



ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS **CAMBODIA**

EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION



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ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: CAMBODIA

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FOREWORD

This is an independent country-level evaluation, conducted by the Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This Assessment of Development Results examines the relevance and strategic positioning of UNDP support and its contributions to the country's development from 2001 to 2009. It assesses UNDP interventions under the various thematic areas of the country programme, with the aim of providing forward-looking recommendations meant to assist the UNDP country office and its partners in the formulation of programmes for the next cycle (2011–2015).

Cambodia has a special place in the recent history of the United Nations. Following the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, the United Nations Team of Action for Cambodia played a central role in bringing peace and stability to the country. The road to peace was cemented by the first democratic general elections in 1993 under the auspices of the United Nations Team of Action for Cambodia, followed by the adoption of the new constitution and formation of a national Royal Government of Cambodia.

UNDP Cambodia has been a staunch ally of the Royal Government of Cambodia in its effort to overcome the enormous challenges of the country's transition to peace, democracy and market-based economic development. Recently, it has made far-reaching contributions towards developing the structures and systems of local governance. It has supported the capacity development of key governmental institutions, from the legislative bodies to the sectoral ministries. It has helped the government establish mechanisms for aid-coordination and mine clearance, mainstream gender perspectives in its policies, and develop a forum to discuss key policy issues at the national level. It has experimented with innovative projects that aimed to assist small entrepreneurs in partnership with

larger enterprises and to promote biodiversity management at the local level.

This evaluation suggests that it may be time to refocus programme activities to the people of Cambodia. Building on the assets of democratic systems and a local governance structure that UNDP has helped to establish, UNDP should now promote the use of such systems by encouraging the participation of people in democratic decision making. The evaluation recommends UNDP increase its focus on poverty in its assistance to economic policy making, and address environmental concerns by making clear linkages with sustainable livelihood concerns of local populations.

The findings and recommendations of the report remind UNDP of the need to constantly readjust itself to align with its corporate mandate—supporting countries to accelerate progress on human development and aim for real improvements in people's lives. As successful as the Cambodia country programme has been, it requires regular reflection and renovation to meet this challenge. It is my sincere hope that this evaluation has provided an opportunity for such reflection and renovation.

A number of people contributed to the evaluation. First and foremost, I would like to thank the independent evaluation team, led by Dr. Siddiqur Rahman Osmani, and its members Pao Li Lim and Mok Tonh. The evaluation was not possible without the support and contributions from colleagues in the Cambodia Country Office: Resident Representative Douglas Broderick, Country Director Jo Scheuer, Deputy Country Director Sophie Baranes, then Chief of the Programme Management Unit Seeta Giri, evaluation focal point Sophat Chun, and all other staff who assisted the team in conducting this evaluation. I thank the external reviewers of the

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Saraswathi Menon
Director, Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
CALM	Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management in the Northern Plains
CBSD	Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in the Tonle Sap Region
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CDC	Council for the Development of Cambodia
CMDG	Cambodia Millennium Development Goal
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRDB	Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board
DDLG	Democratic Development and Local Governance Project
DFID	Department for International Development
GDCC	Government Donor Coordination Committee
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMAG	Gender Mainstreaming Action Group
GSB	Growing Sustainable Business
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/ German Technical Cooperation Agency
LEAP	Legislature Assistance Project
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCDD	National Committee for Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms
NEC	National Elections Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPDD	National Programme for Support to Sub-national Development
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
PSDD	Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
RUBII	Rural Business Information Initiative
SDEP	Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia
SEDP	Socio-economic Development Plan
SHG	Self-help Group
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency

TRADE	Trade Related Assistance for Development and Equity Project
TSBR	Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve
TSCP	Tonle Sap Conservation Project
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USD	United States Dollar
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Cambodia is an independent country-level evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2009. Its objective is to assess UNDP overall performance and contribution to development in Cambodia during the two most recent programming cycles and to draw lessons for future strategies, particularly for the next programming cycle. Accordingly, this ADR examines UNDP strategy and performance under the ongoing Country Programme 2006-2010 for Cambodia and Country Programme Action Plan 2006-2010, as well as the previous Country Cooperation Framework 2001-2005, with a closer look at the more recent programme. In doing the assessment, the report looks at UNDP projects and activities as part of the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

METHODOLOGY

Following the methodology developed by the UNDP Evaluation Office to carry out an ADR, this report evaluates UNDP Cambodia's performance from two broad perspectives—strategic positioning and development results. The assessment of strategic positioning involves an examination of the extent to which UNDP has devised its programmes and strategies in line with the goals and strategies of the government of Cambodia and how it has anticipated and responded to significant changes in the national development context within its core areas of focus. The ADR begins by judging the performance of UNDP against its own target outcomes and outputs, as defined in its programme documents. It then judges the extent to which these outcomes and outputs have helped the country achieve its development goals.

THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Since the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, Cambodia has embarked on a triple transition from conflict to peace, from autocracy to democracy, and from a centrally planned economy to market-based economic development. The challenges of this triple transition are enormous, especially since Cambodia has had to start from a very low level of development.

Despite these challenges, Cambodia has achieved considerable economic success in the past decade, growing at nearly 10 percent (7 percent per capita) per annum and doubling its per capita income from USD 285 in 1997 to USD 593 in 2007. Sustained growth has been accompanied by the beginnings of a structural transformation involving integration into the global economy, a shift in employment from agriculture to manufacturing, the onset of a demographic transition, and increased migration from rural to urban areas. These processes have led to perceptible improvements in the lives of the Cambodian people. For instance, the incidence of poverty has decreased from an estimated 45 to 50 percent in 1993-1994 to 30 percent in 2007. Various social indicators related to health, education and other social services also point towards improving trends.

However despite these achievements, Cambodia still remains a poor country, with the rural areas bearing the brunt of poverty. Although poverty has declined, it has done so extremely slowly considering the exceptionally high rate of growth that Cambodia has achieved. During the last decade and a half, poverty has declined only by about 1 percent per year, while national income has increased by nearly 10 percent. The consequence of this weak link between growth and poverty is that inequality has increased alarmingly. Moreover, there are questions about

the sustainability of such a high rate of growth, since a large part of this growth has occurred through depletion of assets (primarily environmental). There is clearly a long way to go to build Cambodia's progress on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis.

FINDINGS

UNDP has been a staunch ally of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) during these transitions, by providing support in such diverse areas as aid coordination, democratization, decentralization, environmental conservation, and poverty alleviation through employment creation.

UNDP goals and the projects and programmes it has adopted in order to achieve its goals are entirely consistent with the needs of the country and the priorities set by the government, as articulated, for example, in its landmark strategic document called the Rectangular Strategy. Both RGC and UNDP recognize that governance reforms aimed at **democratization and decentralization** are paramount if the country is to bury its tragic past and move forward into a new world in which different segments of society can live in peace and harmony. The relevance of the **environmental programmes** derives from the fact that Cambodia is blessed with rich, yet fragile, environmental resources, especially in the biosphere surrounding the Tonle Sap Lake. Sustainable use of these resources is essential not only to preserve biodiversity but also to protect the livelihoods of the poor people of Cambodia, whose lives are inextricably linked with the use of those resources. The goal of **poverty reduction** is an obvious necessity, as almost one third of the country's population lives in abject poverty and the decrease in the poverty rate is painfully slow, despite an impressive growth of national income over the last decade and a half. Finally, the need for **enhancing aid effectiveness** cannot be overemphasized in a country like Cambodia, which remains one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world. Thus all of the desired outcomes of UNDP are relevant to the needs and priorities of Cambodia. These outcomes are

also consistent with the proposed United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcomes.

UNDP has made significant contributions towards enhancing each of the development outcomes, but there is still room for improvement. The following are the major conclusions from this evaluation:

1. Across the spectrum of UNDP activities—involving democratization, environmental conservation and poverty reduction—a great deal has been achieved, especially in terms of building institutions and capacities. Yet, full achievement of desirable outcomes has often been compromised by a lack of focus on the people. In the area of democratization and decentralization, people's participation and empowerment remain limited; in the environmental programmes, there is more emphasis on conservation and less on sustainable livelihoods of the poor who depend on environmental resources; and in the poverty-related programmes, more success has been achieved in building capacity for market-led development than in creating employment opportunities for the poor.
2. The objective of the democratization programme is to enable civil society and legislature to exercise effective checks and balances on the executive. UNDP has sought to achieve this outcome by helping RGC implement major reforms in the electoral process so that citizens can exercise their democratic rights more effectively, and by building the capacity of legislators so that they can carry out their responsibilities more efficiently. On both fronts, significant success has been achieved—for example, the 2008 national elections were widely acknowledged to have been technically much more 'free and fair' than the previous ones, and UNDP has been acclaimed for playing a vital role in making this possible. Yet, serious questions remain about the extent to which the development outcome of enabling civil society to play a check-and-balance role has been achieved. Although much has

been done in the area of technical capacity building of institutions, little effort has been made to strengthen civil society organizations and thereby develop the democratic space for citizens at large. This has reduced the effectiveness of UNDP efforts towards democratic governance in Cambodia.

3. UNDP has made far-reaching contributions towards developing the structures and systems of decentralization and local-level governance in Cambodia, with a view to enhancing people's participation in decision making and improving the government's ability to more effectively provide service. For the first time in the history of Cambodia, this has made it possible for ordinary citizens to participate in decision-making processes at the local level. However, the full potential of these structures and systems is yet to be fulfilled. While elaborate structures of participation exist, there is a wide variance in the participation of ordinary citizens from one commune to another.
4. The environmental programme deals with many urgent environmental concerns related to sustainable use of natural resources and climate change. A great deal has been achieved in this area, especially in building the capacity for biodiversity conservation. But achievements in creating sustainable livelihoods have been generally lacking, with the exception of some specific pilot projects. There is an inherent tension between conservation and protecting livelihoods.

One potential method for resolving this tension is to involve the communities in ensuring sustainable use of resources through various incentive mechanisms. UNDP Cambodia has initiated a number of pilot projects using the community-based natural resource management approach—with a good deal of success. Yet in the biggest environmental project, involving the Tonle Sap Basin, UNDP has moved away from this approach. As a result, the *Tonle Sap Project* and several other smaller ones have shown

considerable success in conserving biodiversity but much less in promoting sustainable livelihoods.

One possible reason for this imbalance lies in the excessive reliance of UNDP on Global Environment Facility funds for financing its environmental projects. The Global Environment Facility is concerned primarily with conservation, but UNDP should also be concerned with protecting and promoting the livelihoods of those who depend on those environmental resources. A way forward could be for UNDP to engage more fully with other development partners who share UNDP's fundamental concern with human lives and livelihoods.

5. Poverty-related activities have sought to reduce poverty in Cambodia primarily by building capacity for private-sector led development through reliance on the forces of the market and globalization. Much has been achieved in building the capacity and institutions necessary for a country that has had very little experience in market-based growth. Especially impressive has been the capacity building work involving the Ministry of Commerce to enable it to meet the challenges of export growth through diversification of the export structure. However, little has been achieved in introducing a pro-poor bias in these activities. In choosing the products to be promoted for export, no special consideration has been given to the pro-poor impact of these products and small producers have not been favoured in the process of product promotion. One manifestation of the lack of emphasis on the poor was the failure to integrate the Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, which was supposed to improve the capacity of small entrepreneurs.

The poor may have experienced some benefit through the 'trickle-down' process—a process that also characterizes the government's overall economic development policy in Cambodia. But the reliance on the trickle-down process has resulted in a slow rate

of poverty reduction despite the high rate of economic growth. In order to accelerate poverty reduction, UNDP needs to do more to reorient its activities in favour of the poor. In particular, UNDP needs to be more involved in rural and agricultural development, in cooperation with other agencies that have more expertise in this area, because that is where poverty in Cambodia is most heavily concentrated. UNDP has the potential to add value in this area by drawing linkages with its macro policy work and its support to local level governance structures.

6. UNDP Cambodia has forged strong partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in Cambodia, for which it is highly regarded in all quarters. Cooperation with other development partners has been especially strong. The United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator plays a constructive role in this regard by strengthening cooperation with other development partners through formal and informal means. There is room for improving this collaboration at the project level by involving other development partners earlier in the project cycle—at the stage of project design.
7. Sustaining strategic collaboration with other development partners is a challenging task, especially in a country like Cambodia where many agencies are competing with foreign aid. While UNDP has generally met this challenge, there remain some areas of concern. For example, collaborating partners in the UNDP decentralization programme do not share the same view about the basic objective of decentralization, which has compromised the effectiveness of the programme.
8. Cambodia has an elaborate structure of aid coordination, and UNDP has played a vanguard role in this regard by building the institutional capacity of the government to handle coordination, as well as by helping to devise institutions for joint monitoring by the government and development partners. Proper functioning of these institutions is essential for enhancing aid

effectiveness, yet some parts of the system are not functioning as well as expected. The UN Resident Coordinator has recently taken steps to revitalize the moribund segments, an effort to which UNDP has much to contribute.

9. UNDP Cambodia has responded to the emerging development needs of the country quickly and imaginatively with various kinds of support. Most of these responses are highly valued by the government, other development partners and civil society. For example, the Insights for Action Initiative launched in 2006 responded to the government request for new ideas and knowledge in emerging areas of interest. The initiative has a string of achievements to its credit, but its original flexibility has somewhat been lost. This has happened in part because it is now more engaged in following up on previous work than starting new initiatives, and in part because what was originally an initiative under the UN Resident Coordinator has now been placed into the stricter programmatic framework of UNDP.
10. UNDP, along with other UN organizations, has helped Cambodia develop a sophisticated institutional structure for mainstreaming gender in government departments and ministries. This structure is unique in both the developing world and the developed world. Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups have been set up in a number of ministries, many of whom have already produced Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans, some of which have received budgetary support from the Ministry of Finance. However, the national capacity to manage this structure is severely limited. The most significant capacity development has occurred in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, but the ministry does not have enough human resources to provide technical support to all the Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups. To some extent, this problem is mitigated by the fact that some UN organizations in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) provide direct support to the Gender Mainstreaming

Action Groups with which they work. The UNCT might achieve better results by coordinating its activities more effectively—for example, by appointing a gender coordinator at the office of the Resident Coordinator.

11. There are potential synergies across programme areas to be exploited in the Cambodia country programme. The synergies between environmental projects, especially their sustainable livelihood components, and poverty projects are obvious. What is special about Cambodia is the wide-ranging effort that is being made, with the help of UNDP and other development partners, to set up an elaborate decentralization structure. The existence of such a participatory local governance structure and the support mechanism UNDP has at local levels should make community-based initiatives more effective and efficient—whether they are for environmental protection or for poverty reduction. Moreover, if successful execution of community-based projects can be tied with local government planning processes, this would lend credibility and effectiveness to the decentralization process itself. UNDP Cambodia has yet to take full advantage of this potential synergy.
12. This evaluation has identified three issues regarding efficiency in achieving desired outcomes. First, efficiency could be enhanced by fully exploiting the potential synergies among UNDP programme areas through a more programmatic approach rather than by following a conventional project-oriented approach. Second, efficiency could be enhanced by taking more active steps to translate the lessons of pilot projects into larger-scale activities by being more proactive in finding partners who can be entrusted with the task of scaling up. Third, the high rate of turnover in the UNDP country office has a potential deleterious effect on efficiency by reducing institutional memory, especially in a context where the projects have commendable continuity across the programming cycles.

13. There are two concerns regarding sustainability of outcomes. First, sustainability requires adequate capacity building at the national level. Although UNDP in principle puts a lot of emphasis on capacity building, in practice this has been hampered by *de facto* conversion of national execution modality into direct execution modality, driven by the need to deliver outputs. Second, the existence of the scheme of salary supplements for project staff raises questions about the sustainability of incentives beyond the project period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the central recommendations of this report is to refocus the programme activities on people. To this end, concrete strategic recommendations are made below for specific areas of work.

1. To enhance the effectiveness of its flagship programmes on democratization and decentralization, UNDP needs to change its approach towards civil society, strengthening it with a view to developing capacities of Cambodian citizens. A two-pronged approach is suggested: nurturing independent civil society organizations with financial and technical support so that they can carry out the essential function of social mobilization; and encouraging reforms that can create the democratic space in which an independent civil society can flourish.
2. UNDP needs more confidence in the viability of community-based conservation of fishing resources in the Tonle Sap region as well as elsewhere in Cambodia and should devise institutional structures that can forge the link between conservation and livelihood more effectively.
3. To better integrate livelihood concerns into conservation projects, UNDP should forge partnerships with other agencies, which, like UNDP, are concerned primarily with human lives and livelihoods while pursuing environmental objectives.

4. UNDP should introduce a more explicit pro-poor bias into its poverty reduction programme. One suggestion is for UNDP to take pro-poor projects, such as those under the Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, more seriously than it has done so far. In particular, it should integrate the Growing Sustainable Business Initiative more substantively into the mainstream trade project (or its successors), and seek collaboration with other development partners (including non-governmental organizations) so that successful pilots under the initiative can be scaled up to more substantial projects.
5. To accelerate poverty reduction, UNDP should engage more in agricultural and rural development activities, preferably by entering into collaboration with other development partners who have traditionally been more engaged in these sectors in Cambodia.
6. UNDP should exploit the potential synergies among its programme areas to the fullest. One suggestion is to link the local governance structure that it supports with the community-based natural resource management for sustainable livelihood and some of the pro-poor projects (including possible work on agriculture and rural development).
7. UNDP successfully involves other development partners at the stage of execution and implementation of projects, but it needs to do more to ensure cooperation at the stage of project design in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes.
8. UNDP needs to do more to bridge the conceptual divide among its partners in decentralization projects, helping RGC devise an efficient system for combining governance reform with service delivery.
9. Despite the existence of an elaborate structure of aid coordination in Cambodia, several critical parts of this structure—in particular, the Government Donor Coordination Committee and Technical Working Groups—have not functioned well in the recent past. UNDP could play a more active role in revitalizing these parts, making use of the goodwill it enjoys among both donor and government circles by virtue of the seminal role it has played in supporting aid coordination in Cambodia.
10. To enhance UNDP ability to offer imaginative ideas quickly in response to changing country needs, it should restore the flexibility and quick response ability of the Insight for Action Initiative, which has been missing in the recent past.
11. To enhance effectiveness and efficiency across the spectrum of outcomes, UNDP should move faster towards the programme-based approach from the conventional project-oriented approach.
12. UNDP Cambodia should, for the sake of greater efficiency and impact, make a systematic attempt to convert the pilot initiatives into larger-scale activities and seek out partners through whom the scaling up can be achieved.
13. To promote sustainability of outcomes, UNDP should make greater effort to separate technical support from capacity building support and find innovative ways of combining the two in a synergistic rather than competitive relationship.
14. UNDP should further strengthen its effort to mainstream gender in the work of sectoral ministries, and the UNCT that assists sectoral ministries should also mainstream gender in their work across the board. UNCT in Cambodia should seriously consider appointing a senior gender coordinator, preferably located at the office of the UN Resident Coordinator, so as to achieve more effective coordination of gender-related activities across UN organizations.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Cambodia is an independent country-level evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2009. Its objective is to assess UNDP overall performance and contribution to development in Cambodia during the two most recent programming cycles and to draw lessons for future strategies, particularly for the next programming cycle.

Accordingly, this ADR examined UNDP strategy and performance under the ongoing Country Programme Document (CPD) 2006-2010 for Cambodia and Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2006-2010, as well as the previous Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) 2001-2005, with a closer look at the more recent programme. In doing the assessment, the report looked at UNDP projects and activities as part of the broader United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The ADR examined not only performance of the country programme in attaining the target outcomes as defined in the programme document, but also the extent to which the programme outputs helped the country achieve its own development goals. These programme

outputs and target outcomes were also evaluated in terms of their relevance against the needs and priorities of the country, as well as the values and norms of UNDP. Further, the ADR tried to evaluate whether the strategies pursued by the country office have been conducive towards the country achieving its development goals. Recognizing that the contribution towards development results is more than just the sum of outcomes of individual interventions, the ADR did not examine in detail the performance of every programme activity, but sought to assess the impact of the programme as a whole.

While drawing the link between UNDP activities and national development outcomes, care was taken not to rush into a direct causal attribution. The evaluation team adopted the principle of triangulation, cross-checking the evaluators' judgement against the opinions of several alternative sources such as relevant government officials, development partners, professional experts, representatives of political parties, non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and other members of civil society.

The evaluation team found the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment conducted in early 2009 particularly useful.¹ In addition, a number of project reviews and evaluations were used to corroborate what the team obtained from key informants.

¹ Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP Cambodia, 2009. The methodology used by the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment was as follows: First, 12 area experts carefully analysed the outcome and output statements to establish the analytical framework; Second, data for the outcome and output indicators were collected and compared to the baseline and target figures; Third, area experts conducted qualitative assessments based on a variety of sources, most commonly key informant interview and desk reviews. It is to be noted that the results of this assessment were shared with the government and accepted.

1.2.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND METHODS USED

This report evaluates UNDP Cambodia's performance from two broad perspectives—strategic positioning and development results.

The assessment of **strategic positioning** involves examining the extent to which UNDP has devised its programmes and strategies in line with the goals and strategies of the Government of Cambodia and how it has anticipated and responded to significant changes (if there are any) in the national development context within its core areas of focus. This assessment was carried out according to the following four criteria:

- **Relevance:** The extent to which UNDP programmatic interventions as well as non-programme activities are addressing the development challenges of Cambodia, and in support of the national development strategies and policies of the country.
- **Responsiveness:** How has UNDP responded to either significant changes in national development challenges and priorities and to any unanticipated crises or emergency?
- **Contribution to UN values:** To what extent have UNDP activities in Cambodia contributed towards advancing UN values such as promoting gender equality and assisting the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs).
- **Strategic partnerships:** Whether or not UNDP has designed its programmes and activities so as to maximize partnership opportunities with a range of actors such as other development partners, the private sector, media and civil society.²

The ADR was carried out according to the following three criteria:

- **Effectiveness:** Ascertaining whether and to what extent the intended results of UNDP

interventions have been attained and whether unintended results (positive or negative) have also emerged.

- **Efficiency:** The extent UNDP succeeded in making the best possible use of resources — both financial and human—in the course of pursuing its objectives.
- **Sustainability:** The likelihood that the results and benefits generated through UNDP interventions will continue after the closure of the interventions.

While applying each of these criteria, the analysis was based on answers to a number of relevant questions. A sample of such questions, the methods of collecting the necessary information and the major sources of information are spelled out in the evaluation matrix in Annex 4.

Following the methodology specified in the evaluation matrix, the evaluation team conducted desk studies and a series of interviews in two rounds—a scoping mission undertaken in Cambodia during 18-22 May 2009 and a main mission undertaken during 20 July-7 August 2009. During the main mission, the team made several field visits to observe project sites and activities and to interview various stakeholders, including implementing partners and direct beneficiaries. The lists of documents consulted and persons interviewed are provided in Annexes 2 and 3.

1.2.2 PROJECT SAMPLING

Since UNDP seeks to achieve the desired outcomes primarily through the various projects it undertakes, it was necessary to examine the projects in some detail. In this regard, this ADR selected a representative sample of projects that would provide enough insight into the success or failure in achieving the desired development outcomes. The projects chosen for this purpose are listed in Annex 6.

² Partnership with the government is not included in this list, because this particular partnership constitutes the basic modality of UNDP activities in any country. The objective here is to examine how UNDP has been able to use its partnership with other actors as a means of creating a more productive partnership with the government.

In choosing the sample of projects, the following considerations were kept in mind: a mix of projects that would yield the full range of outcomes; a mix of projects representing all programme areas; some project(s) representing the crosscutting issue of gender; projects from both programme cycles, with more emphasis on the recent cycle; covering more than one mode of execution; covering more than one type of partnership; and some projects that require field visits and some that don't. The chosen projects fulfilled all these criteria. Finally, some projects were chosen in pairs, either because they were closely related to each other in terms of the nature of activities or because one of them builds on the other in a sequential manner. The project maps given in Annex 5 were used as the basis for choosing the pairs.

1.3 EVALUABILITY

In terms of evaluability, this ADR benefited from the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment³, which already evaluated UNDP Cambodia's performance in achieving its intended outcomes by, *inter alia*, measuring their respective indicators and comparing them with the baseline and the target figures. However, a potential problem was that adequate documentary evidence was not available for the projects chosen from the earlier cycle (CCF 2001-2005). The problem was aggravated by the fact that the UNDP country office does not seem to possess enough institutional memory to make up for the dearth of documentary evidence. For such cases, the team tried to make as best a judgement as possible based on discussions with relevant stakeholders.

³ Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP Cambodia, 2009.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

2.1 DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Ever since the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, Cambodia has been making a valiant attempt to emerge out of its tragic past. However, the absence of international assistance from most of the world and continued internal warfare, made rebuilding the nation difficult in the 1980s. A major shift occurred in 1989, when the country embarked on a new path to development based on reliance on the market and the private sector, aided and supported by the government. Soon thereafter, the political environment also improved as persistent turbulence gave way to relative stability following the Paris Peace Accord of 1991. The transition towards peace was strengthened by the holding of the first democratically conducted general elections in 1993 under the auspices of the United Nations Team of Action for Cambodia, which was followed up by the adoption of the new constitution and formation of a national Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). Since then, Cambodia's move towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous society has gathered momentum and the country has moved forward, except for a brief interlude in 1998 when a new civil war threatened but was eventually averted.

Cambodia's long-term vision for the future was first articulated in the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia adopted in 1994. Based on that vision, the first five-year Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP I, 1996-2000) was formulated with a focus

on growth, social development and poverty alleviation. This was followed by a second Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP II, 2001-2005) with a similar focus.

During the period covered by SEDP II, three major developments occurred that led RGC to rethink and further elaborate their policy priorities. First, following the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, Cambodia developed its own set of MDGs called Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), focusing on poverty alleviation and human development.⁴ Second, at the behest of the Bretton Woods Institutions, a National Poverty Reduction Strategy was prepared and adopted in December 2002 as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process.⁵ Third, the newly elected government in 2004 adopted a comprehensive strategy for future development, called the Rectangular Strategy for growth, employment, equity and efficiency (revised in 2008 as the Rectangular Strategy, Phase II, or RSII).

