**Executive Summary**

The 2007-2011 Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) was designed to address national priorities of the Government of the State of Eritrea and was closely aligned to the five key outcomes of the UNDAF, namely:

1. support in increasing equitable access and utilization of quality basic services, with particular emphasis on improving the access of vulnerable groups to these services;
2. the establishment of an integrated and effective development planning, monitoring and evaluation framework to address the shortfalls in attaining the MDG targets and the implementation of the MD;
3. improvements of access to food for the most vulnerable population sectors, thereby contributing to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 (MDG 1), and working towards environmental sustainability (MDG 7);
4. assist the government through an integrated multi-sector approach to ensure that IDPs, expellees, returnees, and other war and drought affected communities are reintegrated and have secure livelihoods and access to basic services;
5. support the attainment of equal opportunities, rights, benefits and obligations for women in all areas of life.

The evaluation team concludes that nearly all the planned results were successfully achieved with a few exceptions. This is a shared achievement by UNDP and all its partners (central government, regional administrations, mass organizations and donors). Through this collaborative effort, the implementation of the CPAP has made a significant contribution to national development efforts. The programme was well managed as evidenced by the country office being rated the top performer in the UNDP Africa region for the last two successive years. Strong and effective partnerships were forged with all stakeholders and significant resources were mobilized and efficiently disbursed to address critical capacity gaps and tangible grassroots needs. However, less success was registered on the policy front; as many policies, laws, proclamations and guidelines UNDP helped develop remain unapproved as yet. Below are highlights of key programme achievements, resource mobilization performance, and programme management.

**Assessment of Results Achieved**

*National Capacity Development*

The national capacity development component of the CPAP has four outcomes: (i) capacity is improved and a system established within the National Statistics Office (NSO) and sector ministries; (ii) development planning and budgeting processes, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the Ministry of National Development (MND) and key national stakeholders are strengthened; (iii) operational, regulatory and human capacity of the civil service in all government offices and institutions strengthened; and (iv) strategy for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation developed.

The CD component has successfully targeted key public institutions responsible for the service delivery, attainment of the MDGs and other international obligations of the country. Institutions supported include the Ministry of National Development (MND), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Civil Service Administration (CSA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Department of Immigration and Nationality (DIN), National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW). Overall, with the exception of the establishment of disaster prevention strategy where little progress has been registered, the programme has delivered most of the planned CD results.

The support provided by UNDP has strengthened the planning, operational, regulatory and human resource capacities of these institutions. The human resource capacities were enhanced through short and long-term education, training and study tour programmes organized within and outside the country, as well as through equipment and materials provided. As a result of the trainings provided, skills of civil servants were upgraded which is evidenced by the changes noted in the quality of services provided. The CD support benefited government organizations at central, regional and sub-regional levels.

The implementation of the Anseba Local Development Project (ALDP) strengthened the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting capacities of the regional, sub-regional and local communities of Zoba Anseba. In addition, the micro-projects (water, health, education, roads, marketplace, etc.) brought multiple benefits to rural populations of Zoba Anseba (new income generating initiatives, increased food security, easy access to markets and basic social services, improved project implementation capacity, etc).

However, the delay by the government in the approval of the policies plans and laws drafted with UNDP’s support affected the impact of the programme. Updating of the national database is not done as planned due to delay in producing the EDHS report. Another setback of the programme is the lack of progress in relation to the establishment of a national coordination mechanism for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. Efforts made by UN under the leadership of UNDP resulted in the preparation of a concept note on establishing/strengthening national early warning systems for hydro-met related information. However, this was curtailed by the recent policy shift of GoSE on development aid.

*Food Security and Sustainable Environment Management*

The CPAP sought to achieve three outcomes under this component: (i) enhanced decision (policy) making on food security by 2008; (ii) improved access and availability of food; and (iii) support development and protection of the environment and national resources by 2011.UNDP successfully designed a variety of interventions to address critical national priorities linked to these outcomes. Most of the planned results were either fully achieved or a strong foundation has been laid, with the exception of the outcome related to improved policy where very limited progress was made and efforts were abandoned.

