, EC, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and USAID) was undertaken in March and April 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya with a final report submitted on 11 June. The purpose of the evaluation is to constitute the basis for an extension and/or remodeling of the strategic partnership and take stock of both the performance of the UNDP Somalia programme in the achievement of key outcomes related to the Rule of Law and Governance programmes, and the performance of donors as outlined in the partnership documents and in line with standard Monitoring and Evaluation requirements. Adam Smith Institute was contracted by DFID on behalf of all parties to the partnership agreements to undertake the evaluation.

While UNDP and several donors expressed concern from the outset over the composition of the ASI team and overall approach of the team to the evaluation, UNDP nonetheless accepts the importance and criticality of several issues raised in the evaluation report. In light of this, considerable discussions have taken place on the report with each finding and recommendation carefully reviewed to ensure relevance of UNDP response in light of the evolving situation in Somalia and the overall international response to the changes in the country. To address the evaluation report, an implementation plan has been developed with several key report findings already addressed. In addition, measures introduced to address issues previously identified by UNDP and echoed in the report will continue over the course of 2009 and 2010. UNDP will also work closely with its donors to review the partnership modality to ensure efficient and effective programme delivery in Somalia. This will include active consultation with donors on the implementation plan which will be initiated shortly.

A summary of some key steps UNDP is taking to strengthen both partnership and programme management are outlined below and follow the major finding areas of the ASI report: partnership arrangements, accountability, transparency, focus, reporting, clarity of finances, differentiation of support between regions, security and ‘virtual’ development. Each of these will also shape how the Governance and ROLS programme areas continue to address implementation of their projects.

Partnership Arrangements: A new partnership will be developed by UNDP and donors to enhance development impact in Somalia and a new oversight mechanism will be established. This will include coming together around commonly agreed strategies and results. Furthermore, a Monitoring and Evaluation officer is being recruited to help ensure full accountability by UNDP in line with RBM principles. Policy coherence between development activities of UNDP and political initiatives of the UN system, mainly through UNPOS, is also being articulated to ensure a proper division of labour between these two areas.
Accountability: A key challenge for UNDP and others operating in Somalia is to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation in a context marked by limited staff presence and limited access. More innovative ways of achieving this in the Somali context need to be explored and even greater efforts will be made to ensure Somali counterparts are full and active participants in decision-making related to formulation and implementation of programmes. UNDP will seek to further improve communication and transparency with donors, building on the bi-weekly donor meetings and annual Steering Committee meetings. Donors will continue to participate in strategic planning and risk management discussions on a regular and ad hoc basis. Donors have been actively involved in the design of a risk management matrix for UNDP programmes and operations, which is reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.

Reporting: UNDP fully recognizes reporting as requiring greater attention. In late 2008, the reporting templates in UNDP Somalia were revised to emphasize impact at the outcome level in addition to progress at the output level. Further work is required, together with strengthening monitoring systems, to ensure output level progress translates into impact at the outcome level. More regular evaluations will also be planned, particularly after a programme cycle.

Transparency: A twin approach is being implemented to address this issue. First, as noted already, further efforts are being made to ensure Somali counterparts have access to all relevant information regarding ‘their’ programme and projects and to enable them to truly being partners in joint decision-making with UNDP. Second, in terms of overall project management, actions are underway to ensure systems are in place for quarterly work plan and expenditure reviews as well as quarterly, regionalized Project Board meetings. This will support a longer term planning horizon which contributes to the overall impact of UNDP programmes in Somalia.

Focus: Both the Governance and Rule of Law and Security Programmes have made significant strides in strengthening focus and prioritization of project initiatives. The Governance Programme has been restructured over the past 12 months into three main pillars (Local Governance, Institutional Development and Constitution) with an overarching strategic plan. The Rule of Law and Security Programme continues to build synergies between project initiatives (Civilian Policing, Access to Justice and Armed Violence Reduction) particularly to strengthen impact at the community level. Moreover, the three main programmes of UNDP Somalia (Recovery and Sustainable Livelihoods, Rule of Law and Security and Governance) have initiated an integrated planning process. This will ensure that synergies between the programmes are capitalized on to enhance impact and sustainability. Joint initiatives will be undertaken in specific regions and will optimize donor resources.

Clarity of Finances: UNDP will ensure that donors fully understand how their funds are being utilized. Financial transparency will also be enhanced with strict adherence to activity level budgeting and reporting (in line with partnership guidelines) and further strengthened with multi-year budgeting. This will be complemented by outcome level reporting based on a robust RBM system. UNDP is currently recruiting an Oversight and Compliance Officer who will also help support the attainment of clarity in finances beyond already established corporate standards.

Differentiation of Support between Regions: While maintaining the fundamental objectives of supporting good governance and strengthening the rule of law in Somalia, each project is designed around specific capacities and requirements of respective local, state and national needs. The considerable variances in priorities between the three regions necessitates a differentiated approach, facilitated through regionalized workplans. UNDP will continue to refine as well as strengthen region specific strategic planning, bearing in mind the importance of a coherent approach to development assistance in Somalia.

Security: UNDP recognizes the importance of a safe and secure environment for the implementation of development activities, noting that UN agencies are obliged to follow UNDSS security guidance. Considerable effort is also being placed on risk mitigation (as per the above mentioned risk management matrix). This has ensured that ROLS and Governance programmes have been able to maintain a steady presence in Somalia.
Work is also underway to revamp operations of SPU, rightly noted as an activity that does not necessarily have a development focus.

'Virtual Development': UNDP is fully aware of the risks of having limited presence in the different zones of Somalia. Indeed, UNDP is committed to progressively increasing staff presence in country as the security conditions permit and efforts are currently underway to review our staff presence, especially in those areas where security has improved. This may include having a UNDP Security Officer to complement DSS presence on the ground. Meanwhile, maximum use is made of slots allocated for mission travel.

UNDP remains committed to enhancing and strengthening its programming in Somalia in support of the Somali people in partnership with its donors.

Signed on behalf of UNDP

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