At the conclusion of SEDP II, RGC decided to move away from the traditional, comprehensive planning approach to one that focused on strategic goals and actions. To this end, a new plan called the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) was formulated, capturing essential elements of all the earlier strategy documents (SEDP II, CMDG, National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Rectangular Strategy).⁶ The NSDP is now regarded as the single, overarching, reference document for pursuing all national

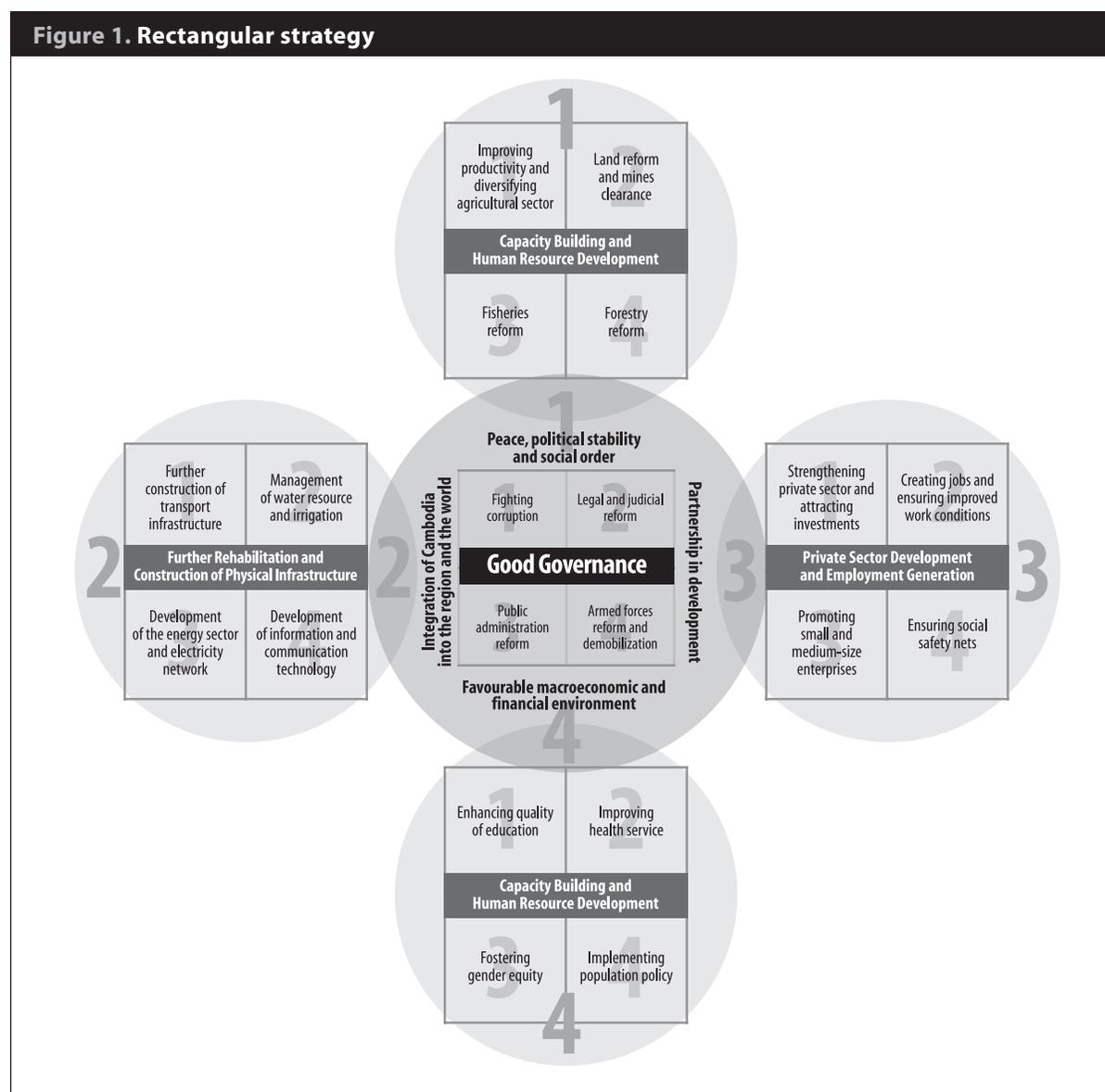
⁴ Ministry of Planning, 'Cambodia Millennium Development Goals', RGC, Phnom Penh, 2003; Ministry of Planning, 'Progress in Achieving Cambodia Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities', RGC, Phnom Penh, 2007.

⁵ RGC, 'National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-2005', Council for Social Development, Phnom Penh, 2002.

⁶ RGC, 'National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010', Phnom Penh, 2005.

goals, targets and actions in Cambodia for the period 2006 to 2010. The Rectangular Strategy provides the conceptual foundation of NSDP. At the core of this strategy lies 'good governance' surrounded by four strategic thrusts: enhancement of agriculture; further rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure; private sector development and employment generation; and capacity building and human resource development. Each of these strategic thrusts as well as the core is supported by four-pronged policy priorities. A schematic representation of this strategic framework is given in Figure 1.

Cambodia has achieved considerable economic success in the past decade, growing at nearly 10 percent (7 percent per capita) per annum and doubling its per capita income from USD 285 in 1997 to USD 593 in 2007. During this period, Cambodia ranked seventh in the world in terms of per capita income growth. Sustained growth has been accompanied by the beginnings of a structural transformation involving integration into the global economy, a shift in employment from agriculture to manufacturing, the onset of a demographic transition, and increased migration from rural to urban areas. These processes have



led to perceptible improvements in the lives of the Cambodian people. For instance, the incidence of poverty has decreased from an estimated 45 to 50 percent in 1993-1994 to 30 percent in 2007. Various social indicators related to health, education and other social services also point towards an improving trend.

Despite these achievements, however, Cambodia still remains a poor country, with the rural areas bearing the brunt of poverty. Although poverty has declined, it has done so extremely slowly considering the exceptionally high rate of growth. During the last 15 years, poverty has declined by 1 percent a year, while national income has grown by nearly 10 percent.⁷ There are not many instances in the world where such a high rate of growth, sustained over more than a decade, has been accompanied by such a slow rate of poverty reduction. The consequence of this weak link between growth and poverty is that inequality has increased alarmingly. Even during the brief period between 2004 and 2007, the Gini coefficient of per capita consumption distribution has increased from 0.39 to 0.43.⁸ No other country in Southeast Asia had such a high level of inequality at comparable levels of development.⁹

To make matters worse, there are reasons to doubt whether the high rate of growth will be sustainable. One surprising feature of Cambodian growth is the exceptionally low rates of savings and investment. The investment rate was a mere 18.5 percent of gross domestic product during the high

growth period of 1998-2007, which is the lowest among countries that have achieved similarly high and sustained growth.¹⁰ This disjuncture between investment and growth suggests that much of the growth has occurred through depletion of assets, primarily environmental assets, for which there is considerable direct evidence.¹¹ With the concern about environmental protection increasing over time, this 'easy' source of growth may not be available in the future.¹²

There is clearly a long way to go to build Cambodia's progress on a secure basis: modernizing and diversifying the economy; creating adequate income-earning opportunities for the people; and providing essential services such as health and education. UNDP and other development partners are engaged in a collaborative enterprise with RGC to meet these unfulfilled needs.

However, the challenges facing Cambodia are truly enormous, due in large part to its unfortunate history. At the time Cambodia turned a corner with the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, the society, the polity and the economy were in ruins. Since then, Cambodia has been trying to achieve three different transitions at the same time: a social transition from conflict to peace; a political transition from autocracy to democracy; and an economic transition from a planned economy to a market economy. It has also been trying to achieve these from a very low level of development. Hardly any other country has had to do that in the contemporary world. The unique

⁷ World Bank, 'Sharing Growth: Development and Equity in Cambodia', East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2007; World Bank, 'Poverty Profile and Trend in Cambodia: Findings from the 2007 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES)', East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

⁸ World Bank, 'Poverty Profile and Trend in Cambodia: Findings from the 2007 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES)', East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

⁹ In terms of distribution of consumption, as distinct from distribution of income.

¹⁰ World Bank, 'Sustaining Rapid Growth in a Challenging Environment', Cambodia Country Economic Memorandum, East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009, Table 2.1, p. 19.

¹¹ The alternative explanation in terms of an exceptionally high rate of productivity growth can be easily ruled out as not being credible even in the light of casual observation. See also: World Bank, 'Sustaining Rapid Growth in a Challenging Environment', Cambodia Country Economic Memorandum, East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

¹² For a fuller discussion of the fragility of Cambodian growth, see: World Bank, 'Sustaining Rapid Growth in a Challenging Environment', Cambodia Country Economic Memorandum, East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

challenge of this task should be borne in mind while evaluating the performance of any development partner, including UNDP.

2.2 THE AID ENVIRONMENT IN CAMBODIA

Cambodia is one of the most heavily aid-dependent countries in Asia. Since 1993, the total disbursement of aid has been approximately \$600 million per annum, not including the aid of emerging partners such as China, which have become increasingly prominent in Cambodia. Until 2004, the volume of international development assistance was as much as the national budget. Although the degree of dependence has decreased in recent years, external aid still accounted for more than 50 percent of government revenue in 2007. Even today, development assistance accounts for almost 90 percent of resources available for financing capital expenditure (Table 1).

Cambodia's heavy dependence on aid stems not only from it being a poor, post-conflict country that the international community is eager to help, but also because the country has a poor record of domestic resource mobilization. For example, in recent years the tax-gross domestic product ratio has been approximately 12 percent, compared with an average of 16 percent in neighbouring countries.

The nature of UNDP and other development partners' involvement in the aid scenario can be seen in Table 2.

Cambodia has developed a highly elaborate structure of aid coordination between RGC and the development partners with a view to improving

the quality of aid effectiveness. At the apex of the cooperative framework is the Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum, which is meant to be the overarching forum for discussion between the donors and the government. The forum was established in 2007, taking over from the Consultative Group meetings that had begun in 1992 under the auspices of the World Bank. The Cambodian Development Cooperation Forum is the highest level forum for dialogue between RGC and development partners on Cambodia's socio-economic development and the management of development cooperation. There are two more joint institutions of RGC and development partners at the operational level: the Government Donor Coordination Committee (GDCC) and Technical Working Groups (TWG).

TWGs are technical mechanisms at the sector, ministry or agency level that have the primary responsibility of developing monitoring indicators for their respective sector or area to monitor progress of development and to identify issues for discussion at higher-level fora. There are 18 TWGs, each of which is led or facilitated by an agency. The monitoring indicators developed by the TWGs are known as joint monitoring indicators. These are intended to link monitoring of performance to a set of priority targets associated with the NSDP.

On the government side, the agency entrusted with the responsibility to act as the focal point for aid coordination is the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). Since 1994, CDC has been the focal point for mobilizing and coordinating external resource flow into Cambodia. Since 1998, the Prime Minister is the Chairman of CDC and all government ministers are members of the

Table 1. Total resource availability, 2003-2008 (USD millions)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 (est.)
Real GDP growth, %	—	—	78.8	95.2	110.3	133.3
Consumer price inflation (average), %	539.5	555.4	610	713.2	790.4	887.9
Current-account balance, USD million	—	—	688.8	808.4	900.7	1021.2
Exchange rate (average KHR: USD), %	—	—	89%	88%	88%	87%

Source: CRDB, 'The Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2008', 2008. Data from the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Department of Budget.

Table 2. Partnership arrangements (reported in 2007)

Lead partners (no. of projects)	Sector (no. of projects)
ADB (3)	Community & Social Welfare, Agriculture (2)
World Bank (6)	Banking & Business, Governance & Administration (3), Health, Rural Development
International Fund for Agricultural Development (2)	Agriculture (2)
UNDP (5)	Governance & Administration (4), Rural Development, Community & Social Welfare
UNFPA (1)	Governance & Administration
UNICEF (4)	Health, Education, Rural Water-Sanitation, Community/Social
World Food Programme (1)	Food Aid, Health, HIV/AIDS, Transportation
FAO (3)	Agriculture (2), Health
Denmark (1)	Agriculture, Governance & Administration, Rural Development
USA (1)	Health, HIV/AIDS
Delegating partners	Implementers and sector (no. of projects)
European Union/ European Commission	UNDP—Community/Social Welfare, Governance & Administration UNICEF—Health FAO—Agriculture (2) World Bank—Governance & Administration, Trade
Finland	World Bank—Rural Development ADB—Community and Social Welfare
France	ADB—Agriculture (2)
Germany	UNFPA—Governance & Administration UNDP—Governance & Administration FAO—Health
Spain	UNDP—Governance & Administration World Food Programme—Food Aid
Sweden	UNDP—Governance & Administration (2) UNICEF—Education
United Kingdom	World Bank—Governance & Administration (2), Health UNDP—Governance & Administration (2) Denmark—Agriculture, Governance & Administration, Rural Development United States—Health, HIV/AIDS UNICEF—Rural Water-Sanitation, Community/Social
Australia	World Bank—Governance & Administration (3), Banking & Business UNDP—Governance & Administration (3), Rural Development
Canada	UNDP—Governance & Administration, Rural Development
New Zealand	UNDP—Governance & Administration Denmark—Agriculture, Governance & Administration, Rural Development

Source: Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board (2008), The Cambodia Aid Effectiveness Report 2008.

Governing Council, with the Minister of Economy and Finance acting as the First Vice Chairman in charge of all strategic and operational aspects.

CDC has two wings: the Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB), responsible for coordination of all official development assistance and prioritization of public investments, and the

Cambodia Investment Board, responsible for foreign direct investments. CDC/CRDB acts as the secretariat of GDCC and plays the most important role in Cambodia in mobilizing and coordinating aid, engaging in policy dialogue with the development partners, and acting as the link between development partners and sectoral ministries and departments.

Chapter 3

UNDP RESPONSE AND STRATEGY

The two most recent programming cycles for UNDP Cambodia have covered the periods 2001-2005 and 2006-2010. In each case, the country programme was preceded by and based upon a common UNDAF.

3.1 UNDAF 2001-2005

UNDAF 2001-2005¹³ was based on the findings of the common country assessment (CCA) formulated jointly by UNDP, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme and World Health Organization.¹⁴ Informed by the findings of the CCA and keeping in view the mandates, experience and comparative advantages of UN system organizations working in Cambodia, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) identified the areas of development in which the UN system should concentrate its efforts during the UNDAF cycle.

The CCA had clearly identified the eradication of poverty as the main challenge facing the country. To effectively address this challenge the assessment suggested that adoption of a holistic approach based on the "linkages between illiteracy, poverty, environmental degradation, population growth, child schooling, health and nutrition" would have a greater effect than

addressing each problem individually. The CCA concluded that supporting human development should be at the forefront of any poverty eradication strategy in Cambodia to ensure that economic growth benefits the whole population and brings about greater equality.

Based on this analysis, UNDAF 2001-2005 resolved that the main challenge the UN system should try to address was how to contribute to the reduction of poverty in Cambodia, while ensuring that people were at the centre of the development process. As a precondition for the successful implementation of people-centred policies and activities, UNDAF identified two other priority areas for intervention: good governance and equal access to natural resources by rural communities in order to ensure intergenerational equity. The areas of concentration are presented in Table 3.

3.2 UNDAF 2006-2010

UNDAF 2006-2010 maintained an essential continuity with the first one, but with a few differences in terms of both process and content.¹⁵ First, the network of collaborative exercise was expanded, with several additional agencies formally adopting the second UNDAF. These new agencies were United Nations Fund for Aids Prevention, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Volunteers (UNV), UN Habitat,

¹³ United Nations, 'UNDAF Cambodia 2001-2005', 2000.

¹⁴ United Nations, 'United Nations Common Country Assessment Cambodia', United Nations Resident Coordinator System, Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 1998.

¹⁵ United Nations, 'United Nations Development Assistance Framework Cambodia 2006-2010', United Nations Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2005.

Table 3. UNDAF areas of concentration, 2001-2005

Areas of Concentration	
1. Governance, peace and justice	2. Poverty eradication
1.1 Rule of law 1.2 Public administrative reform 1.3 Culture of peace	2.1 Enabling environment 2.2 Community development 2.3 Promotion of sustainable livelihoods 2.4 Reducing malnutrition
3. Human development	4. Sustainable management of natural resources
3.1 HIV / AIDS 3.2 Health and water sanitation 3.3 Reproductive health 3.4 Education 3.5 Cultural development	4.1 Land use 4.2 Forestry 4.3 Fisheries 4.4 Environmental awareness and protection
Crosscutting Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Gender equality and women’s empowerment • Minority groups • Children and youths’ rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and democracy • Regional cooperation • Reintegration of demobilized soldiers

Source: United Nations, ‘UNDAF Cambodia 2001-2005’, 2000.

International Labour Organization and the World Bank. Others, such as the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) were also consulted, although they did not formally adopt the UNDAF. Second, unlike the first UNDAF, the second one was not preceded by a CCA, because it was felt that given the substantive analytical work already reflected in several national planning documents, a separate UN exercise for the preparation of a CCA was not needed.¹⁶ Third, by the time the second UNDAF became due, RGC had already published its fundamental strategic document in 2004 called the Rectangular Strategy¹⁷, and UNDAF had to align its objectives closely to the priorities articulated in the Rectangular Strategy. Fourth, the imperative of mainstreaming gender as a crosscutting concern in all programme areas was emphasized more strongly.

The UNDAF 2006-2010 identified four areas of intervention, in close alignment with the priorities of the Rectangular Strategy:

- Good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights
- Agriculture and rural poverty
- Capacity building and human resource development for the social sectors

The first three objectives were essentially no different from the ones articulated in UNDAF 2001-2005. The only real difference was the objective of supporting the NSDP (2006-2010), which had become imperative as a means of translating the Rectangular Strategy into an operational plan.

¹⁶ However, a new CCA (2009) has been prepared as the basis for the next UNDAF which was in the process of formulation while the present report was being prepared. UNDP, ‘Multi-donor Support Programme to Implement the RGC’s Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management (MDSP)—Mid-term Review’, MDSP Project Team, UNDP, Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009b.

¹⁷ RGC, ‘The Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity, and Efficiency in Cambodia’, Address of Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, RGC to the First Cabinet Meeting of the Third Legislature of the National Assembly, on 16 July 2004. RGC, Phnom Penh, 2004.

3.3 CCF 2001-2005

UNDP country programmes for both cycles under review have been formulated in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to UNDP within the UNDAF. The CCF for 2001-2005 identified four areas of concentration for UNDP Cambodia:

- **Strengthening government institutions:** promoting efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in public administration; strengthening institutional capacity of parliamentary structures and processes; enhancing administration of, and access to, justice; and strengthening the government's capacity for effective and efficient aid coordination and management
- **Poverty reduction and monitoring:** promoting pro-poor and gender-sensitive national and sectoral policies and strategies; enhancing access to, and effective utilization of, information and knowledge for enhanced impact on poverty reduction efforts; and promoting improvements in the livelihoods of the poor
- **Management of natural resources:** promoting national policy, legal and regulatory framework for environmentally sustainable development; strengthening monitoring and assessment of environmental sustainability; and enhancing national capacity for participation in global conventions, regulatory regimes and funding mechanisms for environmentally sustainable development
- **Gender:** strengthening advocacy, networking and partnerships for gender equality

3.4 CPAP 2006-2010

The ongoing CPAP for 2006-2010 retains essentially the same focus areas as the second CCF, with slight alterations in details and by

making gender a crosscutting issue instead of a separate area of focus (in line with the suggestion of UNDAF 2006-2010).¹⁸ Accordingly, the current activities of UNDP Cambodia are organized around three programme clusters:

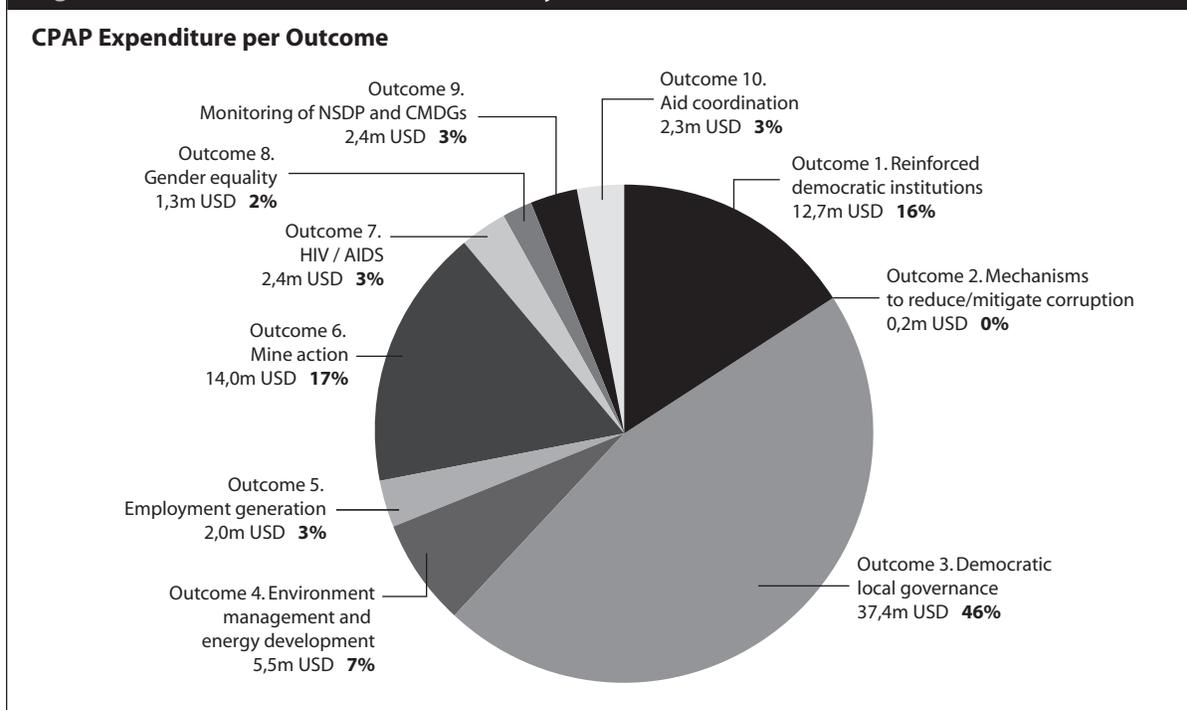
- **Governance:** decentralization and deconcentration; local governance; support to electoral processes; legislature assistance; and access to justice
- **Poverty:** poverty monitoring analysis; trade-related assistance; sustainable business; and strengthening national statistical system
- **Environment and energy:** climate change; land management; conservation of natural resources; and rural energy

The CPAP 2006-2010 specified 10 outcomes (Table 4). The distribution of resources allocated towards achieving these outcomes is shown in Figure 2.

The largest proportion of resources—approximately 46 percent—was assigned to the objective of strengthening democratic local governance and another 16 percent was allocated for reinforcing democratic institutions (at the national level). Thus, as much as 62 percent of all resources in the current programme are being devoted towards democratizing Cambodia. This reflects the importance attached by UNDP (and the UN team as a whole) to assisting Cambodia in its democratic transition—not only for its own sake but also as the foundation for achieving the other two strands of the triple transition (namely, peace and market-based development). The outcome that receives the next highest allocation is that of clearing mines, which is of special significance in Cambodia, as reflected by its inclusion as the ninth goal of the CMDGs.

¹⁸ RGC and UNDP, 'Country Programme Action Plan, 2006-2010', Phnom Penh, 2006.

Figure 2. CPAP distribution of resources by outcomes, 2006-2010



Source: Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP Cambodia, 2009.

3.4.1 MID-TERM CPAP RESULTS ASSESSMENT

The recently-completed Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment has evaluated progress towards desired outcomes and the associated delivery of outputs.¹⁹ The findings are summarized in Table 4.

The Mid-term CPAP Assessment noted that in trying to achieve 10 different outcomes, UNDP Cambodia was potentially reducing

its effectiveness and efficiency by spreading resources and management capacity too thinly. The assessment recommended reducing the number of outcomes to five, by integrating the other five outcomes into the remaining ones. Subsequently, both the UNDP country office and RGC accepted this recommendation and agreed on a revised set of outcomes as outlined in Table 5.

¹⁹ Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP Cambodia, 2009.

Table 4. Mid-term assessment of CPAP outcomes, 2006-2010		
Outcomes	Progress towards outcomes	Delivery of outputs
Outcome 1: Reinforced democratic institutions that help create checks and balances on the executive power	Below expectations	1.1 Exceeds expectations 1.2 Not satisfactory 1.3 Below expectations
Outcome 2: Mechanisms to reduce/mitigate corruption introduced	Not satisfactory	2.1 Not satisfactory
Outcome 3: Enhanced enabling environment for democratic local governance and development	Exceeds expectations	3.1 Below expectations 3.2 Exceeds expectations 3.3 Below expectations
Outcome 4: Improved capacity of national/sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that respond to the needs of the poor	Exceeds expectations	4.1 Exceeds expectations 4.2 Below expectations 4.3 Below expectations
Outcome 5: The policy and planning framework of the country incorporates a comprehensive approach to and specific targets for reduction of human and income poverty through employment generation	Exceeds expectations	5.1 Exceeds expectations
Outcome 6: Strengthened processes in mine action with emphasis on making land and infrastructures available to the rural poor men and women	Exceeds expectations	6.1 Exceeds expectations
Outcome 7: Strengthened HIV / AIDS response across sectors from central to local levels	Not satisfactory	7.1 n/a
Outcome 8: Policy statement and strategies incorporate gender equality dimension	Outstanding progress	8.1 Exceeds expectations
Outcome 9: Improved monitoring of NSDP and CMDGs including broad-based policy dialogue and participatory reporting	Below expectations	9.1 Exceeds expectations 9.2 Not satisfactory
Outcome 10: Effective ownership of external resource mobilization and aid coordination by the government focal point and sectoral ministers/agencies, in line with the Strategic Framework	Exceeds expectations	10.1 Outstanding progress

Source: Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP Cambodia, 2009.