UNDP assistance to improve access to food through its project in Zoba Maekel has created the infrastructures and established the platform for rural households to envisage and plan an alternative future. The project when fully implemented can bring significant stability and predictability to farming activities and to the lives and livelihoods of the rural poor. Furthermore, UNDP support has also enabled the accreditation of the fish quality control laboratory which has provided an opportunity for exports and therefore benefits to the economy as a whole and to households. The two projects designed and implemented by UNDP and partners to enhance food security and reduce poverty are therefore promising. However, given the depth of poverty in Eritrea, they are judged to have a limited localized effect. On the positive side, the interventions are scalable given adequate resources.

Many of the planned results under the sustainable environmental management outcome were largely achieved. Overall, the evaluation team judged that these interventions addressed critical national and international environment concerns relating to climate change, loss of biodiversity, environmental conservation and sustainable land management, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions leading resulting in significant household and national economic and social benefits. In addition, longer term national and local capacities to assess, design and manage programmes to address critical environmental challenges have been enhanced. The UNDP wind energy project aimed at reducing Eritrea’s fossil fuel dependency and promoting a greener energy environment has contributed to technical and institutional innovations on the use of renewable energy technologies. GoSE is now working to upscale its renewable energy sources based on the successful implementation of the pilot wind energy project. The pilot sustainable land management project covering 28 villages and involving close to 48,000 people is facilitating the introduction of a more permanent forms of land ownership to replace the present seven-year ownership system, which is widely regarded as a hindrance to investments aimed at improving land productivity. Much progress has been made in terms of putting in place the physical structures and there are plans to work with the Ministry of Land, Water and Environment (MLWE) to use the SLM project for piloting implementation of Proclamation 58/94. With UNDP support, a national land use policy was drafted but not endorsed but a viable Land Information System (LIS) was designed and implemented using local capacity. UNDP also supported several interventions aimed at preserving and improving the management of Eritrea’s fragile coastal, marine and island ecosystem.

Unfortunately on the policy front, there was less success: a proclamation to establish an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Authority (I-CAM-A) was drafted but not approved yet. . Similarly in June 2007, an Integrated Coastal Area Management Proclamation was finalized but not enacted so far. A proclamation for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for three island areas was prepared but has not been endorsed to date as was the ICAM Policy. The draft land use policy is also among the list of policies not yet approved by government. The finalization of the draft Environmental law met the same fate. The delay experienced in obtaining feedback from GoSE on draft policies and laws affected programme implementation.

*Gender Equity*

The gender component was implemented as a Joint Programme (UNFPA, UNDP UNIFEM, UNICEF and WHO), with UNFPA as lead agency and focused on the following outcomes: (i) capacity for gender responsive advocacy planning, monitoring and evaluation for gender equality strengthened in 12 key national institutions; (ii) NUEW capacity to address economic empowerment of women in difficult circumstances increased.

Several key results have been achieved. A fully equipped resource and research center is established at NUEW head office which will play a critical role in building capacity for gender related issues, including gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, etc. The establishment of the Gender Resource and Research Center will significantly strengthen gender training and research on women’s issues in Eritrea.

Notable progress was made on gender mainstreaming in Government ministries; of the twelve Ministries targeted six have designated gender focal points, five have developed Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and finally four have developed Action Plans. Already this is yielding concrete results – the MLWE is reported to reserve 30% of land bank parcels to be distributed to disadvantaged women; the Ministry of Education reduced the entrance requirements for girls to tertiary education and provided 30% quota for girls joining technical, vocational education and training (TVET). Gender analysis has been strengthened across the board. Gender budgeting has been difficult to pursue due to delays observed in endorsing the draft national development plan. NUEW staff provided gender advocacy training to 8,256 persons and a legal training manual is developed. Advocacy and awareness raising is conducted at all levels – grassroots, sub-regional, regional and national and sensitization materials have been published in three languages (Tigrinia, Arabic, and Tigre).