Table 5. Revised CPAP outcomes, 2006-2010

UNDAF PRIORITY 1 Effective participation of citizens		UNDAF PRIORITY 2 Agriculture and rural development for improved livelihoods		UNDAF PRIORITY 4 National development plan
Outcome 1 Legislature and civil society are able to improve checks and balances of the executive branch	Outcome 2 Improving the delivery of social services and increasing participation of the poor in decision making	Outcome 3 National and local authorities and communities are better able to conserve biodiversity and respond to climate change	Outcome 4 National and local authorities are able to promote pro-poor investment and expand economic opportunities	Outcome 5 National and local authorities are better able to manage development effectiveness
Output 1.1 Capacities of electoral stakeholders strengthened in democratic electoral processes	Output 2.1 Local administration structures (provincial, district and commune) and systems (Planning, M&E, Finance HR, etc.) strengthened	Output 3.1 Capacities of government and local communi- ties enhanced for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods improvement	Output 4.1 Capacity to formulate and implement Cambodian Trade Integration Strategy improved	Output 5.1 Systems and human resources of CDC/CRDB on aid coordination improved
Output 1.2 Capacity of individual parliamentarians and general secretariats strengthened in legislation, oversight and representation	Output 2.2 Mechanisms and capacities of local govern- ment improved to promote voices, accountability and partnership at national and sub-national level	Output 3.2 Capacities of government and local communities enhanced to respond to climate change	Output 4.2 Government capacities strengthened to support pro-poor private sector investment at a provincial level	Output 5.2 Capacities of ministry and planning for poverty monitoring enhanced
	Output 2.3 Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism piloted with local authorities in 6 provinces and marginalized group (poor women and indigenous people) representation		Output 4.3 National capacities enhanced to manage the mine action sector	Output 5.3 Capacities of government and mechanisms for gender mainstreaming strengthened
				Output 5.4 Policy options on managing sustainable development provided

Source: UNDP Cambodia.

Chapter 4

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP

UNDP strategic positioning in Cambodia was analysed in terms of four criteria: the **strategic relevance** of UNDP activities in the light of development challenges faced by Cambodia; the quality of UNDP responsiveness to Cambodia's changing development needs; the contribution that UNDP (and the UN system in general) makes to the propagation and inculcation of wider **UN values** in Cambodia; and UNDP success in forging **strategic partnerships** with various actors in the development arena—multilateral and bilateral development agencies, national and international NGOs, the private sector and civil society—while assisting RGC in achieving its development goals.

4.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

The overall UNDP programme of Cambodia is highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the country as formulated in the various strategic documents produced by RGC. Most of the current activities of UNDP Cambodia are organized into three clusters—governance, environment and poverty, with gender being a crosscutting theme—and the objectives are organized around five themes, as formulated in the revised CPAP classification of outcomes²⁰:

- **Outcome 1:** Legislature and civil society are able to improve checks and balances of the executive branch
- **Outcome 2:** Improving the delivery of social services and increasing participation of the poor in decision making
- **Outcome 3:** National and local authorities and communities are better able to conserve biodiversity and respond to climate change
- **Outcome 4:** National and local authorities are able to promote pro-poor investment and expand economic opportunities
- **Outcome 5:** National and local authorities are better able to manage development effectiveness

At the general level, the relevance of UNDP activities derives from the fact that each of these desired outcomes reflects an important dimension of what Cambodia ought to focus on in order to succeed in the triple transition it has embarked upon since 1991—to peace, democracy and market-based economic development.

The first two outcomes have immediate relevance to the imperative of Cambodia's transition to peace and democracy. After decades of bloody conflicts, political leaders came to realize in the late 1980s that they must bid for peace, and the only viable way in which lasting peace could be established in a deeply divided society like Cambodia was to set up a system of governance that respected the rights and interests of all segments of society and allowed all segments to take part in decision-making processes. In other words, there was a need to install a truly participatory system of democratic governance. RGC articulated this realization through a series of strategic documents spelling out its vision of democratic transition. UNDP helped RGC all along this path, both in formulating and articulating the vision and in implementing it. All

²⁰ While examining the relevance of UNDP activities over the entire period under consideration, it should suffice to focus on the most recent period (2006-2010) since, as noted Chapter 3, there exists an essential continuity in the themes and objectives of UNDP activities and projects across the last two programming periods (in fact, going back even earlier into the 1990s).

UNDP activities in the governance cluster have been dedicated to this task.

There are two broad categories of activities in the governance cluster. One relates to strengthening democratic practices at the national level, by giving support to the electoral process and helping to strengthen democratic checks and balances by empowering the legislature and civil society. This set of activities seeks to achieve Outcome 1. The other category relates to expanding opportunities for people's participation in decision-making processes by decentralizing governance down to the local level and strengthening the machinery of local-level governance. This set of activities pertains to Outcome 2. The two categories of activities answer two equally important dimensions of the democratic transition that Cambodia is aspiring for—national and sub-national dimensions.

More than half of the UNDP budget has been allocated to governance-related activities, which is in keeping with the fundamental importance of securing the democratic transition of Cambodia as the basis for long-term economic and social development. In its Rectangular Strategy, RGC places governance at the centre of the four strategic thrusts that represent the four sides of the rectangle. This demonstrates RGC's recognition of the foundational significance of democratic governance—both for its own sake as well as a means of securing all other objectives. The UNDP decision to concentrate most of its resources to activities in the area of governance echoes that recognition.

The environmental cluster has designed its projects with a view to achieving Outcome 3, which is of great significance for the people of Cambodia. Since 1995, Cambodia has been a ratified signatory of the Convention on Biological Diversity. As part of its response to the convention, Cambodia has developed a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, with support from a Global Environment Facility (GEF) enabling activity through UNDP. The strategy provides a framework for action at

all levels, which will enhance Cambodia's ability to ensure the productivity, diversity and integrity of its natural systems and, as a result, its ability to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of all Cambodians. A large part of UNDP activities in the environment cluster advance the goals of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, by centering on the preservation of biodiversity and environmental resources, based on the recognition that sustainable livelihoods of the people who depend on those resources depend critically on the success of conservation.

This is best exemplified by the environment cluster's flagship projects involving the Tonle Sap Lake. Tonle Sap is a vast wetland connected to the mainstream of the Mekong River by the Tonle Sap River. The flooded forests of Tonle Sap are the largest remaining example of this type of habitat in Southeast Asia and include 400,000 hectares of floodplain swamp forest (increasing to one million hectares when at full flood each year). More than 1.2 million Cambodians live in the maximum flood area, while the population of the Tonle Sap sub-catchment area is estimated at three million, many of whom derive at least part of their subsistence from the lake's resources.

The Tonle Sap is of great significance to the Cambodian people and is often described as the heart of the country's culture and economy. Ancient Khmer civilization, exemplified by the Angkorian temple complexes, was based on the shores of the Tonle Sap, and the two products—rice and fish—that formed the basis of this civilization still remain the staple products of the country.

Despite the vast natural wealth of the Tonle Sap, poverty is widespread: approximately 38 percent of the population living in the five provinces surrounding the Tonle Sap region fall under the official poverty line, the highest proportion in the country. Approximately 50 percent of the villages have 40 to 60 percent of households living below the poverty line, with a peak of 80 percent in some rural areas. The ecological sustainability of the region thus has implications not just for the

valuable flora and fauna it contains but also for the livelihoods of a large fraction of Cambodia's poorest people. Recognizing this fact, RGC has declared the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (TSBR) a region of special significance for the country. UNDP projects related to Tonle Sap derive their relevance from the importance of this region. Other environmental projects, focusing on the forest resources of the Northern Plains and the Cardamom Mountains have a similar rationale.

Outcome 4 is to be achieved mainly by the activities of the poverty cluster. The relevance of these activities is obvious in that Cambodia remains one of the poorest countries in the world and poverty reduction is the overarching aim of RGC. Cambodians were desperately poor when the triple transition to peace, democracy and market-based economy began in the early 1990s. Economic growth has occurred at a high rate but poverty reduction has not kept pace with it, giving rise to extreme inequality in income distribution. With an average growth rate of almost 10 percent per annum, poverty reduction has occurred only at approximately 1 percentage point per annum, which reflects an extraordinarily weak response of poverty to economic growth by international standards. Indeed, the weakness of the growth-poverty nexus observed in Cambodia is quite exceptional in the whole of Asia and invokes parallels only with some countries in Latin America and Africa.

Given this record, it is essential to design economic activities in a way that would enable the poor Cambodians to seize opportunities for better livelihoods opened up by economic growth. RGC recognizes this imperative and has stated the importance of adopting pro-poor policies in its Rectangular Strategy as well as in the NSDP. UNDP activities related to Outcome 3 derive their relevance from this strategic thrust. The major activities in this context include attempts to promote pro-poor policies of international trade and a set of activities under the Growing Sustainable Business (GSB) Initiative that aim to develop micro and small entrepreneurs with

the help of larger players from the private sector. Both through trade and GSB-related activities, UNDP has been trying to link poverty reduction with private-sector-led market-based economic growth, which is precisely the strategy of RGC. UNDP activities related to Outcome 3 are thus highly relevant both to the needs of the people of Cambodia and to the strategy RGC has chosen to meet those needs.

An important component of the poverty cluster is activities related to mine clearance. This has special significance for Cambodia, which is one of the three most mine-infested countries in the world. Demining of land is essential not only for securing the lives and limbs of the Cambodian people but also for expanding the opportunities of the poor who depend on those lands for habitat and livelihood. In recognition of this importance, RGC has added mine clearance as the ninth goal of the CMDGs, which renders UNDP activities related to mine especially significant.

Outcome 5 is a conglomeration of several loosely connected objectives. The one most directly related to development effectiveness is the objective of improving aid effectiveness. Most of the others—such as mainstreaming gender and improving national capacity for monitoring poverty reduction and MDG achievement—have more to do with contribution to UN values in the context of the present evaluation and are discussed separately later in this report. The issue of aid effectiveness is also discussed later in more detail. Since Cambodia happens to be one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, there is a real danger of inefficient use of official development assistance unless it is properly coordinated. RGC is aware of this danger and has set strategies and institutions to ensure aid effectiveness. UNDP has assisted RGC in this regard through a succession of projects over several programming cycles and has played a pivotal role in the overall aid coordination process in Cambodia. In light of the acute need for ensuring effective use of aid in Cambodia, the relevance of these activities cannot be overemphasized.

Overall, UNDP programmes in Cambodia are highly relevant for the country's development goals and priorities. However, when it comes to focusing on specific sub-themes within the broad programme areas, UNDP has not always chosen ones most relevant to either the general UNDP mandate or to Cambodia's development needs. This raises issues not only of strategic relevance but also the effectiveness of UNDP programmes. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.2 RESPONSIVENESS

Few countries have changed as radically as Cambodia has during the last two decades, and UNDP has been a steady partner in this change, responding to the country's evolving needs in a wide range of arenas.

When in the wake of the 1991 Peace Accord the country needed to consolidate the peace process by choosing the path of electoral democracy, the United Nations was there to help. The first post-transition national elections were held in 1993 under the auspices of the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia. But the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia withdrew its peacekeeping troops the same year, leaving behind a 20-person Military Liaison Team, which was reduced to one person by 1994. In the absence of the UN umbrella, the next election in 1998 was marred by widespread violence and the country almost slipped back into a state of civil war. This experience showed the political parties that there was an urgent need for setting up a proper system of elections and democratic practice. However, the country possessed neither the knowledge nor the capacity to do so.

The government turned to UNDP for help, and since then UNDP has been a constant ally of RGC. It has helped not only in conducting elections successfully but also in democratizing the country in various ways: strengthening the National Elections Committee (NEC), building the capacity of parliamentarians, helping to create a democratic culture through its work with the media and civil society, and helping to

spread democracy to the grassroots level through decentralization and local-level governance.

When the country needed to continue its move towards market-based economic development by joining the World Trade Organization (WTO), UNDP provided technical assistance in collaboration with other agencies. The support did not end with WTO accession, however. UNDP entered into a long-term support programme to help the Ministry of Commerce manage its trade integration with an eye on both competitiveness and poverty reduction. This programme was also used as an instrument for responding to the country's new demand for fostering the private sector as the primary vehicle for achieving long-term economic development.

When a large amount of official development assistance began to flow into the country in the 1990s, the government was ill-equipped to handle it. Proper systems and institutions were needed to coordinate the aid process and to prioritize its utilization. Once again, UNDP responded by helping to develop the necessary institutions—in particular, the CDC and its staff—and setting up an elaborate mechanism of aid coordination with the help of other development partners. UNDP has continued to support the CDC and the aid coordination mechanism.

When Cambodia began to feel the after-effects of the most recent global economic crisis in the form of loss of jobs in the export sector (mainly the garments industry) and the government expressed the need to deal with increasing unemployment, UNDP again responded positively. UNDP worked with the International Labour Organization to put together a Tracking Project to trace where the newly unemployed people were heading and to help them get back to employment by giving them new skills and information.

One of the best examples of a rapid and innovative UNDP response was the Insights for Action Project (2005-2010). The project was initiated by a request from His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen to UNDP in 2004 to provide innovative

ideas to help implement the Rectangular Strategy, particularly for achieving further progress towards the CMDGs. Following the request, Insights for Action was set up in 2005 and was designed as a quick response initiative that would offer the RGC ideas rather than money.²¹ These ideas were expected to be innovative in order to catalyze policy implementation. It comprised initially of two components—knowledge generation and knowledge sharing. A third component—knowledge into action—was added in 2007.

The knowledge generation relates most closely to the responsiveness issue. It focuses on practical research in priority areas of the Rectangular Strategy and CMDGs. The specific issues and questions to be researched were determined by the needs and requests of the RGC and other development partners and stakeholders. The idea of flexibility was inherent in the original concept of Insights for Action so that it could act as a potential catalyst to development in the form of a new idea. Flexibility was also seen as important because it was acknowledged that there was no blueprint for development and therefore new ideas and pilot projects could be used as a means of testing something for a short time to ascertain its usefulness to the context.

The project has successfully produced a number of outcomes in terms of both process and content, and high-quality research was conducted in a large number of areas including: human development in Cambodia; competitiveness of the Cambodian economy; and possible economic consequences of off-shore oil and gas discovery. The Mid-term Review of the project observed, however, that “While there have been a number of fora to disseminate the research, it is believed that this could be more effective if approached in a

different way, one that engages stakeholders very early on in conversations about their knowledge needs, identifying existing knowledge and only commissioning research when it is absolutely necessary.”²² The project has been somewhat redesigned in recent years to strike a better balance between knowledge generation and documentation of impact on policy development. This redesign would seem to answer the criticism made by the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment that “while UNDP has been active in knowledge generation, their actual impact on policy development has not been documented yet.” Yet, the new focus on documentation has also created a problem of its own. As the Mid-term Review of the project has pointed out, “At present, IFA [Insights for Action] has lost some of its original flexibility because it is getting further and further embroiled in implementation and in generating more and more information in follow up to past work. Its structure within UNDP has also changed and the CPAP has been imposed on it in adherence to global UNDP requirements, both of which have served to increase bureaucracy and cut response time.”²³ There is clearly a case here for bringing back the original flexibility and quick response ability of the Insights for Action Initiative.

4.3 PROMOTION OF UN VALUES

4.3.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Cambodia has the lowest levels of gender equality in Asia as measured by the Gender-related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Index. Compared with men, women have less access to health and education services, productive employment opportunities and decent work, land ownership, and other property rights.²⁴ Violence against

²¹ CDC and UNDP, ‘Insights for Action: Catalyzing Policies and Actions for Achieving Cambodia’s Millennium Development Goals’, Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2005.

²² Jack M, Steinlin M, Somith S, ‘Unfolding the Knowledge Management Potential of the “Insight for Action” Project of UNDP Cambodia: Mission Report of the Mid-Term Review’, Ingenious People’s Knowledge, Cape Town, for UNDP, Cambodia, 2009, p. 4.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UNDP, ‘Multi-donor Support Programme to Implement the RGC’s Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management (MDSP)—Mid-term Review’, MDSP Project Team, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009.

women is not only widespread, it is widely tolerated in Cambodian society. Formal or informal mechanisms for prevention, protection and redress for victims are limited. The need for raising gender awareness and gender mainstreaming in all aspects of policymaking is thus of paramount importance in Cambodia. RGC is conscious of the scale and intensity of the problem, and UNDP has been helping the government address it.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs has developed a five-year Strategic Plan 2003-2007 titled *Neary Rattanak II (Women Are Precious Gems)*, which is recognized by the Rectangular Strategy as RGC's gender policy. UNDP has long been contributing to this arena by strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and by acting as the donor co-facilitator for the TWG on gender.

UNDP support to the Ministry of Women's Affairs is being provided through the Partnership for Gender Equity Project spanning the last two programming cycles. The project has several interlinked components, but the focus is mainly on strengthening the gender mainstreaming process in national policies and programmes, including sectoral plans, and on capacity building of the ministry and key line ministry staff.²⁵

Using the capacity built through UNDP efforts, the Ministry of Women's Affairs has been helping various line ministries set up Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups (GMAGs) to help mainstream gender into their activities. This effort has already yielded some significant results. GMAGs have been established in 25 ministries and institutions, of which 15 have already prepared their sectoral Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan. Among them, seven have received national budget and/or support

from development partners to implement their plans. All this has resulted in the emergence of an institutional structure for mainstreaming gender in government activities that is quite exceptional in the developing world.²⁶

Although still fragile, this work has the potential for making gender mainstreaming a reality in all or most ministries of the government. Some UN organizations have seen the value of this mechanism and are supporting it in ministries with which they are working, such as the International Labour Organization with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and UNFPA with both the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Health.

Until recently, there was a complaint that while UNDP was trying to help RGC mainstream gender in national programmes and policies, there was inadequate mainstreaming in its own programmes. That situation is now changing, thanks to the leadership of the UNDP country office and to stronger links with UNIFEM. For instance, gender representation and issues have been placed at the centre of the planning system of the UNDP-supported Democratic Development and Local Governance (DDLG) Project, which aims to strengthen the capacity of sub-national governments to engage in inter-commune cooperation. This has allowed representatives from the Women and Children Committees at the commune level to participate in the selection of inter-commune projects and to become *ex officio* members of project management committees. Evidence of gender mainstreaming is also found in several other UNDP projects, including: Trade Related Assistance for Development and Equity (TRADE) Project in the poverty cluster; Tonle Sap Conservation Project (TSCP) in the environmental cluster; and Support to Parliament Project (LEAP), Strengthening Democracy

²⁵ Beresford M, Panhavuth L, 'Partnership for Gender Equity 2001-2004: Terminal Evaluation Report', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2004; and RGC and UNDP, 'Partnership for Gender Equity (PGE)—Phase II', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2004.

²⁶ MOWA and UNDP, 'Minutes of the Annual Progress Review Meeting Partnership for Gender Equity, Phase II', MOWA Conference Room, Phnom Penh, 2007; McKay E, 'UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equity Project—Recommended Actions', UNIFEM, Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009.

and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP) Project, and the Access to Justice Project in the governance cluster.

Recent evaluations reveal that the performance of the gender programme has been promising. However, several challenges remain at the level of implementation.

First, the pressure of balancing the long-term goal of capacity development against the immediate need for providing technical input has over-stretched the Ministry of Women's Affairs staff, compromising their capacity to train GMAGs in other agencies and ministries.²⁷

Second, although most GMAGs claim that they have been able to integrate their activities into the overall plan of their ministry for presentation to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, only a small number of them have been successful in obtaining government finance. For those who did receive financial support, the amounts were relatively modest.²⁸

Third, there are some heads of agencies who readily admit that their understanding of gender concepts, and particularly gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting, is weak or non-existent. This limits their advocacy for gender mainstreaming at the national level and their support for their agency's gender focal points.

Evidently, the good work done by UNDP and other UN organizations (UNIFEM and UNFPA) in setting up institutional mechanisms for and pushing forward the agenda of gender mainstreaming need to be continued and strengthened. Several evaluators of the gender programmes in Cambodia have recommended

that a UN Gender Coordinator at a senior level be appointed, and possibly located at the office of the Resident Coordinator, to improve the quality of gender work across the UNCT.²⁹ This evaluation supports this recommendation.

4.3.2 MDGS

UNDP contributes directly to the promotion of MDGs in Cambodia by pursuing the goal of poverty reduction through its various projects. Most of the projects in the poverty cluster are geared towards that goal. Several of the environmental projects also address this goal by linking livelihood concerns with environmental protection. The decentralization projects in the governance cluster have the potential to advance several of the CMDGs—especially those related to health and education—by creating the institutional structure necessary for effective service delivery at the local level. The Partnership for Gender Equity Project directly addresses the CMDG goal of eliminating discrimination against women. In addition, UNDP plays a strong role in relation to the ninth element of CMDG—demining—through its project called Clearing for Results.

In addition to this direct contribution towards realizing the CMDGs, UNDP also plays a central role in raising awareness about the MDGs, creating and disseminating knowledge about them, and helping to create a database for monitoring progress in their achievement. These activities answer to the output titled “Improving the national capacity to monitor the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs)” under revised CPAP Outcome 5.

²⁷ UNDP, 'Partnership for Gender Equity Phase II: Annual Progress Report 2009', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

²⁸ Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNDP, 'Minutes of the Annual Progress Review Meeting Partnership for Gender Equity, Phase II', Phnom Penh, 2007; UNDP, 'Partnership for Gender Equity Phase II: Annual Progress Report 2009', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

²⁹ McKay E, 'UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equity Project—Recommended Actions', UNIFEM, Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009.

UNDP activities in this regard took the form of programmatic support to the Ministry of Planning for strengthening poverty monitoring systems. The support was provided through two projects: Capacity Development for Poverty Monitoring and Analysis, which was officially terminated in 2007; and Capacity Development of National Statistical System, which ended in early 2008.

The objective of Capacity Development for Poverty Monitoring and Analysis was to strengthen the capacity of the Council for Social Development in the Ministry of Planning to establish a participatory, country-owned and result-oriented poverty monitoring and analysis system, capable of informing pro-poor policy decision making. At the output level, the most important achievement of this project was to improve the availability of poverty statistics by developing relevant indicators, supporting socio-economic surveys, and facilitating exchanges with line ministries.

In terms of capacity development, some success appears to have come from the fact that the government has regularly published key reports on poverty and CMDG monitoring³⁰ and on NSDP progress.³¹ However, officials from the Ministry of Planning contend that very little capacity development has occurred in practice, because the reports were written mostly by external experts who left little expertise behind. Other stakeholders, notably the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, the premier social science research institution in Cambodia, also note that UNDP activities in the field of poverty analysis have not been designed to develop and sustain local capacity. This is certainly an area to which UNDP ought to pay serious attention in the future.

The other project, Capacity Development of National Statistical System, was signed in 2003 but effectively got off the ground in late 2006 and was completed in March 2008. The objective was to strengthen the government's capacity to deliver reliable data for informed decision making on pro-poor policies and tracking progress towards the achievement of CMDGs. Partly as a result of this support, Cambodia was able to implement the Law on Statistics, produce the first data set on the status of CMDGs at the sub-national level, and introduce Cambodia's National Indicator Database (also referred to as CAMINFO) as the database for tracking CMDG progress.

In addition to these two projects, the Insights for Action Project has also contributed towards creating knowledge and raising awareness about MDG-related issues by: producing documents such as the National Human Development Report 2007: Expanding Choice for the Rural People³²; organizing an international conference on Fuelling Poverty Reduction with Oil and Gas Revenues: Comparative Country Experiences; holding the annual Cambodian Economic Forum to promote dialogue on various topics that have implications for poverty and human development; and producing various discussion papers on related matters.

4.3.3 ADVOCACY ROLE OF THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

In Cambodia, UNDP efforts to promote UN values have been complemented by a strong advocacy role played by the UN Resident Coordinator. The Resident Coordinator office has produced and disseminated powerful documents on various topics pertaining to a wide range of UN values. These include persistent violation of human rights, exceptionally high

³⁰ Ministry of Planning, 'Cambodia Millennium Development Goals', RGC, Phnom Penh, 2003; Ministry of Planning, 'Progress in Achieving Cambodia Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Opportunities', RGC, Phnom Penh, 2007.

³¹ RGC, 'National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010: Annual Progress Report 2006', Phnom Penh, 2007; RGC, 'Mid-Term Review 2008 on National Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010', Phnom Penh, 2008.

³² Ministry of Planning, 'Cambodia Human Development Report 2007: Expanding Choice for the Rural People', RGC, Phnom Penh, 2007.

levels of maternal mortality, and the intensification of food insecurity among the poor in the wake the ongoing global economic crisis.

Unlike other advocacy documents that highlight a persistent problem, the advocacy document on HIV/AIDS highlights a problem that was successfully tackled (though not completely defeated). Cambodia is a world leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS and one of only a handful of countries that are on track to achieve this MDG target. The UN team in Cambodia has been engaged in this area, not just in an advocacy role but also in the actual fight against the disease. The country's success in combating HIV/AIDS owes enormously to the technical support provided by the UNCT through United Nations Fund for Aids Prevention.

4.4 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP has been so deeply involved in the development of Cambodia since the country's transition towards peace began in 1991 that there is hardly any aspect of Cambodian economic and political life in which it has not lent a helping hand. Feedback from a wide range of stakeholders has indicated that UNDP standing in Cambodia is disproportionately high in relation to the resources it directly contributes. Even those who have specific criticisms of the UNDP role generally have a high regard for its contribution to the country. UNDP has achieved this standing primarily by forging strategic partnerships with various actors and doing so in a manner that has earned respect and confidence.

Partnerships have been forged with both close collaborators like other UN organizations and distant actors such as the media. UNDP has played an active role in improving UN coordination in Cambodia. In particular, it has collaborated effectively with other members of the UNCT (as well as some other non-UN partners such as ADB) to produce two rounds of UNDAF. UNDP has

made a conscious attempt to align the developmental outcomes of its own country programmes to the broad outcomes that the UNCT has aimed to achieve through this instrument.

Commensurate with its wide-ranging involvement in Cambodian affairs, UNDP has progressively been drawn towards building partnerships with a wide range of development agencies. Each of its programme clusters involves other development partners either in funding or in implementation, some examples include: the governance cluster's partnerships with DFID, Swedish International Development Agency [SIDA], Danish International Development Agency, the European Union, the World Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development; the environment cluster's partnerships with GEF, UNV, Wildlife Conservation Society and the ADB; and the poverty cluster's partnerships with the International Trade Centre, United Nations Capital Development Fund, GTZ³³, International Labour Organization and the World Bank.

Discussion with the donor community suggests that, in general, these partnerships have worked well. However, several issues have come up, mainly in the context of decentralization projects, that call for greater attention on the part of UNDP. First, several representatives of the donor partners felt that while UNDP successfully involves other partners at the stage of execution and implementation of projects, more cooperation is needed at the stage of project design. Second, there seems to exist a deep divide among UNDP partners in decentralization projects on the emphasis on service delivery versus democratization objectives. UNDP takes a middle position on this matter, but it needs to do more to bridge the divide for the sake of effective functioning of decentralized governance.

In addition to UNDP efforts, the office of the UN Resident Coordinator also plays an important

³³ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit/German Technical Cooperation Agency.

role in maintaining close links within the donor community. The Resident Coordinator holds regular formal and informal meetings with other development partners both to foster cooperation amongst the donors themselves and to develop common positions on various issues regarding the donor community's engagement with RGC.

4.4.1 AID COORDINATION

An important dimension of UNDP efforts in building strategic partnerships is the role it has played in strengthening the process of aid coordination between RGC and its development partners. The central feature of this role is the support it has provided (since 1994) to CDC/CRDB, the focal agency of the government in charge of aid coordination and resource mobilization. Two major projects were undertaken during the last two country programmes for this purpose—Strengthening Capacity in Aid Coordination and Development Cooperation Partnerships (2001-2005) and Multi-donor Support Programme to Implement RGC's Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management (2006-2010).

The project on Strengthening Capacity in Aid Coordination and Development Cooperation Partnerships (2001-2005) was intended to help RGC achieve its national objectives and better support the transition from donor-driven development to one of national ownership and leadership. The Multi-donor Support Programme further builds upon previous UNDP engagement and partnerships with CDC/CRDB to promote aid coordination and partnerships. A high priority of the Multi-donor Support Programme was to ensure that RGC's institutions had the capacity to take full ownership and to lead the aid coordination and aid management processes. With this objective, the programme focused on:

- Capacity development of the focal point within the government for resource mobilization and aid coordination functions, and providing high quality policy advisory support to the senior management and staff of CDC/CRDB
- Capacity development of the line ministries and agencies to enable them to effectively manage external assistance that is implemented through them and to effectively coordinate their aid management activities with CDC/CRDB

Evidence suggests that these efforts have made an impact on the national capacity for ensuring aid effectiveness in Cambodia.³⁴ In addition to improving the systems and human resources within CDC/CRDB, the project has also made significant progress on a range of fronts beyond CDC. These areas include successful support to sector ministries through the project's block grant support to TWGs and to the development community at large through better management and support to high-level discussion forums such as GDCC and the Cambodian Development Cooperation Forum.

According to the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment, all stakeholders recognize the project's invaluable contribution towards creation of the evidence base for better aid management in Cambodia, including completion of the second round of the Paris Declaration Survey, implementation of an independent monitoring process, and articulation of two high quality aid effectiveness reports.³⁵ These achievements testify to the increased capacity of CDC/CRDB staff to collect and analyse data as well as to present evidence and recommendations that are pertinent to aid policy.

³⁴ UNDP, 'Multi-donor Support Programme to Implement the RGC's Strategic Framework for Development Cooperation Management (MDSP)—Mid-term Review', MDSP Project Team, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009.

³⁵ Winderl T, 'UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008', UNDP, Cambodia, 2009.

The project's approach to capacity development within CDC/CRDB is considered a model for capacity development in other areas of government. This is evident, as found by the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment, from the fact that the Ministries of Planning and Women's Affairs have called upon the expertise in CDC for designing their own capacity development strategies.

Apart from supporting the CDC/CRDB, UNDP also contributes to the aid coordination process by taking active part in the joint TWGs. UNDP is the lead donor facilitator in three TWGs—those pertaining to gender, mine action, and partnerships and harmonization. In addition, the UN Resident Coordinator's office is the lead facilitator for the TWG on planning and poverty reduction.

Various stakeholders have testified to the value of the UNDP contribution to aid coordination in Cambodia, but they also point to several disconcerting features. First, while participants to the aid coordination mechanism generally appreciated the role UNDP played in building the capacity of CDC/CRDB, there is a need to further strengthen its capacity beyond its leadership and the core staff so as to ensure the long-term sustainability of government-led aid coordination. Second, the majority of the TWGs do not function as well as intended. There are a couple—such as those on health and education—whose work is highly appreciated by the participating agencies, and it is no coincidence that a high degree of donor-government coordination already existed in these sectors long before the formation of TWGs. The newer TWGs are the ones that have lagged behind, and they are the majority. Third, the GDCC forum,

which is supposed to look after the activities of TWGs, has not worked very well. Until recently, the GDCC meetings have been more a forum for making speeches rather than for addressing the work of TWGs and other operational issues.

The current sclerosis in the TWGs and GDCC has the disturbing implication that any capacity development that has occurred within CDC/CRDB through the effort of UNDP cannot achieve its full potential in terms of actually improving development effectiveness. This is unfortunate, considering that Cambodia has so successfully and painstakingly developed one of the most elaborate structures of aid coordination in the developing world.

On a positive note, the current Resident Coordinator has recently taken initiatives to revitalize the GDCC process, which is an essential prerequisite for infusing new life into the TWGs. UNDP should play a part in this process. UNDP is already held in high esteem by the donor community and RGC for helping build the capacity of CDC/CRDB, the lynchpin of aid coordination in the country. This store of goodwill should be fully used to achieve the goal of greater aid effectiveness in Cambodia.

In recent years, UNDP has been moving towards closer partnership with the private sector. This is primarily a response to the government's own inclination to look upon the private enterprise as the main vehicle for bringing about socio-economic development in Cambodia, as emphasized in the Prime Minister's Rectangular Strategy. Most of these partnerships are to be found in the projects that fall under the poverty cluster, such as the TRADE Project and a range of projects under the GSB Initiative.³⁶

³⁶ GSB/UNDP, 'Capacity Building for Energy SMEs (CBES)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'ICT Solutions for Agricultural and Fisheries Industries', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'RES (Renewable Energy Solutions)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'RUBII: Rural Business Information Initiative', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'VPI (Village Phone Initiative)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'Rural Electricity Entrepreneurs', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; GSB/UNDP, 'Investment Feasibility Study on Sustainable Tourism in Cambodia', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

There is a nascent involvement of the private sector in some projects of the environment cluster as well.

Partnerships with civil society and the media appear mostly in the governance cluster in projects related to democratization and decentralization, but also to some extent in the environment

cluster in the context of community-based natural resource management. However, UNDP needs to strengthen its partnership with civil society even more in order to effectively realize development outcomes—mainly in the area of governance, but also in the context of linking environmental protection with sustainable livelihoods.

Chapter 5

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

5.1 OUTCOME 1—LEGISLATURE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ARE ABLE TO IMPROVE CHECKS AND BALANCES OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

This outcome stems from the recognition that broad-based socio-economic development in Cambodia can only emerge from a democratic environment in which the government is responsive to the needs of the people. However to ensure a democratic environment, it is essential that the executive is made accountable for its actions. In turn, the executive's accountability depends on its relationship with other actors in society. This outcome identifies two groups of actors in this connection—civil society and the legislature—and seeks to strengthen them to improve the checks and balances of the executive.

Corresponding to the two groups of actors, the outcome is made up of two outputs: strengthening the capacities of electoral stakeholders in democratic electoral processes; and strengthening the capacity of individual parliamentarians and general secretariats in legislation, oversight and representation. UNDP has launched two major projects to achieve these objectives: the SDEP Project (first objective); and LEAP (second objective).³⁷

5.1.1 STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL PROCESS

SDEP (2006-2010) supports the RGC in conducting free, fair, transparent and sustainable elections and in promoting development of a culture of democracy through civic engagement initiatives.³⁸ Since the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, UNDP has been supporting the Cambodian electoral process. Until 2003, however, this support consisted mainly of short-term technical assistance to particular electoral events. SDEP aims to move beyond such event-specific short-term support and proposes longer-term support to electoral institutions, legislation and processes with a view to making these more transparent, participatory and independent. This move towards the long-term approach is based on the understanding that holding free and fair elections is only a first step on the road to democracy. As the project document points out: "Elections alone are not enough to allow democratic values to flourish, this (sic) is important to couple electoral assistance with broader ranging initiatives involving the Cambodian people as a whole, its civil society and especially the younger generation to foster the emergence of a culture of democracy going beyond the ballot boxes."³⁹

The need for long-term reorientation was recognized in the aftermath of the 2003 National Assembly elections. Following the elections, a political impasse prevailed for almost a year, since no single party could claim the two-thirds majority that was constitutionally required in order

³⁷ There is a whole range of other projects related to the ongoing decentralization and deconcentration process in Cambodia, which can also be expected to improve the democratic environment by strengthening participatory decentralized governance at the sub-national levels. Since, however, there is a separate CPAP outcome related to decentralized governance, these are dealt with separately in the next section.

³⁸ RGC and UNDP, 'Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2006.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 5.

to form a government. The ruling Cambodian People's Party and opposition FUNCINPEC⁴⁰ Party ultimately signed a cooperation agreement in June 2004 that finally allowed the formation of government. This agreement, however, vastly increased the size of the government and the only opposition party in the National Assembly—the Sam Rainsy Party—became effectively absent from most legislative commissions, thereby reducing the democratic value of the Parliament. Furthermore, the electoral process was marred by various irregularities, which the NEC was unable to prevent.⁴¹ The events surrounding the 2003 election were worrying enough to throw into question Cambodia's hard-earned democratic gains.

It is against this background that the RGC, through its Minister of Interior, requested UNDP in 2005 to move from short-term event-specific support to longer-term and broader initiatives beyond electoral processes so as to consolidate the democratic base of the country in the spirit of the Rectangular Strategy. The Minister of Information and the Minister of Education also expressed the wish to see UNDP develop a project that would advance the values of democracy in their respective areas. The SDEP was conceived as a response to this request, and was made up of four components.⁴²

- Providing technical and legal support to the NEC as well as to Provincial Election Committees and Commune Election Committees
- Effecting improvements in the normative electoral framework and processes, including improvements in the voter registration system and enhancement of NEC independence

- Strengthening civic participation and democratic culture, using an appropriate combination of technical and policy advice, consultative processes, educational activities and media capacity building
- Ensuring sufficient resources (financial and technical) to the NEC to hold the 2007 Commune Elections and 2008 National Elections

The project recognized that these four areas represented a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to democracy. On the one hand, they would help create a more enabling legal framework and processes as well as competent, independent institutions (the supply side, or top-down); on the other, they also focused on the subjects of democratic governance, namely the citizens (the demand side, or bottom up). In particular, the project targeted those citizens who would enter the voting age population for the next election. The project consciously tried to address both supply and demand sides in the belief that on its own neither was sufficient to help build democracy, promote reconciliation and maintain peace.

5.1.2 LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE

LEAP (2007-2010) seeks to further enrich democratic practices in Cambodia by enabling parliamentarians to better perform their roles in contributing to policy debates, acting as a conduit between the people and the executive, and holding the executive to account on behalf of the citizens.⁴³ It is a continuation of the earlier UNDP project Support to Capacity Development of Cambodia Parliament, which was completed

⁴⁰ Front Uni Nationale pour un Cambodge Indépendent, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif.

⁴¹ RGC and UNDP, 'Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2006; Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, 'Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; UNDP, 'Project Review—Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP) Project', Report of Project Review Mission, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁴² RGC and UNDP, 'Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2006.

⁴³ Cambodian National Assembly and Senate and UNDP, 'Legislature Assistance Project (LEAP)', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2007.

in 2005. An independent evaluation of the earlier project⁴⁴ as well as an evaluation commissioned by the Canadian International Development Agency of its Canada Cambodia Legislative Support Project found clear improvement of capacity of parliamentarians and staff through their projects, but they also identified areas for further improvement. Continued support was felt necessary as process of parliamentary institutional modernization was expected to take 10 to 15 years. It was against this backdrop that LEAP was designed with a view to building on the experiences from previous support. The project design was also aligned with the goals outlined in the Parliament's 2006 Strategic Framework and Action Plan for the Capacity Building of the Cambodian Parliament. In terms of specific objectives, the project was made up of three components:

- Strengthen and enhance capacity of the commissions to better exercise their interrelated functions: representation, law making and oversight
- Strengthen the Secretariats General of both Houses to deliver effective services to the Parliament
- Build the capacity of the Technical Coordination Secretariat to implement the Strategic Framework and Action Plan of the Parliament and to coordinate all donor assistance to the Cambodian Parliament

5.1.3 EFFECTIVENESS

The electoral processes have improved markedly in recent times as can be seen by comparing the national elections of 2008 with the two preceding

ones. Electoral violence was substantially reduced, the voter registration system was more transparent, electoral complaints were handled more effectively, opposition parties had access, albeit in a limited way, to the media during campaign for the first time in history, and the elections were widely perceived to be technically free and fair.⁴⁵ SDEP can claim a lot of credit for this improvement. As an independent review mission testifies: "UNDP received good feedback for its role in coordinating activity around the national elections of 2008, particularly from the diplomatic community and development partners."⁴⁶

While the SDEP Project—along with contributions from other development partners, especially the European Union—has helped promote a better electoral process, there are disturbing signs that this may not have significantly advanced the achievement of the intended outcome. An independent evaluation of SDEP states that, despite the progress made, a great deal of weakness still remains in Cambodia's electoral process in particular and in its democratic practices in general. The report points out, for instance, that there was unequal access to media by different political parties, and that the opposition parties and civil society complain of a lack of an adequate complaint and appeal process.⁴⁷

This assessment highlights an underlying challenge—that despite having introduced a system of democracy, Cambodian society still remains a hierarchical society, in which decision making is influenced by the power relations that reflect the feudal tradition. Major political players expressed their commitments to democracy based

⁴⁴ UNDP, 'Evaluation of Programme to Support Capacity Development of the Cambodian Parliament, and Options for Future Programmes', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2006.

⁴⁵ For a detailed account of the improvement in electoral quality that has occurred over the years, see Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, 'Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development Through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008; and UNDP, 'Project Review—Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP) Project', Report of Project Review Mission, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁴⁶ UNDP, 'Project Review—Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP) Project', Report of Project Review Mission, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

on the appreciation that without democracy Cambodia will not be able to bury its tragic past, and the very viability of Cambodian society and polity will be threatened. But the challenge lies in translating this commitment into practice.

Despite technical improvements in the electoral process and creation of new structures and systems, UNDP efforts through SDEP haven't been particularly effective yet in achieving the intended outcome of "enabling the civil society of Cambodia to improve checks and balances *vis-à-vis* the executive."

The same is true for LEAP (and its predecessor project) in achieving the intended outcome of enabling the legislature to improve checks and balances *vis-à-vis* the executive. The project has helped build the capacity of the Technical Coordination Secretariat of the two chambers of Parliament, which has organized regular meetings with development partners, and established relationships with embassies, civil society, the UN family, and other parliaments. The project has organized a number of field trips for parliamentarians to various parts of the country so that they are able to: interact directly with the constituents and gain first-hand knowledge of the realities faced by ordinary Cambodians; play an important oversight role by working with local government actors to find solutions to the challenges at the local level; and disseminate information regarding decentralization, good governance, democracy, and new laws to the local government members. Parliamentarians have also been given training on raising questions in Parliament and performing their roles better in parliamentary oversight committees. Furthermore, in order to raise the general competence of the parliamentarians, the project has organized a series of workshops and seminars on a range of issues including human trafficking, MDGs, Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women, human rights, economic crisis, competitiveness,

land disputes, climate change, electoral reform, transparency, accountability and democracy. The project has also enhanced parliamentarians' interactions with civil society by arranging meetings between members of civil society and the parliamentarians during the latter's field trips and inviting civil society representatives to the seminars and workshops conducted for the benefit of the parliamentarians.

All this is likely to have contributed towards improving the capacity of the Parliament and the parliamentarians to perform their duties.⁴⁸ In a country with a distinct lack of human resources, such capacity building is an essential pre-requisite for improving the checks and balances between the legislature and the executive, without which a democracy cannot function properly. To that extent, UNDP Cambodia has done a commendable job.

But the relevant question for this evaluation is: Has all this capacity building been effective in achieving the stated outcome of "enabling the legislature to improve checks and balances of the executive branch"? Capacity building is necessary but not sufficient for such an empowerment to occur. For capacity to translate into empowerment there must exist a congenial environment in which the newly acquired capacity can be effectively exercised. That is where the problem lies. Based on discussion with a wide range of people including members of the major political parties and the parliamentary secretariat, this environment does not seem to exist in Cambodia.

What Cambodia has at present is a Parliament that is active enough in passing laws on a regular basis, but has yet come to a stage where the parliamentarians can effectively function in terms of representation, law-making and oversight. The parliamentarians may receive valuable feedback from their constituencies during field trips and educate themselves on issues of national importance from workshops and seminars, but

⁴⁸ Technical Coordination Secretariat, 'Legislature Assistance Project. Quarterly Progress Reports', National Assembly, Phnom Penh, 2008.

all these come to nought if they seldom raise any issues in the Parliament in the form of questioning the executive. Members of all the major political parties suggest that the members of the ruling party do not raise questions because there is a strong coherence in the party that does not leave much room for questioning, and the members of opposition tend not to do so because they do not perceive the environment as congenial enough to affect the outcomes. Laws are thus formulated by the executive with hardly any input from the members of Parliament.⁴⁹ The same situation prevails with parliamentary oversight committees. Clearly, in an environment like this, the capacity of parliamentarians, even if enhanced, cannot count for much in terms of achieving the desired outcome of improved checks and balances.

Underlying this problem is the same challenge that constrains the effectiveness of SDEP in strengthening the electoral process—the prevailing power of tradition, which defines the context in which any political or social system operates. As a consequence, there is a disjunction between what UNDP envisages as the democratic practice and what the Cambodians have been able to achieve given the historical and social context.

What then is the way forward? A common refrain is that not much can be done unless there is a ‘political will’ of the powers that be to allow democratic practice to flourish in its true spirit. For instance, the Review Mission of SDEP makes the following point regarding the lack of independence of NEC: “This is not necessarily the fault of the SDEP Project or of the NEC *per se*, as it is clear that the issue of NEC independence has been pushed as far as it can within the confines of the institution itself. It is, in fact, unreasonable to expect the NEC to reform itself from within when the requisite political will to render the NEC truly independent—in its freedom of action, in its financing, in how its members are appointed or removed, and in who

it reports to—is missing. If lack of political will is the root cause of the NEC’s lack of independence, then it must be tackled at a higher level of policy dialogue and advocacy, and using different entry points than the NEC *per se*.”⁵⁰

The invocation of political will as the solution to such a complex problem is a common temptation, but it is not terribly helpful. After all, as noted before, the Cambodian politicians have made a commitment to democracy. What appears as lack of political will is perhaps the failure to forge true consensus on what form of democratic practice needs to be pursued in the current Cambodian context, in a society where traditional relationships still prevail in decision-making processes.

If it is tradition that is holding back fuller realization of the commitment to democracy, then the only solution lies in the emergence of a consensus among its citizenry to change such tradition and seek an alternative path. Without a collective will of Cambodians at large, whatever technical support UNDP provides will not go far. The legislature will be able to play its checks-and-balances role effectively only when those who elected them hold them accountable to that end. Similarly, civil society will be able to play its checks-and-balances role effectively only when it is allowed to function in an environment that enables it to represent the voice of citizens at large. What is required then, is the awareness and the ability of the citizens to bring their agenda forward.

Under these circumstances, UNDP should think in long terms and contribute to capacity development of the Cambodians at large on democratic practice, and not to be confined to the technical capacity building of institutions. The role of UNDP (as well as other development partners) can at best be an indirect one in this area, one of playing a catalytic and supporting role. The question is how to play this role more effectively.

⁴⁹ This was testified to the evaluation team by some of the parliamentarians themselves, from both sides of the house.

⁵⁰ UNDP, ‘Project Review—Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP) Project’, Report of Project Review Mission, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 7.

The main route UNDP has chosen so far for this purpose is to strengthen the electoral process. This is vitally important, because voting in elections is the primary democratic institution through which citizens exercise their democratic rights. But it is increasingly being recognized both in political theory and in practice that it is not enough to exercise this power only through periodic elections. For the will of the citizens to be reflected in the day-to-day business of running public affairs, it is important to create a democratic space in which the citizens can form groups that give voice to their concerns, and in which people can freely debate and protest. What is needed is what modern political thinkers have called a ‘deliberative democracy’.⁵¹ In this context, giving voice to civil society organizations is important, both as a means to raise the awareness of the people and as a means for the people to raise their concerns.

UNDP can help achieve this goal. The current UNDP programmes involve civil society at various points, but this involvement mainly takes the form of bringing civil society and the government together—through dialogues, seminars, meetings, etc.—in the hope that civil society would be able to inform the government and affect the content of policies. While useful to some extent, this approach does not address the fundamental problem that civil society is not strong enough to make their voice count in such engagements.⁵² UNDP could strengthen its approach in support of civil society by: nurturing independent civil society organizations with financial and technical support so that they can carry out the essential function of social mobilization and democratic deliberations; and trying to bring about reforms that can create larger democratic space in which an independent civil society can flourish. To the extent that

these actions help create a more vibrant civil society in Cambodia, it will pave the way for the Cambodians to find their democracy in their own terms. This in turn will enhance the effectiveness of UNDP’s democratization programme.

5.2 OUTCOME 2—IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR IN DECISION MAKING

The two objectives of this outcome are closely related to each other, both causally and institutionally. Causally, they reinforce each other—while participatory process improves the likelihood of better service delivery, improved service delivery also encourages greater degree of participation by the beneficiaries. Institutionally, decentralized governance structures are increasingly perceived to be essential for achieving both objectives. In recognition of the connection between service delivery and people’s participation, UNDP Cambodia, in collaboration with several other donors, has helped the government develop an effective structure and system of decentralization and deconcentration. A wide range of projects have been developed for this purpose spanning more than a decade. Three major types of projects can be identified, related to the three outputs listed under this outcome in the revised CPAP classification of outcomes (see Table 5).

The first type of project seeks to establish the institutional foundation of participatory service delivery by creating appropriate structures and systems for decentralized governance at sub-national levels. The major activities in this area are subsumed under the ongoing Project to Support Democratic Development through

⁵¹ Fung A, Wright EO (eds.), *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, Verso Books, London and New York, 2003.

⁵² At the sector level, NGOs’ presence and voice tend to be strong only in sectors where policy contestability is technical, rather than political. In addition, there remains a perception within the NGO community that “[g]overnment officials in Cambodia are still not used to accepting civil society inputs into planning, and are sometimes dismissive of NGO opinion.” Sophal C, Mangahas J, Than An PT, Wood B, ‘Cambodia Evaluation of Aid Effectiveness’, Independent Review Team for Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 42.

Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD). The second type of project complements the first by developing mechanisms and capacities of local government to promote voice, accountability and partnership at national and sub-national levels. The ongoing DDLG Project is the main instrument being used for this purpose. The third type of project, exemplified by the Access to Justice Project, is a concrete example of implementing decentralized service delivery—in the arena of justice.

5.2.1 SUPPORTING DECENTRALIZATION AND DECONCENTRATION PROCESS

The PSDD is the continuation of a long-standing donor enterprise to support decentralization and deconcentration in Cambodia. Starting with the Cambodia Resettlement and Re-integration Project (1996-2000), the programme then moved on to the project called Partnership for Local Governance (2001-2006). This project was funded by UNDP, DFID and SIDA, and implemented by the National Committee for Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reforms (NCDD). Building on Partnership for Local Governance, PSDD (2007-2009) was launched to provide core support to the overall design, management, coordination and implementation of the evolving reforms in decentralization and deconcentration in Cambodia as well as to the NCDD's annual work plan and the budget formulated each year by the national authorities.

PSDD is a complex project comprising many different elements and involving different tiers of sub-national governance as well as the national authorities. It is not simply a support programme in that in addition to providing policy advice and capacity building assistance it also funds investment projects.⁵³ As the Mid-term Review of the project correctly observed, “Neither PSDD nor its predecessors are easily characterised. Partly, they are support projects to government reform

programmes. However, in practice they have often taken a great deal of initiative in initiating and shaping those reform programmes, such that the project that is theoretically ‘supporting’ is in many ways leading ... In some ways, parallels can be drawn now between PSDD and NCDD: NCDD is not a fully developed reform programme. There are some key policy documents, some national level institutional arrangements but the shape of the programme is very unclear. To the extent that it is a support programme, therefore, PSDD is partly in limbo waiting to respond to developments and to achieve a defined role.”⁵⁴

PSDD comes to an end in December 2009, when the decentralization reform programme will be at a critical stage. A landmark in the decentralization process is the Law on Administrative Management of Capital, Provinces, Municipalities, Districts and Khans (widely referred to as the ‘Organic Law’), which was approved in May 2008. Under the Organic Law, sub-national councils were elected in May 2009, initiating the process of transferring functions to new sub-national administrations. A new NCDD replaced the existing NCDD in December 2008. Formulation of a National Programme for Support to Sub-national Development (NPDD) is under way, which will provide a framework for phased reforms by establishing programme areas with indicators and targets for each phase with estimated resources for the first phase covering 2010-2012. When implemented, sub-national administrations will be established with clearly defined structures, lines of accountability and inter/intra relationships. Processes and guidelines will be developed for functional reviews and assignments to be done by line ministries accompanied by transfers of resources, capacity and personnel from national to sub-national administrations over a period of 10 years. NPDD will be accompanied by a Development Partner Assistance Framework. By

⁵¹ SIDA, DFID and UNDP, ‘Cambodia: Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD)’, Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2007.

⁵⁴ Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, ‘Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development Through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 8.

the end 2009, it is envisaged that the majority of donor agencies active in decentralization will have committed to the partnership principles embodied in the Development Partner Assistance Framework and will be in a position to formulate action plans for aligning their assistance to the framework. How PSDD evolves beyond 2010 depends on the contents of NPDD and the Development Partner Assistance Framework. Either way, UNDP will continue to support the evolving structure of decentralization in Cambodia.