*Basic Social Services*

The planned results of the basic social services component of the CPAP include: (i) by 2011, access to permanent shelter and sustainable human settlement increased by 20% with focus on vulnerable groups; (ii) HIV/AIDS transmission to infants born to HIV positive women is reduced by 50% and HIV prevalence among young people reduced by 25%. Under this component, very little was done with respect to shelter. It is however important to note that UNDP has provided significant support to shelter as part of the Transition and Early Recovery component of CPAP.

With respect to the outcome related to HIV/AIDS, the HIV/AIDS workplace policy is drafted but not yet approved by the MoLHW and thus its implementation in 80% of public sector institutions and public and private enterprises is not delivered. The HIV/AIDS support enhanced the human and institutional capacities of the NCEW Training and Documentation Centre and HIV/AIDS and OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) Unit. In addition, the support resulted in the establishment of HIV/AIDS and OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) committees in 45 public and private enterprises in Zoba Maekel, constituting about 20% of the 230 targeted enterprises organized under the NCEW.

As a result of the training and sensitization activities undertaken by the HIV/AIDS and OSH unit of the NCEW and the HIV/AIDS and OSH committees, awareness of the workers about HIV/AIDS is raised. This has positively contributed to overall reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence rate. Available information shows that the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the country has fallen from 2.4% to 0.7%[[1]](#footnote-1). However, there was no evidence that shows the increase in awareness has led to behavioural change.

*Transition & Early Recovery*

Ensuring that IDPs, expellees, returnees and other war-affected and drought-affected are reintegrated and have secure livelihoods and access to basic social services, was one of the key national priorities of the Government of Eritrea in its quest to ensure post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country after years of war and displacement. The CPAP had the following outcome under this component: war affected IDP populations resettled, returned, and reintegrated in an environment that is safe from landmines andUXOs.

The planned results under this component have been fully achieved. All IDPs and expellees that were still in camps at the start of the programme (17,690 households or 71,207 persons) have been successfully and safely transported with their belongings from camps to their villages of origin or new settlements in the designated areas. Hence, all IDP/expellees camps were closed by March 2008. The evaluation team concluded that the JP has undoubtedly helped and provided an opportunity for large segments of the war – affected population to begin to restore their lives and livelihoods. It has been effective in addressing the needs of the vulnerable such as, female-headed households, children and poor families, and contributed to closing the chapter on war and displacement in Eritrea. By helping to rebuild critical socio-economic infrastructure, restored livelihoods the JP also contributed to laying the foundation to medium and long-term socio-economic development, poverty reduction and attainment of the MDGs in Eritrea. The JP has succeeded to consistently respond and provide support to very deserving communities. IDPs/expellees and returnees were provided with shelter, basic social services, improved stoves, home solar systems, farm tools, oxen, land clearance and traction, seeds, and land to ensure livelihood security. Consequently, IDPs and expellees have started a dignified and purposeful life, free from the uncertainties of camp life. In the focus group discussion, beneficiaries reported: “*In the camps, yes we had enough to eat, but now we have our own land, our own houses, and we are now in full control of our lives*”. Compared to their pre-displacement situation, IDPs have now better access to basic social services such as water (for human and animal consumption), shelter, and school. However, they are far below their pre-displacement position in terms of their livelihood.

The joint programme also enhanced the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting capacities of the regional and sub-regional administrations in Gash Barka, Debub and Southern Red Sea Regions. This was achieved through the provision of training and office equipment. The capacity building support has also benefited sub-zoba administrations responsible for the provision of technical support to communities and monitoring implementation of joint programme activities. Consequently, regions have become more efficient in coordinating programme activities and delivering projects, though their monitoring activities were affected by shortage of transportation facilities.

***Resource Mobilization &Partnerships***

UNDP Eritrea was highly successful and effective in mobilizing, managing and delivering substantial amount of resources to meet programme objectives. Figures show that UNDP over the five years of the CPAP mobilized approximately USD 52 million , exceeding its resource mobilization target by 261% or by two and a half times. The country office raised USD 2.08 for every USD spent from its core resources, demonstrating a high leveraging capacity. Delivery of programme resources was also excellent; out of a budget of USD 81.7 million UNDP delivered USD 73.3 million leading to a 90% delivery rate.

However, going forward, there are already clear signs of weaknesses in UNDP’s resource base made more challenging by the small donor base in Eritrea and the government’s change of policy. UNDP should strategize on how to tap other sources, and the evaluation team makes several recommendations on this point.

UNDP forged effective partnerships with central government ministries, regional administrations, mass organisations and donors. At all these levels, UNDP is regarded as a credible and trusted partner, recognized for its flexibility and adaptability. Close cooperation was also established with sister UN agencies.

***Programme Management***

The programme was implemented through national execution modality and was efficiently managed at all levels. For example, the Transition and Early Recovery programme adopted a highly successful project implementation modality by working directly through regional administrations, and in the process strengthened their capacities to plan, execute and monitor and report on projects. This modality in the view of the team represents a best practice in the field of post-conflict recovery internationally.

Monitoring and evaluation was largely satisfactory, and efforts were made to develop the appropriate instruments and templates to enhance follow up and reporting. A key problem was getting permits for field visits by UNDP staff and management, as well as donors. Notwithstanding the impressive implementation record, the evaluation team also identified several challenges faced by UNDP and government partners.

Many of UNDP’s interventions were planned to be jointly implemented with other UN agencies. There were varying degrees of success in these joint programmes. The collaboration was not as was foreseen due among others to limited resources pledges by other UN agencies, leaving UNDP to bear major responsibility for mobilizing resources, as well as differences in modalities for channeling resources to implementing partners, particularly at regional level.

Two key lessons standout in terms of implementation of the CPAP: ***Firstly***, the high delivery rate of programme resources which was consistent throughout the CPAP period. This was due to a variety of factors, including training and mentoring provided by UNDP staff, the stability of staff in implementing partners, the dedication and commitment of government personnel to national development goals, the limited corruption in the public service and finally the attitude of UNDP country office staff who treated their government counterparts as equals and with respect. A ***second*** key lesson was that the CPAP was implemented without recourse to costly and disruptive programme implementation units. Nearly all programmes, both at national and regional levels were fully integrated into partner structures with no need for CTAs or separately remunerated programme managers and other project staff. This success is largely due to strong government leadership and its policy that discourages the creation of especially dedicated programme units within government structures.

***Conclusions and Way Forward***

At the time the evaluation was undertaken, the cooperation between GoSE and the UN system in Eritrea had entered a decisive phase with the UNDAF 2007-2011 cut short by six months and in its place a new cooperation framework centered on health, water supply and sanitation and lasting 18 months, to December 2012. The recent policy shift on UN-Eritrea cooperation is part of a broader policy of the Government to phase-out from grant/aid financing and put in place its long stated goal of a development blue print based on its self- reliance principle, and was not specifically targeted at the UN system

On the way forward in this challenging context, the team recommends that a UN and/or UNDP retreat be organized to seriously reflect on options to pursue. The purpose is to undertake a scenario planning exercise underpinned by analysis of strategic options faced by the UN after December 2012. This will help the UN/UNDP to be ready should GoSE wish to engage them.

To aid the reflection proposed, the team has briefly outlined some of the options UNDP could be faced with based on the three scenarios that may arise after December 2012. The way forward could be discussed based on the following three possible scenarios.

* + - ***Scenario One***: UN system support expanded
    - ***Scenario Two***: Government would inform UN by April 2012 at the latest on whether to extend, modify, expand or end cooperation after 2012: UN System continues to work within the existing cooperation framework (with possible modification**).**
    - ***Scenario Three***: UN system further scale down or phase out its support

These three scenarios represent different technical, financial and administrative implications for UNDP CO and HQ.

1. Result Oriented Annual Report, 2010, UNDP based on the statement delivered by the Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on 21 September 2010 at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals [↑](#footnote-ref-1)