In terms of deliverable outputs, the objectives of PSDD consist of four distinct but inter-related elements:

- To put in place Cambodian-owned sub-national structures that promote voice, responsiveness, delivery capability, and accountability
- To develop decentralized planning, finance, implementation and monitoring systems and to integrate them into new national structures and systems
- To deliver investment funds through mechanisms that promote accountability and permit debate (on the choice of the use of funds)
- To develop a mechanism whereby the aid given by various donors in support of Cambodia's decentralization efforts can be effectively coordinated

5.2.2 SUPPORTING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The DDLG Project is the successor of the Decentralization Support Project that was implemented by the Ministry of Interior from 2001 to 2005. During the Decentralization Support Project period the Long Term Policy for Sub-National Reforms was formulated by RGC, which paved the way for designing the

new Organic Law. DDLG (2006-2011) was launched as a joint enterprise of the European Commission and UNDP with a view to building on the work of Decentralization Support Project. The project is implemented by the Ministry of Interior and the National League of Communes and Sangkats, which is the Local Government Association of Cambodia. Initially DDLG was launched in five provinces, but since October 2008 the project covers all 24 provinces of Cambodia.

The project uses commune and *sangkat* councils as the entry point to: ensure better dialogue and accountability between commune councils and all other stakeholders; improve cooperation among commune councils and other stakeholders by establishing national association of local councils; and promote inter-commune projects for the benefit of the poor.⁵⁵

The intended output of the DDLG project consists of three elements that aim to complement the objectives of PSDD.

- To put in place clearly defined operational mechanisms and increased capacity for good communication, accountability, dialogue and partnership between commune councils and all other stakeholders to address issues of local governance
- To establish a network of commune councils with institutional guidelines and the long-term objective to create a national association of commune councils, for improved cooperation among commune councils and other actors and promotion of good conduct and practices
- To address local area development needs through implementation of pro-poor inter-commune projects as a means of developing good management capacity, processes and practices

⁵⁵ RGC, UNDP and European Commission, 'Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia: Building Local Capacity and Local-local Cooperation (DDLG)', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2005.

Thus, while PSDD focuses on strengthening the capacity and functioning of each unit of local government, DDLG complements that effort by strengthening inter-commune linkages.

5.2.3 ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Access to Justice Project uses the newly evolving decentralization structures to advance the cause of legal and judicial reforms. The project supports the ongoing legal reform strategy as well as the implementation of the strategy to establish a credible and stable legal and judicial sector to uphold the principles of the rights of the individual, rule of law and separation of powers. Out of the seven main thrusts of the Legal and Judicial Reform Agenda, the Access to Justice Project supports two: the programme to raise awareness of fundamental rights at the commune level; and the programme to implement the Alternative Dispute Resolution Project at the commune and district levels.⁵⁶

5.2.4 EFFECTIVENESS

The combined contribution of PSDD and DDLG (and their predecessor projects) to Cambodia's decentralization process has been positive and significant. Considering the starting point, the transformation has been remarkable. The environment for democratic local governance and development has steadily improved, as evidenced by the endorsement of the Organic Law, the current drafting of the rules and regulations to implement the law (NPDD), and the high level commitment that underpins the ongoing governance reforms.

UNDP has played an important role throughout the entire process—from providing technical support for drafting laws at the national level to developing the capacity for planning and implementation of projects by the Commune

Councils and district and provincial local governments. While support at the national level has borne fruit in the form of the Organic Law—the overarching legal-institutional framework for decentralized governance—support at sub-national levels has helped develop the machinery for putting this legal framework into practice. As the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment observes, “The structures that have been established with UNDP’s support are aimed at improving the **sub-national administrative, political and financial systems** and this has occurred to a large extent. For example, the procurement system at the commune level works through these established structure, indicating a trend toward sustainability and ownership of the systems, which have laid a strong foundation for the future phases of local governance reform in Cambodia.”⁵⁷

The success in setting up efficient structures and systems, especially at the provincial level, is evident from the fact that donors are increasingly using these structures and systems to channel resources. Thus one of the objectives of PSDD—to develop a mechanism whereby the aid given by various donors to support Cambodia’s decentralization efforts can be effectively coordinated—has been achieved to a large extent. As the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment recognizes: “This is positive because a) the ultimate purpose of establishing well-working systems and structures is to improve the delivery of services at the local level; and b) the use of the system by actors beyond the concerned donors imply that there is a trust in the system’s efficiency, which also increases the likelihood for sustainability.”⁵⁸

However, some misgivings remain on this issue of coordination. For instance, the Mid-term Review of PSDD has observed that “‘Core’ PSDD donors remain frustrated at a lack of opportunity for

⁵⁶ RGC and UNDP, ‘Access to Justice in Cambodia’, Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2006.

⁵⁷ Winderl T, ‘UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008’, UNDP Cambodia, 2009, p. 20.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

policy debate; donors who fund through PSDD remain frustrated with operational feedback mechanisms...The concerns of the 'core' PSDD donors (DFID, SIDA, UNDP), the concerns of the donors funding through PSDD (e.g. WB [World Bank], UNICEF, IFAD [International Fund for Agricultural Development]), and the concerns of other donors supporting reforms but less directly connected with PSDD (e.g. GTZ, Asia Foundation, USAID, ADB, JICA [Japan International Cooperation Agency]) were all quite different, but all were some way short of being met."⁵⁹ Discussions with members of the donor community suggest that this disjuncture among the donors arises, at least in part, from a shortcoming in the process of project design. Some donors pointed out that not enough consultation was carried out with the larger donor community (going beyond the immediate funders and executors) at the stage of project design, with the result that when they were subsequently called upon or encouraged to get involved in the project they did not find the design fully consistent with their own modalities and requirements. There is obviously a lesson for the future here, especially when it comes to detailing the implementation of the Organic Law through NPDD.

As a complement to PSDD, the DDLG project has also made a significant contribution to the decentralization and deconcentration reform process through its support to the associations of local councils (National League of Communes and Sangkats and Provincial Association of Communes and Sangkats) and by promoting inter-commune investment projects. The Mid-term Review of the project recognizes that "No other support programme captures these important elements of a well-functioning local government system and the relevance of this support is high. The project adds value to the overall efforts on developing local governance, civic participation and horizontal

commune cooperation as well as strengthening the voice of communes/*sangkat vis-à-vis* central government and the decentralization and deconcentration reform process. Inter-commune investment projects are only successful when they are based on mutual trust. When inter-commune investment projects succeed they promote mutual trust, understanding and cooperation among neighbouring communes, which in itself is an important aspect in a post-conflict country like Cambodia."⁶⁰

While the achievements of PSDD and DDLG in terms of their intended outputs have been substantial, there remain some weaknesses that hinder the full realization of the developmental outcome—namely, effective service delivery at local levels through participatory decision making. In order to take a more nuanced view of the successes and failures of PSDD and DDLG, it is necessary to distinguish three elements that are common to both of them: institution and capacity building, service delivery, and participation and accountability. The greatest success has been achieved in terms of institution and capacity building at both national and sub-national levels. Much less has been achieved on the other two accounts.

There are some positive achievements on the front of service delivery. For instance, PSDD provided support to the establishment and initial operations of the Commune Committee on Women and Children in 18 provinces, which have been doing useful work on social development and advocacy within local communities. Some success has also been achieved in the delivery of justice through the Access to Justice Project, which is being administered through the decentralized governance structures. The project has contributed towards empowering women at the commune level and has created an avenue for the marginalized groups to seek redress in disputes. Through this project,

⁵⁹ Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, 'Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 14.

⁶⁰ RGC, UNDP and European Commission, 'Mid-term Review: Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia: Building Local Capacity and Local-level Cooperation (DDLG)', Phnom Penh, 2009, p. 6.

training has been provided to the members of Dispute Resolution Committees at the commune level to enable them to resolve local disputes, especially those related to land and family, thereby making justice more readily accessible to the poor, women and the indigenous people.⁶¹ Field interviews suggested a high rate of successful reconciliation of disputes at the local level. This has in many cases obviated the need for taking recourse to formal and higher levels of courts, which can be both expensive and difficult to reach for the poor and marginalized people.

PSDD has also enabled development partners to work with sub-national government to plan and implement development projects at local levels. This has helped them to deliver services to local residents more quickly. Many of the small infrastructure projects created in the process have helped to improve the lives of Cambodian villagers, even if in a modest way. For instance, 24 communes in the districts of Samlot, Kamriengm Phnom Proek and Sampov Loun have been provided with school buildings, wells, roads, vocational training centres, concrete bridges and water spillways.⁶²

However, progress on service delivery is still modest, due largely to the fact that very few functions have been delegated down to the sub-national level and financial resources are severely limited. The Provincial Investment Fund is the only discretionary fund available at the provincial level, and the amount of the fund is inadequate relative to needs. Limited resources and highly circumscribed discretionary choice mean that desired services cannot be provided to those who need them most, and the participatory

process is undermined by resulting frustration among the people.

This frustration is compounded by the fact that the planning process at the local level is quite complicated (although it has recently been simplified from 11 steps to 5 steps), and in many cases villagers receive nothing after taking part in the elaborate planning process. The Mid-term Review of PSDD has noted that “In communes visited it was possible to identify villages that had received nothing for 5-6 years. [Commune Councils] reported frustration and resistance among villagers to engage [in the process].”⁶³ In the same vein, the Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment has observed, “Another concern is that given the limited amount of discretionary funds that the communes have—a planning figure in the range of USD 10,000 is simply insufficient to pilot and demonstrate the developmental role of the Commune Councils—the inability to respond to more than a fraction of demands from the constituencies might lead to frustration in the democratic process.”⁶⁴

One of the underlying problems hindering success in service delivery is what the Mid-term Review of PSDD describes as “...a lack of clarity regarding the distinction between improvement of governance structures and systems and the provision of investments and service delivery through such systems.”⁶⁵ This lack of clarity derives, at least in part, from differences among donors in their underlying philosophy of decentralization. Of the three core donors of the PSDD project, SIDA looks upon decentralization primarily as a means of advancing the cause of democratic governance but DFID is more

⁶¹ Basnyat A, Try T, ‘Access to Justice in Cambodia: Mid-term Project Assessment’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009; UNDP, ‘Access to Justice in Cambodia, Semi-annual Project Progress Report, January 1-June 30, 2008’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁶² UNDP, UNDP Newsletter, Vol 06 No. 23, Jul-Sep 2009.

⁶³ Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, ‘Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development Through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 38.

⁶⁴ Winderl T, ‘UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008’, UNDP Cambodia, 2009, p. 21.

⁶⁵ Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, ‘Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development Through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 37.

keen to use it as a mechanism for delivering effective services to the poor, while UNDP has tried to occupy the middle ground extolling the virtues of mixing governance reform with service delivery, which is what is actually happening in practice.

The authors of the Mid-term Review of PSDD are critical of this mixing, though. While acknowledging the historical necessity of funding investments and service delivery to make decentralization meaningful at an early stage of decentralization and deconcentration, they argue against such mixing at present, for a number of reasons.⁶⁶ First, when a project uses the systems and structures that have been developed at the provincial level, it tends to be regarded a decentralization and deconcentration project to be managed by NCDD and the Ministry of Interior. This brings the risk that NCDD and the Ministry of Interior may end up ‘owning’ projects for which it has inadequate capacity. Second, the competencies needed to design and implement improvement in governance systems and structures are different from the competencies needed for delivery of investments and services. Third, investments and service delivery projects would be using the existing systems and structures rather than developing them, and in the process would tend to increase capacity by providing additional technical assistance and hiring project staff rather than developing capacity. The implication of these arguments is that the present tendency to mix governance reform with service delivery will end up undermining both.

This evaluation finds that conclusion pessimistic. The current problems do not necessarily arise from any inherent contradiction in pursuing the twin objectives of governance reform and service delivery at the same time, but from the unresolved tensions that exist in the fundamental approaches of the core donors. Lack of agreement about the basic approach has prevented a system from

emerging that would balance the twin objectives in a satisfactory way. There are examples in other parts of the world (for example, the Panchayat system in India and local governance reform in Uganda) where the same tension has been confronted and resolved. The Cambodian people and the development partners should be able to find a resolution that is appropriate in the Cambodian context. Indeed, how to find this resolution should be one of the principal concerns of the NPDD that is currently being formulated. UNDP can make a major contribution here. With its philosophical middle ground, UNDP could play an active role in this process, helping RGC devise an efficient system for combining governance reform with service delivery.

Achievements on the score of participation and accountability also fall short of expectations. There has been some success in the voice and accountability component of DDLG. This success has been achieved by holding regional fora where commune councillors have the opportunity to put forth issues and questions to the Senate members and high-level line ministry officials. However, these have been isolated events. Serious deficiencies remain in downward accountability of commune councillors *vis-à-vis* their constituencies. As the Mid-term Review of DDLG has observed, “Little progress has been achieved in compiling and disseminating best practises on downward accountability relations between the [Commune Council] and their electorates, partly due to the vacant governance advisor position and the local elections in 2007, partly because the focus has been on getting National League of Communes and Sangkats and the Provincial Association of Communes and Sangkats established and starting up basic activities. Other development partners are also struggling with promotion of downward accountability, though, and closer cooperation with organizations such as the Commune Council Support Programme and PACT⁶⁷ may enable DDLG to gain some ground

⁶⁶ Andersen H, Biddulph R, Birgegard L, ‘Mid-term Review of the Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD): Final Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁶⁷ A U.S. based NGO.

and make some achievements during the second half of the DDLG project.”⁶⁸

The accountability problem is closely related to the problem of inadequate participation at the grass-roots level. Application of the participatory process has varied and there is no convincing evidence about its effectiveness in terms of garnering participation from villagers in the planning process. This is confirmed by the findings of the Third Progress Report of LEAP, which observed that the commune councils found it difficult to get citizens to attend the meetings citing lack of understanding of project development and benefits of their local development project.⁶⁹

The problem of participation is due to multiple causes. In part, it reflects the complexity of the planning process and the frustration that emanates from the absence of tangible results due to the paucity of resources. But it is also a problem of culture—or rather the lack of culture of civic engagement in public affairs. In a society that has been torn asunder by internecine conflicts over decades, such a culture cannot emerge *sui generis*; it has to be cajoled and nurtured into existence through a process of sustained social mobilization. International evidence shows that participatory governance at the local level succeeds only where some external agency—typically some NGO or a progressive political party—has done years of hard work at mobilizing the ordinary people.⁷⁰ This lesson holds equally true in Cambodia, which is still in a gradual healing process from the legacy of conflicts.

5.3 OUTCOME 3—NATIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE BETTER ABLE TO CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In assessing UNDP contribution to this outcome, the following clarification needs to be made. As clearly stated in its Strategic Plan: “the UNDP mission is to support countries to accelerate progress on human development” and all its activities “must be aimed at one end result: real improvements in people’s lives and in *the choices and opportunities open to them.*”⁷¹ The Strategic Plan also clarifies that “the UNDP goal in the area of environment and energy is to strengthen national capacity to manage the environment in a sustainable manner while ensuring adequate protection of the poor.” Therefore, if UNDP is to be involved in this area, its concern cannot only be to achieve environmental sustainability but also to ensure that environmental sustainability is contributing to human development, in particular through forging close links between environment and sustainable livelihoods. This is important also because, without linkage to the sustainable livelihoods of the local population, the results of the conservation effort are not likely to be sustainable in the long run.

Although this recognition may not be explicit in the formulation of the outcome, it is in the first of the two outputs specified under the outcome (see Table 5), which says, “Capacities of government and local communities enhanced for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods improvement.” The second output—linked to climate change—remains exclusively environment-oriented, however. It says, “Capacities of

⁶⁸ RGC, UNDP and European Commission, ‘Mid-term Review: Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia: Building Local Capacity and Local-level Cooperation (DDLG)’, Phnom Penh, 2009, p. 7.

⁶⁹ Technical Coordination Secretariat, ‘Legislature Assistance Project. Quarterly Progress Reports’, National Assembly, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁷⁰ Osmani SR, ‘Participatory Governance: An Overview of Issues and Evidence’, in United Nations, ‘Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)’, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), United Nations, New York, 2008.

⁷¹ UNDP, ‘UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development’, (DP/2007/43), 2007.

government and local communities enhanced to respond to climate change.” The aspect of human development does not enter explicitly into this formulation, although in a way this is understandable. While acknowledging that UNDP has done useful work on the front of climate change⁷², this ADR focuses only on the first outcome, that is, the one dealing with biodiversity conservation as well as livelihood improvement.

The projects related to biodiversity conservation and livelihood enhancement through natural resource management aim to provide both input support and capacity building support to the relevant actors, including concerned staff of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as well as sub-national governments and communities. Geographically, the projects have focused on the environmentally sensitive areas of the Northern Plains, Cardamom Mountain, and the Tonle Sap Basin. The following projects have been prominent in this regard: Cardamom Mountains Protected Forest and Wildlife Sanctuaries (Cardamom Project); Establishing Conservation Areas Landscape Management in the Northern Plains (CALM); TSCP; and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development in the Tonle Sap Region (CBSD).

5.3.1 CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND FOREST RESOURCES IN THE CARDAMOM MOUNTAINS

The Cardamom Project (2003-2007) was designed to achieve long-term protection and sustainable management of two wildlife sanctuaries (Phnom Aural and Phnom Samkos) in the Cardamom Mountains and to establish the Central Cardamom protected forest. Co-funded

by UNDP and the GEF and co-implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Environment, the project set three specific objectives: to reduce threats to populations of rare/endangered fauna and flora of the Cardamoms Mountains; to ensure that no new human settlement occurred within Cardamom Mountain Protected Area Complex beyond the baseline; and to reduce illegal resource extraction in the protected area. In contrast to the other three projects, the focus of this project was almost exclusively on the conservation of biodiversity and forest resources without any explicit linkage with livelihood protection.

5.3.2 BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT IN THE NORTHERN PLAINS

The CALM Project (2004-2012), based on the Northern Plains of Cambodia, does incorporate in its design an explicit linkage between conservation and livelihoods.⁷³ The Northern Plains are the largest remaining intact block of a unique landscape of exceptional global importance for biodiversity conservation. The area maintains a key population of 36 species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List, including six listed as critically endangered. Escalating land and resource use across the Northern Plains is leading to competition between human and wildlife requirements and loss of key biodiversity values. Human use of land and resources has increased as a result of increasing human population, in-migration, and resource exploitation by outsiders due to improved security in post-conflict Cambodia. Degradation of the forests was further exacerbated by the existing ‘open-access’ management system of natural resources across the Plains.

⁷² For example, with UNDP help, the consumption of ozone-depleting gases has been cut by 2.55 tonnes, and the Climate Change Office of RGC has successfully completed an inventory of greenhouse gases and an assessment of climate change vulnerability. A number of reports have also been prepared for international bodies. There remains a question mark, however, on the extent to which national capacity that has been created in this regard since most of the work has been done by external experts with very little substantive involvement of Cambodian nationals.

⁷³ UNDP, ‘CALM (Conservation Areas Through Landscape Management) in the Northern Plains of Cambodia’, Country Office Local Advisory Committee (LPAC) Report, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2005; UNDP, ‘Establishing Conservation Areas Through Landscape Management (CALM) in the Northern Plains of Cambodia’, Project Document, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2007.

The CALM Project addresses this problem and is co-funded by UNDP, GEF and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The project is designed to focus on building capacity of provincial departments and authorities so that they can introduce biodiversity values into land-use planning process in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. This is intended to be achieved through a three-pronged approach: introduction of biodiversity considerations into provincial level land use processes; demonstration of specific mainstreaming interventions; and strengthening the capacity for biodiversity management by the government.

The second prong of this approach recognizes the need for linking conservation with livelihoods. As the project document states: “Changes in land-use practices to incorporate conservation impacts will involve a loss of short-term earnings (from wildlife trade, timber etc...) in favour of long-term gain (e.g. income from wildlife tourism, sustainable resin-tapping, community forests, etc...) Encouraging these changes will require not only an increase in security of tenure, but also positive incentive measures to replace the short-term loss of production income. The project will therefore also work ... to demonstrate more specific mainstreaming interventions such as community land-use tenure, community contracts and incentives for changes in land-use practices, biodiversity-friendly resin tapping, and—most importantly—working to mainstream biodiversity into 2 production sectors; forestry (in the concession sites) and tourism.”⁷⁴

5.3.3 BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN THE TONLE SAP BASIN

TSCP aims to develop management capacity for biodiversity conservation in the TSBR, one of the richest environmental resources in South-East Asia. Recognizing the unique

ecological, environmental, economic, social and cultural significance of the Tonle Sap Lake, and in accordance with the statutory framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserve, the TSBR was established by a Royal Decree in 2001. Three core areas within TSBR were identified (Prek Toal, Boeng Tonle Chhmar, and Stoeng Sen) as a national park or wildlife sanctuary, which was to be devoted to long-term protection and conservation of natural resources and ecosystem, in order to preserve flooded forest, fish, wildlife, hydrological systems, and natural beauty. The geographical focus of TSCP is on these three core areas.

The project is a component of a broader programme called the Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project co-financed by UNDP, ADB, GEF, Capacity 21, Wildlife Conservation Society and RGC. The project works in five provinces around the Tonle Sap Lake and consists of three components:

- Strengthening natural resource management coordination and planning for the TSBR
- Organizing communities for natural resources management in the TSBR
- Building management capacity for biosphere conservation in the TSBR

TSCP is an integral part of the third component and is funded mainly by GEF and Wildlife Conservation Society, with additional support from UNDP, ADB and UNV. The project closely coordinated with the other two components through common management, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The overall objective of protecting biodiversity within the core areas of TSBR is divided into three specific tasks: enhancing the capacity for management of biodiversity in the ‘core’ areas; developing systems for monitoring and management of biodiversity; and promoting awareness,

⁷⁴ UNDP, ‘Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia: Building Local Capacity Through Networking and Local-Local Cooperation, 2006 Annual Progress Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2004, p.2.

education, and outreach on biodiversity conservation in the TSBR.⁷⁵

The CBSD Project (2003–2007), funded jointly by UNDP and Capacity 21, is closely related to TSCP—starting a year earlier, overlapping with TSCP for a few years, and also serving the third component of the larger Tonle Sap Environmental Management Project. Compared to TSCP, CBSD had a more explicit concern with linking environmental conservation with livelihood protection, especially through community-based natural resource management. However, its activities were not intended to create community-based natural resource management structures by itself, but to help develop Cambodian capacity to create such structures, specifically in the fishing sector. The project did, however, develop a number of community groups for the purposes of demonstration and training.⁷⁶ In its capacity building task, the project targets especially the Community Fisheries Development Office and Community Fisheries Development Units at provincial levels. It also seeks to promote partnerships and cooperation between institutions from national to local levels.

5.3.4 EFFECTIVENESS

In assessing the effectiveness of development outcomes, this evaluation focused on how well livelihood or human development concerns have been integrated into activities meant for environmental protection. In this respect, the Cardamom Project did not achieve much, because it was not meant to directly promote sustainable livelihoods. The focus was almost exclusively on conservation through protection of wildlife and forest sanctuaries. To the extent that conservation efforts succeed, they will eventually have a beneficial impact on the livelihoods of those who depend upon the use of environmental resources. But judging by the evaluations of the Cardamom

Project, even the conservation efforts were not very successful. Of the three specific objectives of the project—reducing threats to the existing flora and fauna, not allowing new settlements in the protected areas, and reducing illegal extraction of forest products—only the second was satisfactory, and even that was not perceived to be sustainable.

The final review report of the project explains the reasons for the overall lack of success as follows: “...the conditions associated with implementing the project area are extremely challenging: (i) the project area is a former stronghold of the Khmer Rouge and has only recently come under government influence; (ii) the wildlife sanctuary designation and laws are new to the culture and tradition of subsistence use of natural resources; (iii) the sanctuaries are large, extensively populated and difficult to monitor, and (iv) both corruption and insufficient respect for the law are commonplace in government and the military due to the poor salaries and lack of institutional modernization.”⁷⁷

The CALM Project was much more successful in terms of livelihoods, primarily because the project was consciously designed to integrate livelihood concerns into the strategy for environmental conservation. Specific incentives were created to induce the local population to use the existing environmental resources in a sustainable manner. For instance, by following a systematic landscape management policy, the project not only designated the protected areas but also identified areas that the local inhabitants could use for productive activities, and then supported those activities.

CALM has also piloted a number of initiatives involving conservation contracts or direct payments for conservation. These initiatives have proved remarkably effective and cost-effective in

⁷⁵ UNDP, ‘Tonle Sap Conservation Project: Project Document’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2004.

⁷⁶ UNDP, ‘UNDP/Capacity 2015: Capacity Building for Sustainable Tonle Sap Region: Final Review Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2007.

⁷⁷ Ferguson A, Sok V, ‘Management of Cardamom Mountains Protected Forest and Wildlife Sanctuaries–Cambodia: Final Evaluation Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2007, p.16.

delivering the project objectives, in terms of both increased wildlife populations and contributions to local livelihoods. However, the scale of the project is too small to have a tangible impact on the bigger picture.⁷⁸ This is a promising pilot scheme in terms of combining conservation with livelihoods, but its effectiveness is compromised by leaving it at the pilot stage instead of trying to graduate into a larger intervention.

The CBSD Project appears to have been highly successful in linking environment with livelihoods by adopting the community-based natural resource management approach—particularly in the fisheries sector. One of the project’s most notable achievements has been its support for the establishment of eight fish sanctuaries within community fishery sites. This has led to significant increases in fish stocks, observable even over the course of one breeding season.

In its capacity-building component, the project has directly assisted in building partnerships between 7 community fisheries committees and 10 commune councils to manage and protect community fishery areas. The project has had the greatest immediate impacts from these relationships between communities and local authorities. As well as promoting partnerships at the community level, the project has also fostered partnerships between community fisheries, NGOs and other development projects.⁷⁹

There are a number of community benefits that result from capacity improvement in the

community fisheries sector, for example: more equitable and participatory resource governance; lower transaction costs; increased fish yield from conservation; and the creation of strong incentives for sustainable management. However, the project has also yielded more direct benefit to the communities’ livelihoods by creating community fisheries groups in all six target provinces around the TSBR for demonstration purposes.

The TSCP Project has had less of a focus on livelihoods compared with CBSD. Its main focus has been on building capacity for biodiversity conservation in the core areas of the TSBR and creating awareness among the inhabitants about the importance of conservation. In respect to capacity development, the project has been fairly successful.⁸⁰ But there is not much to show for it in terms of linking conservation with sustainable livelihoods.

The only direct link between conservation and livelihood is the strategy that might be described as ‘turning poachers into rangers’. One of the reasons the bird sanctuaries in the core areas of TSBR have been threatened is that local poachers steal bird eggs and sell them. This project has employed some of these same poachers as ‘rangers’ to protect the sanctuaries from other poachers, thereby giving the former an alternative livelihood. This is a nice example of how to build congruence between conservation and livelihood, but the scale of this activity is too small to have any appreciable impact on the livelihood of the majority of the inhabitants.

⁷⁸ For instance, the project’s concrete achievements include: 70 families experienced a sustained improvement in cash income as a direct consequence of the project’s initiatives in 2007; two Commune Development Plans have included conservation activities, one Environmental and Social Impact Assessments has been completed, two village land-use plans (including conservation priorities) have been completed in 2007; two villages have received community tenure or title over agricultural and residential land in 2007; and incentive scheme contracts have been established with one village and 50 families in 2006. UNDP, ‘Conservation Area Landscape Management’, Project Factsheet, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁷⁹ UNDP, ‘UNDP/Capacity 2015: Capacity Building for Sustainable Tonle Sap Region: Final Review Report’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2007.

⁸⁰ The achievements include (as of end 2007): establishment of five management centres for the conservation of protected areas; 162 rangers, managers and technical staff trained and qualified in protected area management; completion of the Management Plan for the Prek Toal core area; biodiversity database developed and monitoring report for 2003–2006 completed; and technical and financial support and training provided for 52 rangers and custodians for law enforcement and regulations in the Core Areas. UNDP, ‘Tonle Sap Conservation Project’, project factsheet, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

For the majority of the inhabitants, the main problem is that they traditionally derived their livelihoods from fishing. The project's objective of protecting the fish population is in direct conflict with their short-term interest. The project tries to mitigate this conflict by creating awareness of the long-term benefits of conservation and alleviating the short-term problem by creating opportunities for alternative livelihoods. For this purpose, the project created self-help groups (SHGs) and tried to strengthen their capacity to engage in alternative livelihoods in three disciplines: caged fish culture, vegetable cultivation and mushroom growing. They have also been encouraged to develop into savings and credit groups so as to overcome capital constraints, and have been given training in accounting and record-keeping to improve their management skills. These groups have also benefited from access to subsidised agricultural inputs and technical assistance linked to piloted alternative livelihoods.

This livelihood component of TSCP was in a state of limbo in the early years (2004-2007) and only gathered momentum with the involvement of UNV in 2007. However, according to a UNV assessment, the enterprise has not been particularly successful. Although a large number of self-help groups has been created, UNV noted that the uptake of piloted alternative livelihoods by the group's members has been limited because of a disconnect between the current livelihood development approach and community needs and desires. The essential problem is that delivery of the TSCP livelihoods component has occurred in a top-down fashion, without paying due regard to what the communities want. In consequence, "SHG lending records show little, if any, capital being borrowed by SHG members to undertake the livelihoods piloted by TSCP. Capital is instead primarily used to increase fishing activity, the opposite of the desired outcome."⁸¹

To redress the problem, UNV recommends: "Rather than providing subsidised agricultural inputs to SHGs (e.g. vegetable seeds, fish fingerlings) as has been the case, the TSCP should instead provide technical support and direct/indirect financial grants to the SHGs to undertake the alternative livelihood of their choice (based on an agreement that grants provided cannot be used on fishing equipment)."⁸²

However the UNV preferred approach is unlikely to be able to deliver. There is a contradiction in proposing that SHGs should be enabled to undertake alternative livelihoods of their choice and then to suggest that grants cannot be used for fishing equipment. To the extent that some of the SHGs want to diversify into non-traditional occupations, the UNV approach would be valid. But under the prevailing economic environment, the majority of the local inhabitants still want to pursue fishing as their principal occupation. In order to be effective, the objective of conservation must be pursued by respecting and accommodating this occupational choice of local communities rather than by moving them away from it in a paternalistic manner.

The ideal approach is to let the fishing communities continue to pursue their traditional occupation (if they want to) but to integrate the principle of conservation into their activities. What is needed is a community-based natural resource management approach—an approach that UNDP promoted in the CBSD project but discarded in TSCP.

It is instructive to examine why the community-based approach to fisheries conservation was discarded by TSCP. Certainly, it was not based on the lessons of CBSD. It seems that the country's general opinion about the sustainability of community-based fisheries has undergone a fundamental change in recent years. In the 1990s, much of the fishing areas in Cambodia were

⁸¹ Colomer J, 'Tonle Sap Conservation Project: Sustainable Livelihoods Component', United Nations Volunteers, Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2009, p. 4.

⁸² Ibid.

leased out to private entrepreneurs to avoid the ‘tragedy of the commons’, and local communities were denied access to these privatized fishing lots. However at the same time, some civil society organizations were exploring the feasibility of community-based conservation with the help of development partners, among them the Food and Agriculture Organization played a leading role. Encouraged by the success of these experiments and political considerations, the Prime Minister took an initiative in 2000 to release almost half the fishing lots for community use and management. It soon transpired, however, that the communities were undermining the objective of conservation by treating the newly released lots as open-access resources. In the process, the idea of conserving fishing resources through the community-based approach fell into disrepute. As a consequence, the current trend is to return the fishing lots back to private entrepreneurs, thereby recreating the tension between conservation and the livelihoods.

The TSCP approach is a reflection of this unfortunate new trend. The fact that the fishing lots released to the communities were misused does not prove that communities are incapable of conserving their resources. Proper institutions are needed through which communities can use the common property resources in a sustainable manner.⁸³ Sometimes these institutions evolve naturally through many years of experience, but often they have to be created through external support. In the Cambodian case, neither evolution nor external support came to the rescue of the fishing communities. In fact, the opposite happened, as explained by the TSCP Project Document: “Although reform of the fisheries sector is timely, many of these reforms have been conceived and/or implemented rapidly and without adequate consultation with key

stakeholders such as local authorities and fishing communities and adequate knowledge of their potential impacts. Enforcement also remains a major weakness.”⁸⁴

If a principle fails to work because it was implemented without appropriate institutional support, the principle should not be discarded—appropriate institutional support should be found. UNDP Cambodia can draw inspiration from its own CBSD Project. Although it operated on a small scale, CBSD did succeed in creating sustainable community conservation groups, as noted on the UNDP website (Box 1). TSCP and its successor projects ought to have more confidence in the viability of community-based conservation of fishing resources in the Tonle Sap Region as well as elsewhere in Cambodia and try to devise institutional structures that can forge the link between conservation and livelihood more effectively than has been possible so far.

Furthermore, by taking the community-based natural resource management approach, UNDP Cambodia can play to its strength, which is its deep involvement in the development of the local governance structure and the support it has established through the PSDD and DDLG projects. The community-based approach would be more effective and sustainable when it is linked to and supported by the local government structure, particularly at the commune level. So far, such a cross-sectoral synergy does not appear to have been exploited enough.

One reason why UNDP Cambodia has been less than a stellar performer in bringing about sustainable livelihood is its overreliance on GEF funds for its environmental projects. The UNDP mission is human development, and it should integrate conservation into that broader

⁸³ In a remarkable coincidence, on the very day these lines were being written, the Nobel Committee had awarded the Nobel prize for economics to Eleanor Ostrom, whose life long work has been devoted to establishing the proposition that under appropriate institutional arrangements communities are perfectly capable of managing common property resources sustainably, without falling prey to the ‘Tragedy of the Commons’. The challenge lies in identifying what institutions are appropriate in particular circumstances and how to put them in place. On Ostrom’s research in this area, see, *inter alia*, her seminal work in Ostrom, 1990.

⁸⁴ UNDP, ‘Tonle Sap Conservation Project: Project Document’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2004, p. 12.

concern. For this to be possible, the environment cluster of UNDP Cambodia should seek to forge partnerships with agencies that, like UNDP, are concerned primarily with human lives and livelihoods.

Box 1. The successful legacy of CBSD

The Peam Chrey's villagers, who are rice farmers, remember times when they could not catch enough fish for daily consumption. Fishing used to be a free-for-all exercise. People used to stun or kill the fish by using electric fishing gear. In some cases, they used very small mesh net like mosquito nets that trapped not just big but also tiny species. But three years ago, after receiving funding from UNDP, the community started the conservation group. This included employing villagers to patrol the lake at night when poaching is rife. They work in shifts and on a voluntary basis, and not only men can be part of it.

"I used to be scared of the poachers before, but now I think they are more scared of us," said 51-year-old Phan Savuth, a patrol woman. She said that, after they were caught, poachers were usually fined and made to sign a promise not to use illegal fishing gear again. "Poaching has decreased because of our vigilance," said Phan Savuth, who also heads a village savings group that pools money to lend to its members in emergency and at a low interest rate.

When UNDP financial support to the initiative concluded in 2007, the village's conservation leader leng Phalla recalled his worries that the volunteers would lose motivation, leaving the lake to fall prey to poachers like in the old days again. But he said the villagers' "firm resolve" to protect one of their main livelihood sources has since proved him wrong.

Source: <http://www.un.org/kh/undp/Energy-environment/Fish-making-a-comeback-thanks-to-villagers-conservation-efforts.html>

5.4 OUTCOME 4—NATIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE ABLE TO PROMOTE PRO-POOR INVESTMENT AND EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

As discussed, the pace of poverty reduction in Cambodia has not matched the pace of economic growth. This dissonance between growth and poverty reduction can only be resolved if the pattern of growth can be altered by promoting pro-poor investment and by expanding economic opportunities for the poor. The NSDP recognizes this point and emphasizes the need for such re-orientation. The UNDP country office has responded by adopting a number of programmes and activities that are intended to help RGC achieve the necessary re-orientation.

Almost everything that the UNDP country programme does has some potential impact on poverty. This can be seen in the case of activities related to democratic governance and environmental management, because both the quality of governance and the quality of environment have profound implications for the economic opportunities that become available to the poor. Therefore, the evaluation of UNDP impact on the poverty reduction cannot, strictly speaking, be confined to the examination of some specific subset of its programmes and activities.

However it is possible to identify a subset of programmes that have the most relevance as they directly impact the promotion of pro-poor investment and expansion of economic opportunities for the poor. It is no coincidence that these activities fall under the poverty cluster. This section focuses primarily on this subset of activities but takes note of causal connections with other programme areas wherever appropriate.⁸⁵ Two major ongoing projects belong to this category: the TRADE Project (2006–2010), and the Clearing for Results Project (2006–2010).

⁸⁵ This does not, however, amount to an evaluation of the entire range of activities that fall under the Poverty Cluster, because at least some of the activities in this cluster have more immediate relevance for other outcomes—in particular, for the revised CPAP Outcome 5 ("National and local authorities are better able to manage development effectiveness"), which was covered in Chapter 4 on UNDP strategic positioning in Cambodia.

5.4.1 TRADE-RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY

The TRADE Project seeks to promote Cambodia's integration into the world economy in a way that opens up opportunities for the poor to engage in remunerative economic activities, while the Clearing for Results Project attempts to link the imperative of clearing landmines in a post-conflict society with strengthening the livelihoods of the poor. As Cambodia emerged from decades of internal conflict, RGC soon recognized the importance of embracing globalization and clearing a mine-infested landscape. RGC also realized that both these imperatives might be pursued in way that could be especially beneficial to the poor. The overarching concern with poverty reduction thus came to be embedded in the processes related to trade reform and mine clearance. Therein lies the genesis of these two UNDP projects.

Early in the present decade, RGC embraced the Integrated Framework as part of its preparation for Cambodia's accession to WTO. The Integrated Framework strategy was developed by six multilateral agencies (International Monetary Fund, International Trade Centre, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNDP, World Bank and WTO) to enable the least developed countries (LDCs) to integrate into the world economy in a way that minimizes costs and maximizes benefits. In 2001, Cambodia was selected as one of three LDCs to pilot the Integrated Framework scheme, with the objective of mainstreaming trade reform in national poverty reduction strategies.

The UNDP country office was involved in the preparatory activities that led to the adoption of the Integrated Framework in Cambodia. Building on these early contributions, in September 2002 the country office launched the first major project to support the implementation of the Integrated Framework. The Capacity Building for Pro-Poor

Trade Reforms (Integrated Framework Phase I) Project was funded by the Government of Japan and UNDP, and was meant to achieve three objectives: promote a broader national constituency on trade and poverty; enhance opportunities for effective allocation of official development assistance towards trade, by demonstrating the export potential of selected products in the agro-business and handicraft sectors, and further elaborate on the links between poverty reduction and trade expansion.

The TRADE Project that was adopted in 2004, and subsequently revised in 2006, builds upon the earlier project on pro-poor trade reform. In its amended form the project is composed of five distinct modules:⁸⁶

- **Module 1:** Updating the Cambodia Diagnostic Trade Integration Study, building on an earlier diagnostic study titled Integration and Competitiveness Study carried out by the Ministry of Commerce in 2001 with the help of the World Bank. Its objective is to identify the sectors and products with the greatest potential for export promotion and employment generation.
- **Module 2:** Enhancing the national capacity to facilitate pro-poor trade policy formulation and implementation, targeting specifically the capacity of the Ministry of Commerce.
- **Module 3:** Undertaking a Human Development Impact Assessment of trade-related reforms. Two such assessments have been carried out so far—one on the impact of fiscal liberalization in Cambodia, and the other on the impact of the Multi Fiber Arrangement on Cambodia's garment industry—the country's leading export sector.
- **Module 4:** Enhancing the country's supply capacity, focusing especially on public-private partnerships for strengthening supply capacity at the provincial level.

⁸⁶ RGC and UNDP, 'Trade Related Assistance for Development and Equity Project Revision', RGC, UNDP Cambodia, and Cambodia National Mekong Committee, Phnom Penh, 2007.

- **Module 5:** Unleashing business enterprises in Cambodia by making the regulatory environment more conducive for the start-up and development of micro, small and medium-size enterprises and by making business information more readily available.

The TRADE Project is a wide-ranging enterprise that extends beyond directly trade-related issues. Only the first three modules are directly related to international trade. The last two modules are concerned more broadly with the development of private-sector capacity, which may serve the cause of trade integration by addressing supply bottlenecks in sectors linked with external trade, but their benefits are likely to accrue to the purely domestic sphere as well.

In recognition of their distinctive nature, several activities under the TRADE Project have been brought under a common umbrella called the Growing Sustainable Business (GSB) Initiative.⁸⁷ The objective of this initiative is to facilitate the development of innovative business models in a way that is mutually beneficial for both private sector development and poverty reduction. The activities undertaken under GSB include: the Village Phone Initiative, developed in the image of the well-known Grameen Phone model in Bangladesh, to help small rural entrepreneurs obtain necessary market information more

efficiently⁸⁸; the Rural Business Information Initiative, designed to enable the poorest to have access to valuable communication services through a network of local Village Phone Booth Operators⁸⁹; an information and communications technology project to help increase access to business information and improve procurement for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the agricultural and fisheries sectors by using wireless networks⁹⁰; the Rural Electricity Entrepreneurs Project aimed at improving the quality, efficiency, capacity and range of services offered by rural electricity generation entrepreneurs who operate small local grids around Cambodia meeting the shortfall of the general grid⁹¹; the Capacity Building of Energy Small and Medium-size Enterprises Project, creating a network of strong, capable, efficient and well organized energy small and medium-size enterprises⁹²; the Renewable Energy Solution Project for creating sustainable, commercially viable, decentralized renewable electricity solutions for remote villages in Cambodia that may not receive access to grid power in the near future⁹³; and a sustainable eco-tourism project engaging private sector resources, while offering significant opportunities for income generation opportunities for grass-roots communities, focusing on the North-East provinces of Cambodia.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ The GSB Initiative grew out of the 2002 United Nations Global Compact policy dialogue on business and sustainable development. Conceived by the private sector, it was presented and endorsed in a high-level session at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. Since then, the GSB Initiative has been developed by UNDP and has been introduced in several countries, including Cambodia.

⁸⁸ GSB/UNDP, 'VPI (Village Phone Initiative)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁸⁹ GSB/UNDP, 'RUBII: Rural Business Information Initiative', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁹⁰ GSB/UNDP, 'ICT Solutions for Agricultural and Fisheries Industries', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁹¹ GSB/UNDP, 'Rural Electricity Entrepreneurs', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁹² GSB/UNDP, 'Capacity Building for Energy SMEs (CBES)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁹³ GSB/UNDP, 'RES (Renewable Energy Solutions)', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

⁹⁴ GSB/UNDP, 'Investment Feasibility Study on Sustainable Tourism in Cambodia', Project Brief, Growing Sustainable Business Initiative, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

5.4.2 MINE CLEARANCE

The rationale of the Clearing for Results Project lies in the legacy of protracted armed conflicts that has left Cambodia as one of the three countries in the world most affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war. RGC, in line with a joint donor evaluation of the sector, estimated that most of the negative socio-economic impact of landmines could be dealt with by clearing 427 square kilometers of high priority land over a period of 10 to 15 years. RGC then requested donor assistance for this purpose, including the creation of a pooled funding mechanism targeting mine clearance resources on development priorities, as established by the Provincial Mine Action Committees and the Cambodian Mine Action Authority, in cooperation with concerned line ministries and development partners. Responding to this request, UNDP launched the Clearing for Results Project in 2006 to support the process of community-driven prioritization of landmine clearance established by RGC in 2005. The project introduces a new multi-donor funding facility for mine action, which has been designed to: address efficiency and transparency issues; support systematic integration of mine clearance with national and provincial development plans and programmes; and build national capacities to provide independent quality assurance and define clearance standards.

The two primary objectives of the project are to: promote results-oriented mine clearance operations that directly contribute to poverty reduction and rural development activities; and further develop the capacity of the Cambodian Mine Action Authority in the areas of monitoring, regulation, quality assurance, socio-economic planning and post-clearance land use monitoring. The project is currently funding the Cambodian Mine Action Centre to conduct clearance operations in Pursat, Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, the three most heavily-mined provinces of Cambodia.⁹⁵

A distinctive feature of the project is that communities are expected to participate actively in prioritizing lands that are to be cleared. The Provincial Mine Action and Mine Action Planning Unit, in cooperation with affected communities, demining operators and development organizations, develop Annual Demining Work Plans, which establish priority minefields to be cleared. The cleared land is meant to be used for agriculture, housing, roads, schools and other activities that are in line with national and provincial development plans. A policy and corresponding mechanisms for the socio-economic management of mine clearance were developed in 2005 to ensure that demining resources target the clearance of land in support of the poor and vulnerable people. This is where the social imperative of mine clearance is meant to be integrated with the overarching concern with employment generation and poverty reduction.

5.4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

In terms of outputs of the TRADE Project, the key achievement has been the development of the Cambodian Trade Integration Strategy in 2007, which is an update of the earlier diagnostic Integration and Competitiveness Study carried out in 2001. With UNDP support, the Ministry of Commerce has formulated this updated strategy, which has led to the identification of mechanisms and frameworks for planning, implementation and monitoring of trade-related activities to achieve pro-poor outcomes.

As part of the legal and institutional reforms proposed in the Cambodian Trade Integration Strategy, the Sub-committee of Trade Development and Trade Related Investment under the Ministry of Commerce has been identified as the focal point that will provide oversight for all trade-related activities. At the same time, a Trade Sector-Wide Approach has been developed as the main mechanism for coordinating all trade-related assistance of various development partners in Cambodia.

⁹⁵ RGC and UNDP, 'Clearing for Results: A Partnership for Landmine Action in Cambodia', Project Document, Phnom Penh, 2005.

These activities have had a number of significant effects at the level of policy formulation and implementation. First, they have created an institutional framework that is conducive to more efficient use of resources devoted to the trade sector. Second, they have created the national capacity—at least in the Ministry of Commerce—for approaching the challenge of integration with the world economy with a greater degree of confidence and expertise. Third, they have helped create a general awareness—spreading beyond the Ministry of Commerce—that it is possible to embrace globalization in a manner that can serve the interests not just of businesses but also of the poor.

The Mid-term CPAP Results Assessment awarded a rating of ‘exceeds expectation’ to the TRADE Project.⁹⁶ However, while the project has performed well in delivering the promised outputs in terms of studies, strategies and capacity building, it has yet to make a significant impact on the broad developmental outcome of employment generation for the poor. The reason for this dissonance between the impact on outputs and the impact on outcome lies not in the scale of the project, which is quite large and involves a diverse range of activities, nor in the size of the sector it deals with, for external trade is one of the most important sectors of the Cambodian economy—indeed it has been the major driving force behind the impressive growth the economy has achieved in the last decade. The reason lies primarily in the nature of activities the project has tried to promote and the manner in which it has tried to promote them.

There is nothing wrong with the fundamental premise underlying the TRADE Project that the expansion and diversification of international

trade can potentially play a major role in creating income-generating employment for the poor. International trade has indeed played such a role in Cambodia—the most obvious example being the labour-intensive garment industry, whose rapid expansion has not only driven economic growth in Cambodia, but also created large-scale employment opportunities for poor unskilled workers, a large proportion of whom are women. But the success of the garment industry owes nothing to the TRADE Project, which has focused on non-traditional agro-based exports with the hope of creating a more diversified export structure. However this diversification has not yet occurred. Cambodia’s export sector is still dominated by the garments industry.⁹⁷

This failure may in part be due to the time scale; it takes time to create the infrastructure necessary for making major breakthroughs in new products, and the project might yet be able to accomplish that task given more time. However, even if the hoped for diversification does occur, will it have any significant effect on employment for the poor? One has to judge not just whether the project has the potential to contribute towards a diversified export structure but also whether it has the potential to create a pro-poor trade regime, as that is the rationale of the project. There are reasons to be sceptical on this score.

Any success in export diversification will contribute something towards employment generation, and a part of the new employment will most likely accrue to the poor as well. But that does not make the trade regime pro-poor. In order to be pro-poor, the trade regime must be consciously structured so as to create a bias in favour of the poor.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Winderl T, ‘UNDP Cambodia Country Programme Action Plan—Results Assessments 2006-2008’, UNDP Cambodia, 2009.

⁹⁷ World Bank, ‘Sustaining Rapid Growth in a Challenging Environment’, Cambodia Country Economic Memorandum, East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009; World Bank, ‘Poverty Profile and Trend in Cambodia: Findings from the 2007 Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey (CSES)’, East Asia and Pacific Region-World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

⁹⁸ The idea that pro-poor policies must imply a bias in favour of the poor is widely recognized both within and outside UNDP. Thus a UNDP document states: “Pro-poor policies will lead to an increase in the income levels of the poor faster than the average rate of growth in income as a whole” (Abbott, undated). See also the rich discussion on pro-poor growth in the website of UNDP’s International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (formerly, International Poverty Centre): www.undp-povertycentre.org.

In practice, no such pro-poor bias is evident in the project—either in the choice of the products to be promoted, or in the choice of technology to be used, or in the kind of support to be provided to the producers.

In design, the products to be promoted were to be chosen on the basis of their pro-poor impact. But in practice, the choice was made primarily on the basis of perceived export potential. The project does include a component of Human Development Impact Assessment, but this assessment was carried out at a macro-level, on the impact of fiscal liberalization and the Multi Fiber Arrangement. There is no evidence that the TRADE Project gave any special weight to pro-poor bias when it chose products to be promoted. In particular, there is no evidence that a product was chosen for its pro-poor properties, overriding claims of other products with superior export potential. Even after a product was chosen for promotion, no conscious effort was made to ensure that the poor people engaged in the value chain were given preferential treatment over the better off. Officials in the Ministry of Commerce were quite candid in their admission that they treated everyone equally—rich and poor. That may be the right way to achieve the commercial objective of export diversification, but it is hardly the way to promote a pro-poor trade regime.

A potentially promising route of inducing a pro-poor bias in the trade regime lay in integrating the activities under the GSB component of the TRADE Project more effectively into the mainstream activities of the project. The stated objective of the GSB Initiative was to involve large-scale private sector businesses in innovative partnerships with small-scale rural entrepreneurs in the pursuit of mutually profitable activities.

These partnerships were to serve two distinct purposes.

First, they were expected to strengthen supply capacity at the local level as a means of sustaining export promotion at the national level. Second, they were to help small entrepreneurs benefit from export expansion by being involved remuneratively at different points of the value chain. By proactively involving small entrepreneurs in the process of creating supply capacity for export, GSB could have functioned as the mechanism for imparting a genuine pro-poor bias to the trade regime.

In practice, however, this potential could not be realized, for at least two reasons. First, most of the activities under the GSB Initiative have not taken off. Some, such as the project on Capacity Building for Energy Small and Medium-size Enterprises, have stalled because the principal large-scale partner has not found the activity sufficiently profitable. Others, such as the eco-tourism project for the north-east region, are still in search of a private sector partner.⁹⁹ In general, most of the activities are either in the form of feasibility studies or small-scale pilot projects, which have yet to graduate into something more significant. The only exception is the Village Phone Project, but even there the full benefit of the technology of mobile phones is not accruing to the rural entrepreneurs. The expectation was that the Village Phone Operators could be turned into Public Call Booth Operators, using them as a conduit through which useful market information could be transmitted to rural entrepreneurs, who could then claim a fairer share of the value-added from whatever line of production they were engaged in. But this hope has not materialized, as the Public Call Booth Operators have shown no inclination to act as conduits of

⁹⁹ A feasibility study notes, "It was observed that no projects to date, however, conducted by the above Donors or NGOs in the NE provinces of Cambodia has illustrated the strong involvement from the private sector or proved that their running projects are private-sector orientated with the support from national private firms or international/regional investment funds." Economic Institute of Cambodia, 'An Investment Feasibility Study for Sustainable Tourism in North-East Provinces of Cambodia', UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p.4.

information—they stick to selling the traditional mobile phone services.¹⁰⁰ All in all, the potential of GSB is yet to be realized.

In addition, whatever success GSB may have had in its own sphere, it has failed to feed significantly into the mainstream TRADE Project. Thus, a Progress Report on the TRADE Project recognizes: “...there has not been any proper strategic orientation and plan being developed since implementation of the GSB Initiative in early 2006 ... linkages between GSB projects being developed and TRADE existing programs are weak.”¹⁰¹

In summary, the effectiveness of the TRADE Project in achieving the outcome of employment generation for the poor has been compromised for a number of related reasons: lack of a conscious effort to introduce a pro-poor bias in mainstream TRADE activities; inadequacies of the GSB Initiative, which did have a pro-poor bias; and weak linkages between the GSB component and the mainstream components of the TRADE Project.

Regarding the effectiveness of the Clearing for Results Project, UNDP support to this project has played an important role in strengthening the capacity to RGC to bring mine clearance in this country close to international standards in quality and safety.¹⁰² The lives that have been saved and injuries that have been avoided by successful mine clearance are an enormous contribution to society. Further value has been added by encouraging the participation of affected people in the decision-making mechanism. Finally, the project is introducing the useful new

element of socio-economic impact assessment. All these positive outcomes of the project are widely recognized.

However, whether the project has been successful in enhancing poverty reduction through employment creation is a different matter. Once a piece of agricultural land is cleared of mines (and other explosives) it immediately creates the potential for the poor villagers to find gainful employment on that land. The important questions that need to be answered in this context are: Does the project have built-in mechanisms for realizing this potential and to what extent is the potential being realized?

On paper, the necessary mechanisms do seem to exist. First, there is an elaborate participatory mechanism for prioritizing the plots of land to be cleared. The system works by starting participation at the village level, and working through the commune and district up to the provincial level. Inhabitants of the affected villages participate directly at the first stage of the process (the village level) where they agree, with other stakeholders (including relevant government officials, mine clearance operators, and sometimes NGOs and development agencies), on a short list of lands they would like to be cleared during a year. Subsequently, representatives of villagers also participate at higher levels where choices are finally made. Because of this participatory nature, this mechanism allows for the possibility that the interests of poorer households can be represented in the decision-making process.

Second, the same decision-making process that leads to the choice of lands to be cleared also

¹⁰⁰ A recent feasibility study has pessimistically observed, “The idea of facilitating the transformation of PCB Operators into information service providers is attractive, although the field survey did not provide conclusive supporting evidence for the viability of this concept. Ultimately, the future prospects of PCB Operators will be driven by market forces, rather than donor intervention or facilitation.” GTZ and UNDP, ‘Review of Village Phone Initiative: Final Report’, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 59.

¹⁰¹ UNDP, ‘Trade Project Quarterly Progress Report: 1st Quarter, January—March 2008’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 7.

¹⁰² See the recent evaluation of the project for a detailed review of the actions taken under the project and their results. Gomer L, Paterson T, Creighton M, ‘Mid-term Evaluation of the UNDP Project: Clearing for Results: A Partnership for Landmine Action in Cambodia’, UNDP Cambodia, Phnom Penh, 2008.

specifies the purpose for which a particular piece of land should be used once it is cleared. The villagers suggest how they would like to use the land, and there is a well-structured mechanism for monitoring how the land is actually being used after it has been cleared. The monitoring is carried out by the Mine Action Planning Unit at the provincial level with the help of the Socio-economic Department of the Cambodian Mine Action Authority at the national level.

These two aspects of the mine clearance process—participatory prioritization and monitoring of post-clearance land use—together constitute an institutional framework that allows for the possibility that the interests of poorer households will be accorded priority in the choice of lands to be cleared and in specifying the manner in which the cleared lands are to be used. In this way, it should be possible to draw a clear linkage between mine clearance, which is necessary for personal security, and the goal of poverty reduction through employment creation for the poor.

In reality, however, this linkage does not seem to exist. There are a number of reasons for this, most of which have to do with the process through which prioritization actually occurs. First, the participatory process does not always work well in practice. As has been noted by an evaluation of the Clearing for Results Project: "... often times the operators and development agencies try to influence the MAPU [Mine Action Planning Unit] process by getting participants to include in the list of priorities some of the tasks the operator/agency would like to carry out based on its own mandates and priorities. They basically 'manipulate' the process."¹⁰³ Moreover, while the participatory process is at least on paper followed within the commune level, this is not the case when it comes to allocating sites across the communes. The allocation of sites across the communes is often made on the basis of how many demining assets some mine-clearing agency happens to have within a particular commune. As

a result, "There is no mechanism to ensure, from a national perspective, that the most assets are allocated to the communes with the biggest and/or most intense problem."¹⁰⁴

Second, even when the participatory process works well, it only leads to an agreed classification of lands by different categories of risk, not by their socio-economic characteristics. The final choice of lands to be cleared within a commune is made on the basis of these agreed 'degree of risks' of lands on the short list, and not on the basis of their relevance for the poorer segments of society.

Third, the distribution of user rights on the cleared lands is determined on the basis of historical claims on the land, not on the basis of the current needs. But the validity of historical rights on land is an extremely complex issue in Cambodia, where local muscle power, and often fire power, was historically the primary means of claiming land rights. The inequalities inherently involved in this historical process are simply being reproduced by allocating user rights on cleared lands on the basis of historical claims. Such a process must have an inherent tendency to be anti-poor rather than pro-poor.

For all these reasons, the mine clearance process cannot claim to have been effective in enhancing the developmental outcome of poverty reduction through employment creation. As in the case of the TRADE Project, the point is not that the poor people did not benefit from this process, but that the process was not designed to ensure that majority of the benefit went to the poor.

This is the weakness of UNDP programmes with regard to the developmental outcome of poverty reduction. Instead of orienting or biasing activities in favour of the poor, UNDP has pursued the goal of growth and employment creation generally, hoping that the poor would benefit from it in a 'trickle down' process.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

In this, UNDP Cambodia has been faithfully following the government strategy. To achieve their overarching goal of poverty reduction, both RGC and UNDP have relied too much on the 'trickle down' process.¹⁰⁵ There is no doubt that the poor have benefited from the growth process, as can be seen from the 1 percent reduction in poverty per year, but the poor need much more than that. With a growth rate of almost 10 percent per annum, the rate of poverty reduction should have been faster. The fact that it has not been so is because nothing was done to impart a pro-poor bias to the growth process. If anything, the growth process has been biased in favour of the rich, as evidenced by rising inequality.

If UNDP intends to have a more effective contribution to poverty reduction in Cambodia, it must consider a major reorientation of its country programme. A couple of steps suggest themselves immediately.

First, UNDP must take the pro-poor initiatives of the kind undertaken in the GSB Initiative much more seriously than it has done so far. It must try to integrate the GSB Initiative more substantively into the mainstream TRADE Project (or its successors), and collaborate with other development partners (including NGOs) so that successful pilots under the GSB Initiative can be scaled up.

Second, UNDP should collaborate with other development partners who are more heavily engaged in agriculture and rural development in Cambodia than UNDP has been. Poverty is primarily a rural problem in Cambodia and agriculture still provides the major source of livelihood for the rural poor. Under these conditions, big success in poverty reduction can only come from a big thrust in agricultural

development. Yet, agriculture has been relatively neglected in the past in terms of public expenditure. For instance, "Three ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Water Resource and Meteorology), which have most to do with the agriculture and rural sector, together received only 3% and 3.5% respectively of total recurrent government expenditure in 2006 and 2007, while 85% of the population (and even more of the poor) are found in the rural areas, 60%-70% depend on agriculture and the bottom 20% remain hungry or food poor."¹⁰⁶ RGC seems to have grasped the problem, as evidenced by the increased emphasis it has accorded to agriculture in the revised Rectangular Strategy.¹⁰⁷ UNDP Cambodia should do the same.

UNDP has not historically been a major player in agriculture. Other agencies (such as ADB in the case of Cambodia) have the comparative advantage in this sphere. However, in order to be useful UNDP Cambodia does not have to compete with other agencies or duplicate their efforts. Instead, by engaging with agriculture and rural development in collaboration with other agencies, UNDP can bring in added value to the effort made by other development partners. The first such added value is the linkage with its macro-level policy work, particularly the TRADE Project and the work relating to CMDGs and the national planning process. Second, UNDP could take full advantage of the support for local governance it provides through PSDD and DDLG projects.

5.5 EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The preceding discussion has examined the effectiveness of UNDP efforts in achieving its desired outcomes. The remainder of this chapter

¹⁰⁵ In NSDP and other strategic documents, it is hard to find any special mechanism for biasing the growth process in favour of the poor.

¹⁰⁶ Sophal C, Mangahas J, Than An PT, Wood B, 'Cambodia Evaluation of Aid Effectiveness', Independent Review Team for Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board, Phnom Penh, 2008, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ RGC, 'The Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity, and Efficiency in Cambodia, Phase II', Address of Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister, RGC to the First Cabinet Meeting of the Fourth Legislature of the National Assembly, on 26 September 2008, Phnom Penh, 2008.

examines the issues of efficiency and sustainability jointly because most of the considerations that are relevant to these criteria cut across the whole range of activities and their outcomes.

5.5.1 EFFICIENCY

The first issue relating to efficiency is that UNDP should be able to enhance efficiency across the spectrum of outcomes by taking a more programme-based approach. The debate between a project-based approach versus a programme-based approach is a perennial one, and each has its strengths and weaknesses. But in the context of UNDP Cambodia, the case for adopting the programmatic approach is stronger than usual because of the nature of activities it undertakes. The strength of the programme-based approach is the greatest when there is significant scope for synergies among different lines of activities. This is the case in Cambodia.

The synergies between environmental projects and poverty projects are obvious. What is special about Cambodia is the wide-ranging effort that is being made, with the help of UNDP and other development partners, to set up an efficient decentralization structure. The existence of the participatory local governance structure should not only enhance the likelihood of producing better results for both community-based environmental projects and projects aimed at helping the rural poor, but also facilitate their efficient execution. Successful pursuit of the outcomes related to decentralization projects should have a positive spill-over effect on the pursuit of environmental and poverty-related outcomes. At the same time, if successful execution of community-based environmental projects and other projects for the rural poor can be tied up with the planning processes at local-level government, this would lend credibility and effectiveness to the decentralization process itself.

These synergies are best realized through a programme-based approach rather than a project-based approach. To some extent, the synergies are already being cultivated by UNDP Cambodia,

especially between some environmental projects and local governance projects. But there is scope for doing much more, embracing all three programme clusters—governance, environment and poverty—as well as gender-focused activities.

The second issue of efficiency relates to the fact that in each of the programme areas UNDP Cambodia undertakes small-scale innovative pilot projects but then makes no systematic attempt to convert the pilots into larger-scale activities. This is particularly true of the environment and poverty clusters. For example, the lessons learned from the CBSD Project on how to run successful community-based fisheries conservation enterprises have been allowed to wither away. Similarly, some of the promising pro-poor activities under the GSB Initiative were not moved up to a larger scale.

Such failure to scale up successful pilot projects amounts to inefficient use of resources and knowledge. UNDP should try to capture the externalities that can be reaped by applying the lessons learned from pilot projects to larger-scale activities. Of course, the scaling up does not have to be done by UNDP itself. But UNDP should be more proactive in finding partners to whom it can transfer the knowledge necessary for scaling up.

A third efficiency issue is related to the turnover of personnel in the UNDP country office. Quick turnover of personnel is a problem everywhere, but the problem is especially acute in UNDP Cambodia. Most of the staff at critical positions are so new that the office as a whole has very little institutional memory. This was evident when the evaluation team tried to obtain information related to the projects belonging to the earlier programming cycle (CCF 2001–2005). In many cases, the office could not even find documents—such as evaluation reports and progress reports—for those projects, let alone provide any insight into their achievements and failures.

This absence of institutional memory is incongruent with the fact that there exists a commendable continuity among projects of

successive cycles—in the form of new projects being built upon the experience of the older ones. The continuity of projects offers the opportunity for new projects to benefit from the lessons learned in old ones, but this opportunity cannot be seized in the absence of institutional memory. That is where an exceedingly quick turnover causes inefficiency despite the high calibre of individual members of staff. Solutions for addressing this problem are hard to identify, but this inefficiency should be noticed, as it might have an adverse effect across the spectrum of outcomes.

5.5.2 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of outcomes depends, among other things, on the availability of resources, capacity and incentives to carry forward the good work when the projects come to an end. In the context of UNDP Cambodia outcomes, the issue of resources has little impact on sustainability, but there is cause for concern regarding the other two.

The outcomes being pursued by UNDP Cambodia are well aligned not only with the objectives of the UNCT, as can be seen from the congruence between the UNDAFs and the CCF/CPDs, but also with the priorities of RGC, since the priorities of both UNDAFs and CCF/CPDs have been consciously derived from government priorities as articulated in various official documents. This is equally true about the outcomes related to governance, environment and poverty. Given this all-round congruence of objectives, it seems unlikely that lack of resources would be a problem in sustaining any of the UNDP outcomes once its projects come to an end. Others—whether other development partners or RGC—would probably find some way of pursuing those outcomes either through new projects or as part of routine activities of relevant line ministries, because in a broad sense the UNDP outcomes are owned by others as well.

However, capacity is a different matter. Decades of conflict—when a large fraction of skilled people left the country—have left the country with little capacity to carry out the essential tasks

of governance and policy making. The few that are capable are highly overstretched. In recognition of this problem, UNDP as well as other development partners have put a lot of emphasis on capacity building in government agencies.

But such attempts to build capacity in an environment characterized by extreme lack of capacity are fraught with a potential danger: those who are responsible for capacity building are also required to undertake substantive tasks—such as formulating policies, doing analysis and writing reports—because there is no national capacity. When there is a tension between the demands of capacity building and the demands of providing technical support, the priority is often given to technical support for the sake of ensuring implementation, thereby perpetuating a vicious cycle. This appeared to be the case in many UNDP projects. Often, UNDP tried to implement a project through the national execution mode with a view to building capacity but end up with a *de facto* direct execution. The local counterpart often scoffed at the virtual conversion of national execution into direct execution, but UNDP felt obliged to accept it for the sake of successful execution of projects. The resulting perpetuation of lack of national capacity casts some doubt on the sustainability of outcomes.

It is not clear what the solution is. One possibility is to make stronger efforts to keep technical support separate from capacity building; another is to find innovative ways of combining the two so that they can exist in a synergistic rather than a competitive relationship.

The issue of incentive is also a matter of concern. Government officials in Cambodia earn extremely low salaries. In view of this, RGC has instituted a salary supplement scheme, through which the officials involved in aid-financed projects can earn an extra income so that they can dedicate their extra time and effort to activities in support of the projects. The development partners, including UNDP, accept the idea of salary supplement and build it into

their project budgets. This makes the projects function better than non-project activities, but it creates problems of its own. The salary supplement scheme not only creates jealousy and discord between those who work on projects and those who don't, it also creates serious issues regarding the sustainability of project outcomes. The question naturally arises: Would the activities promoted by a particular project be continued with the same degree of efficiency

and dedication when the project, and with it the salary supplement, comes to an end?

It is encouraging to note that after suffering from this problem for many years, RGC is replacing the salary supplement scheme with a merit-based payment system. Sustainability of UNDP outcomes, like the outcomes of all other efforts, may depend on how well this new scheme works.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Ever since Cambodia emerged from the darkness of history with the Paris Peace Accord of 1991, UNDP Cambodia has been actively engaged in helping the country achieve the triple transition from conflict to peace, from autocracy to democracy, and from a centrally planned economy to market-based economic development. The challenges of this triple transition are enormous, especially as Cambodia has had to attempt it from a very low level of development. UNDP has been a staunch ally of the RGC in its attempt to meet the challenges, by providing support in such diverse areas as aid coordination, democratization, decentralization, environmental conservation, and poverty alleviation through employment creation.

The goals UNDP has set itself and the projects and programmes it has adopted in order to achieve these goals are entirely consistent with the needs of the country and the priorities set by the government, as articulated in its landmark strategic document called the Rectangular Strategy. Both RGC and UNDP recognized that governance reforms aimed at democratization and decentralization are of paramount importance if the country is to bury its tragic past and move forward into a new world in which different segments of society can live in peace and harmony. The relevance of the environmental programmes derives from the fact that Cambodia is blessed with rich, yet fragile, environmental resources throughout the country, especially in the region surrounding the great lake of Tonle Sap. Sustainable use of these resources is essential not only to preserve biodiversity but also to protect the livelihoods of the poor people of Cambodia whose lives are inextricably linked with the use of those

resources. The significance of focusing on the goal of poverty reduction is obvious from the fact that nearly one third of the country's population live in abject poverty and the rate at which their numbers are falling is painfully slow. Finally, the need for enhancing aid effectiveness cannot be overemphasized in Cambodia, which is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world. It is thus evident that all desired outcomes of UNDP are relevant to the needs and priorities of Cambodia.

This evaluation found that UNDP has made significant contribution towards enhancing each of the development outcomes, but there is room for improvement in many areas. Some of the major conclusions arising from the evaluation are summarized below, followed by a set of recommendations.

1. Across the spectrum of UNDP activities—involving democratization, environmental conservation and poverty reduction—a great deal has been achieved, especially in terms of building institutions and capacities. Yet, full achievement of desirable outcomes has often been compromised by a lack of focus on the people. In the area of democratization and decentralization, people's participation and empowerment remain limited; in the environmental programmes, there is more emphasis on conservation and less on sustainable livelihoods of the poor who depend on environmental resources; and in the poverty-related programmes, more success has been achieved in building capacity for market-led development than in creating employment opportunities for the poor.
2. The objective of the democratization programme is to enable civil society and

legislature to exercise effective checks and balances on the executive. UNDP has sought to achieve this outcome by helping RGC implement major reforms in the electoral process so that citizens can exercise their democratic rights more effectively, and by building the capacity of legislators so that they can carry out their responsibilities more efficiently. On both fronts, significant success has been achieved—for example, the 2008 national elections were widely acknowledged to have been technically much more ‘free and fair’ than the previous ones, and UNDP has been acclaimed for playing a vital role in making this possible. Yet, serious questions remain about the extent to which the development outcome of enabling civil society to play a check-and-balance role has been achieved. Although much has been done in the area of technical capacity building of institutions, little effort has been made to strengthen civil society organizations and thereby develop the democratic space for citizens at large. This has reduced the effectiveness of UNDP efforts towards democratic governance in Cambodia.

3. UNDP has made far-reaching contributions towards developing the structures and systems of decentralization and local-level governance in Cambodia, with a view to enhancing people’s participation in decision making and improving the government’s ability to more effectively provide service. For the first time in the history of Cambodia, this has made it possible for ordinary citizens to participate in decision-making processes at the local level. However, the full potential of these structures and systems is yet to be fulfilled. While elaborate structures of participation exist, there is a wide variance in the participation of ordinary citizens from one commune to another.
4. The environmental programme deals with many urgent environmental concerns related to sustainable use of natural resources and climate change. A great deal has been achieved in this area, especially in building

the capacity for biodiversity conservation. But achievements in creating sustainable livelihoods have been generally lacking, with the exception of some specific pilot projects. There is an inherent tension between conservation and protecting livelihoods.

One potential method for resolving this tension is to involve the communities in ensuring sustainable use of resources through various incentive mechanisms. UNDP Cambodia has initiated a number of pilot projects using the community-based natural resource management approach—with a good deal of success. Yet in the biggest environmental project, involving the Tonle Sap Basin, UNDP has moved away from this approach. As a result, the Tonle Sap Project and several other smaller ones have shown considerable success in conserving biodiversity but much less in promoting sustainable livelihoods.

One possible reason for this imbalance lies in the excessive reliance of UNDP on GEF funds for financing its environmental projects. The GEF is concerned primarily with conservation, but UNDP should also be concerned with protecting and promoting the livelihoods of those who depend on those environmental resources. A way forward could be for UNDP to engage more fully with other development partners who share UNDP’s fundamental concern with human lives and livelihoods.

5. Poverty-related activities have sought to reduce poverty in Cambodia primarily by building capacity for private-sector led development through reliance on the forces of the market and globalization. Much has been achieved in building the capacity and institutions necessary for a country that has had very little experience in market-based growth. Especially impressive has been the capacity building work involving the Ministry of Commerce to enable it to meet the challenges of export growth through diversification of the export structure. However,

little has been achieved in introducing a pro-poor bias in these activities. In choosing the products to be promoted for export, no special consideration has been given to the pro-poor impact of these products and small producers have not been favoured in the process of product promotion. One manifestation of the lack of emphasis on the poor was the failure to integrate the GSB Initiative, which was supposed to improve the capacity of small entrepreneurs.

The poor may have experienced some benefit through the 'trickle-down' process—a process that also characterizes the government's overall economic development policy in Cambodia. But the reliance on the trickle-down process has resulted in a slow rate of poverty reduction despite the high rate of economic growth. In order to accelerate poverty reduction, UNDP needs to do more to reorient its activities in favour of the poor. In particular, UNDP needs to be more involved in rural and agricultural development, in cooperation with other agencies that have more expertise in this area, because that is where poverty in Cambodia is most heavily concentrated. UNDP has the potential to add value in this area by drawing linkages with its macro policy work and its support to local level governance structures.

6. UNDP Cambodia has forged strong partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders in Cambodia, for which it is highly regarded in all quarters. Cooperation with other development partners has been especially strong. The UN Resident Coordinator plays a constructive role in this regard by strengthening cooperation with other development partners through formal and informal means. There is room for improving this collaboration at the project level by involving other development partners earlier in the project cycle—at the stage of project design.
7. Sustaining strategic collaboration with other development partners is a challenging task, especially in a country like Cambodia where

many agencies are competing with foreign aid. While UNDP has generally met this challenge, there remain some areas of concern. For example, collaborating partners in the UNDP decentralization programme do not share the same view about the basic objective of decentralization, which has compromised the effectiveness of the programme.

8. Cambodia has an elaborate structure of aid coordination, and UNDP has played a vanguard role in this regard by building the institutional capacity of the government to handle coordination, as well as by helping to devise institutions for joint monitoring by the government and development partners. Proper functioning of these institutions is essential for enhancing aid effectiveness, yet some parts of the system are not functioning as well as expected. The UN Resident Coordinator has recently taken steps to revitalize the moribund segments, an effort to which UNDP has much to contribute.
9. UNDP Cambodia has responded to the emerging development needs of the country quickly and imaginatively with various kinds of support. Most of these responses are highly valued by the government, other development partners and civil society. For example, the Insights for Action Initiative launched in 2006 responded to the government request for new ideas and knowledge in emerging areas of interest. The initiative has a string of achievements to its credit, but its original flexibility has somewhat been lost. This has happened in part because it is now more engaged in following up on previous work than starting new initiatives, and in part because what was originally an initiative under the UN Resident Coordinator has now been placed into the stricter programmatic framework of UNDP.
10. UNDP, along with other UN organizations, has helped Cambodia develop a sophisticated institutional structure for mainstreaming gender in government departments and ministries. This structure is unique in both the

developing world and the developed world. GMAGs have been set up in a number of ministries, many of whom have already produced Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans, some of which have received budgetary support from the Ministry of Finance. However, the national capacity to manage this structure is severely limited. The most significant capacity development has occurred in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, but the ministry does not have enough human resources to provide technical support to all the GMAGs. To some extent, this problem is mitigated by the fact that some UN organizations in the UNCT provide direct support to the GMAGs with which they work. The UNCT might achieve better results by coordinating its activities more effectively—for example, by appointing a gender coordinator at the office of the Resident Coordinator.

11. There are potential synergies across programme areas to be exploited in the Cambodia country programme. The synergies between environmental projects, especially their sustainable livelihood components, and poverty projects are obvious. What is special about Cambodia is the wide-ranging effort that is being made, with the help of UNDP and other development partners, to set up an elaborate decentralization structure. The existence of such a participatory local governance structure and the support mechanism UNDP has at local levels should make community-based initiatives more effective and efficient—whether they are for environmental protection or for poverty reduction. Moreover, if successful execution of community-based projects can be tied with local government planning processes, this would lend credibility and effectiveness to the decentralization process itself. UNDP Cambodia has yet to take full advantage of this potential synergy.
12. This evaluation has identified three issues regarding efficiency in achieving desired

outcomes. First, efficiency could be enhanced by fully exploiting the potential synergies among UNDP programme areas through a more programmatic approach rather than by following a conventional project-oriented approach. Second, efficiency could be enhanced by taking more active steps to translate the lessons of pilot projects into larger-scale activities by being more proactive in finding partners who can be entrusted with the task of scaling up. Third, the high rate of turnover in the UNDP country office has a potential deleterious effect on efficiency by reducing institutional memory, especially in a context where the projects have commendable continuity across the programming cycles.

13. There are two concerns regarding sustainability of outcomes. First, sustainability requires adequate capacity building at the national level. Although UNDP in principle puts a lot of emphasis on capacity building, in practice this has been hampered by *de facto* conversion of national execution modality into direct execution modality, driven by the need to deliver outputs. Second, the existence of the scheme of salary supplements for project staff raises questions about the sustainability of incentives beyond the project period.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the central recommendations of this report is to refocus the programme activities on people. To this end, concrete strategic recommendations are made below for specific areas of work.

1. To enhance the effectiveness of its flagship programmes on democratization and decentralization, UNDP needs to change its approach towards civil society, strengthening it with a view to developing capacities of Cambodian citizens. A two-pronged approach is suggested: nurturing independent civil society organizations with financial and

- technical support so that they can carry out the essential function of social mobilization; and encouraging reforms that can create the democratic space in which an independent civil society can flourish.
2. UNDP needs more confidence in the viability of community-based conservation of fishing resources in the Tonle Sap region as well as elsewhere in Cambodia and should devise institutional structures that can forge the link between conservation and livelihood more effectively.
 3. To better integrate livelihood concerns into conservation projects, UNDP should forge partnerships with other agencies, which, like UNDP, are concerned primarily with human lives and livelihoods while pursuing environmental objectives.
 4. UNDP should introduce a more explicit pro-poor bias into its poverty reduction programme. One suggestion is for UNDP to take pro-poor projects, such as those under the GSB Initiative, more seriously than it has done so far. In particular, it should integrate the GSB Initiative more substantively into the mainstream trade project (or its successors), and seek collaboration with other development partners (including NGOs) so that successful pilots under the initiative can be scaled up to more substantial projects.
 5. To accelerate poverty reduction, UNDP should engage more in agricultural and rural development activities, preferably by entering into collaboration with other development partners who have traditionally been more engaged in these sectors in Cambodia.
 6. UNDP should exploit the potential synergies among its programme areas to the fullest. One suggestion is to link the local governance structure that it supports with the community-based natural resource management for sustainable livelihood and some of the pro-poor projects (including possible work on agriculture and rural development).
 7. UNDP successfully involves other development partners at the stage of execution and implementation of projects, but it needs to do more to ensure cooperation at the stage of project design in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes.
 8. UNDP needs to do more to bridge the conceptual divide among its partners in decentralization projects, helping RGC devise an efficient system for combining governance reform with service delivery.
 9. Despite the existence of an elaborate structure of aid coordination in Cambodia, several critical parts of this structure—in particular, the GDCC and TWGs—have not functioned well in the recent past. UNDP could play a more active role in revitalizing these parts, making use of the goodwill it enjoys among both donor and government circles by virtue of the seminal role it has played in supporting aid coordination in Cambodia.
 10. To enhance UNDP ability to offer imaginative ideas quickly in response to changing country needs, it should restore the flexibility and quick response ability of the Insight for Action Initiative, which has been missing in the recent past.
 11. To enhance effectiveness and efficiency across the spectrum of outcomes, UNDP should move faster towards the programme-based approach from the conventional project-oriented approach.
 12. UNDP Cambodia should, for the sake of greater efficiency and impact, make a systematic attempt to convert the pilot initiatives into larger-scale activities and seek out partners through whom the scaling up can be achieved.
 13. To promote sustainability of outcomes, UNDP should make greater effort to separate technical support from capacity building support and find innovative ways of combining the two in a synergistic rather than competitive relationship.

14. UNDP should further strengthen its effort to mainstream gender in the work of sectoral ministries, and the UNCT that assists sectoral ministries should also mainstream gender in their work across the board. UNCT in Cambodia should seriously

consider appointing a senior gender coordinator, preferably located at the office of the UN Resident Coordinator, so as to achieve more effective coordination of gender-related activities across UN organizations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts country evaluations called Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national effort for achieving development results. ADRs are carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.¹⁰⁸ The purpose of an ADR is to:

- Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board
- Support greater UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and partners in the programme country
- Serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions at the country level
- Contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels

The ADR in Cambodia will be conducted in 2009, towards the end of the current programme cycle of 2006-2010. The ADR in Cambodia is intended to make a contribution to a new country programme, to be prepared by the UNDP country office in Cambodia together with national stakeholders.

BACKGROUND

Since 1993, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has made important strides in re-establishing political and economic stability. The successful conduct of national elections in July 1998 led to the installation of a coalition government and regained seat and representation at the General Assembly. In 1999, the country became a full member of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

The first long-term vision for the rehabilitation and development for this post conflict era was articulated in the National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia adopted in 1994. Based on that vision, the first five-year Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP I, 1996-2000) was formulated setting clear goals and milestones to be reached by 2000. This plan focused on macro-economic growth, social development, and poverty alleviation. At the same time, a three-year rolling Public Investment Programme was developed to channel domestic and external aid resources to the priority areas of SEDP I and to synchronize them with the annual budget of the government.

In 1997, UNDP established its first Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) (1997-2000) in support of the national development effort. Its central objective was to develop and institutionalize national capacities to plan and implement programmes for alleviating poverty, especially in respect of the rural areas.

The second five-year Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP II, 2001-2005) succeeded SEDP I and established various development

¹⁰⁸ Available online at: www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf.

targets to be reached by 2005. In its preparation, the Prime Minister stated that the government's poverty-reduction strategy aimed to achieve: long-term sustainable economic growth; equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth among all socio-economic groups between urban and rural areas and between women and men; and sustainable management of the utilization of the environment and natural resources.

In line with SEDP II, UNDP established its second CCF (2001-2005), with a focus on creating a pro-poor environment conducive to openness, transparency, accountability and participation in the national development process both at the central and local levels.

Following the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 and the subsequent establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Cambodia developed its own set of MDGs called Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), focusing on poverty alleviation and human development. The National Poverty Reduction Strategy was adopted in December 2002 through an inclusive process.

In 2004, the newly-elected government adopted a comprehensive strategy for future development, called the Rectangular Strategy for growth, employment, equity and efficiency. The strategy aimed at improving and building capacity of public institutions, strengthening good governance, and modernizing national economic infrastructure, with the objective of enhancing economic growth, generating employment for all citizens, ensuring social equity, enhancing efficiency of the public sector, and protecting the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage.

In support of the Rectangular Strategy, the UN Country Team (UNCT) identified, in its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2006-2010, areas of cooperation where the United Nations can collectively make

a difference, namely: good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights; agriculture and rural poverty; capacity building and human resources development for the social sectors; and development of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).

For the period 2006-2010, the government decided to move away from the traditional comprehensive planning approach to one that focuses on strategic goals and actions. The new plan was called the NSDP (2006-2010). Its major goal was to achieve interim 2010 targets of CMDGs towards poverty reduction, taking account of findings and recommendations of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, along with other necessary achievements in macro-economic, productive and service sectors. The strategies to be followed are laid out by the Rectangular Strategy.

The current UNDP country programme (2006-2010) aims to contribute to the achievement of the UNDAF objectives in line with UNDP practice areas. It aligns itself to support the government Rectangular Strategy and its effort in making progress towards the achievement of CMDGs. The country programme is implemented through the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2006-2010 signed by the government and UNDP in September 2006.

The near completion of the current country programme for 2006-2010 in Cambodia presents an opportunity to evaluate the UNDP contributions and shortcomings during the current and the last programme cycles. The findings will be used as inputs to the next cycle of country programme to be submitted to the Executive Board in 2010.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The ADR will review the UNDP experience in Cambodia under its two most recent country programmes (2001-2005 and 2006-2010), and

assess its contribution to the national effort in addressing its development challenges, encompassing social, economic and political spheres. It will assess key results, specifically outcomes—anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative, intentional and unintentional—and will cover UNDP assistance funded from both core and non-core resources.

The evaluation has two main components, the analysis of the strategic positioning of UNDP and UNDP contribution to development results. For each component, the ADR will present its findings and assessment according to the set criteria provided below. Further elaboration of the criteria will be found in ADR Manual 2009 (to be provided by the task manager).

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The ADR Cambodia will assess the strategic positioning of UNDP both from the perspective of the organization and the development priorities in the country. This will entail systematic analyses of UNDP's place and niche within the development and policy space in the country, as well as strategies used by UNDP to create a position for the organization in its core practice areas and to maximize its contribution through adopting relevant strategies and approaches. The set of criteria to be applied in assessing the strategic positioning of UNDP would be as follows.¹⁰⁹

Evaluation criteria for strategic positioning

1. Strategic relevance

- 1.1 Relevance against the national development challenges and priorities
- 1.2 Leveraging the implementation of national strategies and policies
- 1.3 Corporate and comparative strength

2. Responsiveness

- 2.1 Responsiveness to evolution and changes in development needs and priorities
- 2.2 Mechanism to respond to crisis and emergencies
- 2.3 Balance between short-term responsiveness and long-term development objectives

3. Contribution to UN values

- 3.1 Assisting the attainment of MDGs
- 3.2 Contribution to gender equality
- 3.3 Addressing the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged

4. Strategic partnerships

- 4.1 Effective use of partnerships for development results
- 4.2 Working with non-governmental partners
- 4.3 Assisting government to use external partnerships

5. Contribution to UN coordination

- 5.1 Undertaking the CCA/UNDAF process
- 5.2 Other Inter-organizational collaboration
- 5.3 UNDP as a window to other UN organizations and assistance

DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

The assessment of the development results will entail a review of the UNDP programme portfolio of the previous and ongoing programme cycles, conducted by the areas of intervention. This would entail: a review of development results achieved by the country and UNDP

¹⁰⁹ These criteria and sub-criteria could be modified when ADR Manual 2009 is completed.

contribution to them with a reasonable degree of plausibility; the extent to which intended programme outcomes were achieved; and factors influencing results (e.g., UNDP positioning and capacities, partnerships, and policy support). Where relevant, the relationship to the national effort (e.g., Rectangular Strategy) and UNDAF will be analysed. The set of criteria to be applied in assessing the development results would be as follows.¹¹⁰

Evaluation criteria for strategic positioning

- 6. Relevance at the programmatic level**
(to be specified)
- 7. Effectiveness**
 - 7.1 Achievements
 - 7.2 Synergy of UNDP interventions
 - 7.3 Reaching poor and disadvantaged groups
- 8. Efficiency**
 - 8.1 Managerial efficiency
 - 8.2 Programmatic efficiency
 - 8.3 Avoiding over-burdening of national partners
- 9. Sustainability**
 - 9.1 Design for sustainability
 - 9.2 Implementation issues and corrective measures
 - 9.3 Scaling-up pilots

The overall process will follow with ADR Guidelines (January 2007) to be found at the Evaluation Office website.

EVALUATION METHODS AND APPROACHES

DATA COLLECTION

In terms of data collection, the evaluation will use a multiple method approach that could include document reviews, workshops, group and individual interviews (at both Headquarters and the country office), project and field visits, and surveys. The appropriate set of methods would vary depending on country context and the precise nature would be determined during the scoping mission and detailed in an inception report.¹¹¹

VALIDATION

The Evaluation Team will use a variety of methods to ensure that the data is valid, including triangulation. Precise methods of validation will be detailed in the inception report.

STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

A strong participatory approach, involving a broad range of stakeholders, will be taken. The ADR will have a process of stakeholder mapping that would identify both direct partners of UNDP as well as stakeholders who do not work directly with UNDP. These stakeholders would include government representatives of ministries and agencies, civil-society organizations, private-sector representatives, UN organizations, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and importantly, the beneficiaries of the programme.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The ADR process will also follow the ADR Guidelines, according to which the process can be divided in three phases, each including several steps.

¹¹⁰ These criteria and sub-criteria could be modified when ADR Manual 2009 is completed.

¹¹¹ The scoping mission and inception report are described in Section 5 on the evaluation process.

PHASE 1: PREPARATION

- **Desk review**—Based on the preparatory work by the Evaluation Office (identification, collection and mapping of relevant documentation and other data), the evaluation team will analyse, *inter alia*, national documents and documents related to UNDP programmes and projects over the period being examined.
- **Stakeholder mapping**—The evaluation team will prepare a basic mapping of stakeholders relevant to the evaluation in the country carried out at the country level. These will include state and civil-society stakeholders and go beyond UNDP partners. The mapping exercise will also indicate the relationships between different sets of stakeholders.
- **Planning meetings**—Planning meetings will be held with the Evaluation Office to define and plan for the overall ADR process. If desirable, meetings or interviews with other entities of UNDP could be arranged at this stage.
- **Scoping mission**—A scoping mission to the country will be undertaken to:
 - Clarify the understanding of development challenges of the country with the government and other key stakeholders in the country
 - Understand the perspective of key stakeholders on the role of UNDP in addressing development challenges with a view to formulating focused evaluation questions
 - Deepen the understanding of the UNDP programme, projects and activities with the country office staff
 - Develop a concrete evaluation plan in consultation with the country office staff, including selection of data collection methods, selection of projects for field visits and addressing logistical issues

- Identify and collect further documentation as required
- Identify and consult with the team member(s) at the national level
- Address management issues related to the rest of the evaluation process including division of labour among the team members
- Ensure the country office and key stakeholders understand the ADR objectives, methodology and process

The scoping mission will be undertaken by the team leader, the team specialist (if available) and the task manager.

- **Inception report**—A short inception report will be prepared by the team leader following the scoping mission. The report will present the evaluation design and plan, including: the stakeholder mapping, evaluation questions and methods to be used, information sources and plan for data collection—including selection of project and field sites for visits, and design for data analysis.

PHASE 2: CONDUCTING ADR AND DRAFTING EVALUATION REPORT

- **Main ADR mission**—A mission of two to three weeks to Cambodia will be undertaken by the evaluation team to carry out the evaluation plan defined in the inception report, *inter alia*, to collect data and validate findings. At the outset, an entry workshop will be organized to explain to the stakeholders, the ADR objectives, methods and process. The team will visit significant project and field sites as identified in the scoping mission. At the exit meeting of the mission, the evaluation team will provide a debriefing of the preliminary findings to the country office and key stakeholders, take initial comments and validate the findings.

- **Analysis and reporting**—The information collected will be analysed and the draft ADR report will be prepared by the evaluation team within three weeks after the departure of the team from the country. The draft report will be submitted by the team leader to the task manager, and its acceptability is subject to the initial checking by the task manager on the compliance to the terms of reference and other basic standards and guidelines¹¹², including on the quality aspects.
- **Review**—Once the draft report is accepted by the task manager to have satisfied the basic requirements, it will be subject to a formal review process. This comprises: factual corrections and views on interpretation by key clients (including the UNDP country office, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the government); a technical review by the Evaluation Office; and a review by external experts. The Evaluation Office will prepare an audit trail to show how these comments were taken in to account. The team leader in close consultation with the task manager shall finalize the ADR report based on these final reviews.
- **Stakeholder meeting**—A meeting with the national stakeholders will be organized in the country to present the results of the evaluation and examine ways forward. The purpose of the meeting is: to facilitate greater buy-in by national stakeholders for taking forward the lessons and recommendations from the report; and to strengthen the national ownership of development process and the necessary accountability of UNDP interventions at the country level.

PHASE 3: FOLLOW-UP

- **Management response**—The UNDP Associate Administrator will request relevant units (normally the UNDP country office and Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific) to jointly prepare a management response to the ADR. As a unit exercising oversight, the regional bureau will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre (on the UNDP Intranet).
- **Communication**—The ADR report and brief will be widely distributed in both hard and electronic versions. The evaluation report will be made available to the UNDP Executive Board by the time of approving a new country programme document. It will be widely distributed to stakeholders in the country and at UNDP Headquarters, to evaluation outfits of other international organizations, and to evaluation societies and research institutions in the region. The report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website¹¹³ and made available to the public. Its availability will be announced on UNDP and external networks.

The time-frame and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively as follows:

¹¹² To be provided by and discussed with the task manager.

¹¹³ Available online at: www.undp.org/ea.

Activity	Estimated time-frame
Collection and mapping of documentation by the research assistant	March
Desk review by the Evaluation Team	April
Scoping mission to the country	mid-late May
Inception report and revised ADR terms of reference	mid June
The following are tentative and will be firmed during the scoping mission in consultation with the CO and the government:	
Main ADR mission to the country	July / early August
Submission of first draft report	September
Comments/corrections from the Evaluation Office, external reviewers, country office	mid October
Submission of second draft report	end October
Validation with the government	November
Issuance of final report	end November
Stakeholder workshop	first quarter 2010

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

UNDP EVALUATION OFFICE

The Evaluation Office task manager will manage the evaluation. She or he will support the team in designing the evaluation; ensure coordination and liaison with UNDP Cambodia country office, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, and other concerned units at Headquarters; participate in the missions; provide ongoing advice and feedback for quality assurance; accept the draft reports and manage the review process; and assist the team leader in finalizing the report.

The evaluation team will be supported by the research assistant based in the Evaluation Office at the initial stage of the process to collect and organize necessary information, and by the programme assistant throughout the process on logistical and administrative matters.

The Evaluation Office will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ADR. These will include costs related to participation of the team leader, international and national consultants, as well as the preliminary research and the issuance

of the final ADR report. The Evaluation Office will also cover costs of any stakeholder workshops as part of the evaluation.

THE EVALUATION TEAM

The team will be constituted of three (or more) members:

- Team leader (international consultant), with overall responsibility for providing guidance and leadership, and in coordinating the draft and final report
- Team specialist(s) (international or national consultant/s), who will support the team leader and provide the expertise in the core subject areas of the evaluation, and be responsible for drafting relevant parts of the report
- National team member(s) (national consultant/s), who will undertake data collection and analyses at the country-level, support the work of the missions and undertake other tasks in the country as decided by the team

The evaluation team will orient its work by the Norms and Standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), and

individually must adhere to the ethical Code of Conduct¹¹⁴ also established by UNEG.

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE IN CAMBODIA

The country office will support the evaluation team in liaison with key partners and other stakeholders, make available to the team all necessary information regarding UNDP programmes, projects and activities in the country, and take a lead role in organizing dialogue and stakeholder meetings on the findings and recommendations. The office will also be requested to provide additional logistical support to the evaluation team as required. The country office will contribute support in kind (for example office space for the evaluation team) but the Evaluation Office will cover local transportation costs.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The expected outputs from the evaluation team are:

- The inception report (maximum 20 pages)
- The final report ‘Assessment of Development Results—Cambodia’ (maximum 50 pages plus annexes)
- A separate document containing the ratings as specified in ADR Manual 2009
- Draft for the evaluation brief (2 pages)
- A presentation at the stakeholder meeting

The final report of the ADR will follow ADR Manual 2009, and all drafts will be provided in English.

¹¹⁴ UN Evaluation Group Guidelines, ‘Norms for Evaluation in the UN System’ and ‘Standards for Evaluation in the UN System’, April 2005.

Annex 2

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Annex 3

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Phoung Phea, Mine Clearance Beneficiary, Khlang village
Vong Phul, Mine Clearance Beneficiary, Kompong Mkak Village, Kdol Commune, Borvel District, Battambang Province
Bun Phan, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Chhon Chhuon, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Det Suphean, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Hoy Thom, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Kim Chan Theng, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Ly Bun Tan, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Ly Vy, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Ly You Leng, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Nhim Somath, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin
Ov Chan Dara, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin

Pum Komsan, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Preab Lagn, Village Assistant, Preah Trapeang Village
Ry Phirum, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Seun Chean, Village Chief, Daun Reach Village, Kok Thlok Krom Commune, Chikreng District, Siem Reap Province
Sao Un, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Khit Ravy, Villager, Daun Reach Village
Sen Sophin, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Khchor Pich, Village Assistant, Khlang Village, Kdol Commune, Borvel District, Battambang Province
Sok Kosal, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Phi Cheap Ros, Villager, Kor Koh Village, Kok Thlok Krom Commune, Chikreng District, Siem Reap Province
Sorn Chhorvy, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Oun TI , Villager, Kor Koh Village, Kok Thlok Krom Commune, Chikreng District, Siem Reap Province
Yan Pun, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Five anonymous villagers, Syvantha, Prasat Commune, Sontuk District, Kompong Thom Province
Yeum Saroeun, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Touch Sakun, Director, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre, Kampong Speu Province
Youn Sovanna, Ranger, Prek Toal, Tonle Sap Basin	Mao Saroeun, Administrator, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Ly Heang, Self-help Group Member, Anlong Tahour village	Chorn Soned, Administration Assistant, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Chhen Sophea, Self-help Group Member, Anlong Tahour village	Saung Sok Khoeun, Food Processing Trainer, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Kun Thoeun, Self-help Group Member, Anlong Tahour village	Him Dina, Tailoring Trainer, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Pil Khorn, Self-help Group Member, Anlong Tahour village	Chreng Ritiny, Weaving and Food Processing Trainer, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Thoeun Phy, Self-help Group Member, Anlong Tahour village	Ben Saren, Weaving Trainer, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Bit Prean, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	Phon Chanthorn, Weaving Trainer, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Chhon Chanthou, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	Sao Pisey, Cook, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Heng Heak, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	Kach Heng, Security, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre
Im Kimheang, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	
Preun Lom, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	
Tun On, Self-help Group Member, Kompong Prosak	
Son Nary, Self-help Group Member, Prek Toal	
Y Simon, Self-help Group Member, Prek Toal	
Lim Lon, Village Chief, Preah Trapeang Village, Damdek Commune, Damdek District, Siem Reap Province	

Un Savly, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Phnaov Village, Saong Tong District, Kampong Speu Province

Au Sreynad, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Psar Samaky Village, Saong Tong District, Kampong Speu Province

Phaung Rey Ya, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Psar Samaky Village

Sem Srey Sar, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Psar Samaky Village

Saung Srey Touch, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, They Village, Saong Tong District, Kampong Speu Province

Chhay Thavrin, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Vorlish Village, Saong Tong District, Kampong Speu Province

Nhak Sivorn, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Vorlish Village

Tieng Kolap, Villager, Samdech Meh Women Development Centre Beneficiary, Vorlish Village

Kun Tit, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Naun Sam, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Thor Rin, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Khaun Chantrea, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Khaun Duly, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Nget Kin, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Nhem Sorn, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Sam Vy, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Say Sophea, Villager, Kompong Speu Province

Annex 4

EVALUATION MATRIX: EVALUATION QUESTIONS FOR THE ADR CAMBODIA

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Methods of assessment	Sources of information
Development results			
Effectiveness	<p>Did the UNDP programme accomplish its intended outcomes?</p> <p>What, if any, unexpected outcomes did it yield?</p> <p>What are the main contributions to development for which UNDP is recognized in Cambodia?</p> <p>To what extent, and how, do these contributions relate to the intended outcomes that UNDP has striven to achieve?</p> <p>What other conditions and factors have had a significant influence on the achievement of UNDP development results?</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Field visit</p>	<p>UNDP programme documents and reviews</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Stakeholder workshop</p>
Efficiency	<p>How optimally did UNDP use its resources (human and financial) in implementing the country programme?</p> <p>Is UNDP-Cambodia realizing opportunities for synergies among the three programme areas?</p> <p>How efficient, rapid, and flexible are UNDP decision-making and approval processes during development and implementation of projects?</p> <p>What could be done to ensure a more efficient use of resources in the context of Cambodia?</p> <p>Does UNDP have the necessary capacity, especially human resources to meet its own responsibilities?</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>UNDP programme documents and reviews</p> <p>Interviews with UNDP staff and government officials</p> <p>Stakeholder workshop</p> <p>Information on management and funding costs</p>
Sustainability	<p>Are the benefits of UNDP interventions owned by national stakeholders?</p> <p>Do adequate systemic, technical and financial capacities and commitments exist within key stakeholders to capitalize on UNDP contributions to development?</p> <p>How has UNDP been able to contribute to the development of the capacities of partner institutions?</p> <p>How well does UNDP follow up to ensure the longer-term sustainability of its interventions and results?</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Field visit</p>	<p>UNDP programme documents and reviews</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <p>Field visit observations</p> <p>Stakeholder workshop</p>

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Methods of assessment	Sources of information
Strategic positioning			
Relevance	<p>How relevant are UNDP programmes to the priority needs of Cambodia?</p> <p>To what extent are the government's national development goals and strategies in line with the most pressing national needs?</p> <p>Are UNDP programmes responding to the real needs of target groups?</p> <p>What are the critical gaps in UNDP programmes, if any?</p> <p>Does UNDP have a clear, coherent and appropriate strategy to maximize opportunities to contribute to development in Cambodia?</p> <p>How did UNDP respond to national long-term development needs?</p>	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Documents on national development achievements UNDP programme documents and reviews Key informant interviews Stakeholder workshop
Responsive-ness	<p>How did UNDP anticipate and respond to significant changes in the national development context?</p> <p>What were the missed opportunities in UNDP programming, if any?</p>	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	Documents on national development achievements UNDP programme documents and reviews Key informant interviews
Strategic partnership	<p>How has UNDP leveraged partnerships within the UN system as well as with national civil society and private sector?</p> <p>How effective is the cooperation strategy with other UN organizations?</p> <p>How effective is the cooperation strategy with other development partners?</p> <p>To what extent is UNDP playing a role in promoting coordination between: the Government of Cambodia and donors; donors; and civil society organizations and donors?</p> <p>How have UNDP development contributions affected its position and role in Cambodia?</p>	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	UNDP programme documents and reviews Interviews with UNDP staff and government officials Interview with other development partners
Contribution to UN values	<p>Did the programmes and interventions of UNDP lead to reduced vulnerabilities in the country?</p> <p>Did UNDP intervention in any way influence the existing inequities (exclusion/inclusion) in society?</p> <p>Was the selection of geographical areas of intervention guided by the needs of the people?</p> <p>Do UNDP programmes display the necessary cultural sensitivity?</p> <p>Do UNDP programmes promote gender equality and the human rights perspective in the development of Cambodia?</p>	Desk review Semi-structured interviews	UNDP programme documents and reviews Interviews with UNDP staff and the UNCT

Environment & Energy

		CCFII					CPD							
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Biodiversity	Cambodia Biodiversity Enabling													
	Cambodia NBSAP (Nat'l Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan)													
	National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management													
	Cambodia Conservation Areas through Landscape Management (CALM)													
	Management of the Cardamom Mountains Protected Forest and Wildlife Sanctuaries													
	Capacity Building for Tonle Sap Region													
	National Capacity Self Assessment													
	Harmonizing Natural Resource Management Policy to Improve Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements													
	Tonle Sap Conservation Project													
	Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme													
	Sustainable Land Management SLM													
	CMB: Northern Plains (CALM)													

Annex 6

PROJECTS CHOSEN FOR IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

PROGRAMME AREA: POVERTY REDUCTION

Project ID 11821 & 11832: Poverty
Monitoring Analysis

Project ID 62180: Preparatory Assistance for
CMGD/NSDP Monitoring

Project ID 11837 & 11838: Pro-Poor
Trade Reform

Project ID 39690: Trade Related Assistance for
Development and Equity (TRADE)

Project ID 42787: Insights for Action Initiative

Project ID 00011824: Aid Coordination
and Partnership

Project ID 00048711: Multi-donor Support
Programme for Aid Coordination

Project ID 00047488: Clearing for Results

Project ID 00011828: Support to Mine
Action Programme

PROGRAMME AREA: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Project ID 00011829 & 00011822:
Partnership for Local Governance

Project ID 00054656 & 00054664:
Project Support to Decentralization and
Deconcentration

Project ID 00011827: Fiscal Decentralization
Support Project

Project ID 00049185: Strengthening
Democratic Governance in Cambodia

Project ID: 00048421: Moving Toward Equal
Access to Justice in Cambodia

PROGRAMME AREA: ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Project ID 00047478: Establishing CALM
(Conservation Areas through Landscape
Management) in the Northern Plains
of Cambodia

Project ID 00011841: Capacity Building for
Tonle Sap

Project ID 00038552: Tonle Sap
Conservation Project

ID 00011839 & 00011840: Project
Management of the Cardamom Mountains

CROSSCUTTING ISSUE

Project ID 00011820: Partnership for
Gender Equity I

Project ID 00037213: Partnership for
Gender Equity



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