The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Sri Lanka is an independent evaluation conducted in 2011, jointly by the Evaluation Office (EO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Sri Lanka. The EO and the Government participated in a Joint Management Group (JMG) which established an independent national team, led by a professional manager from the EO, and oversight to the evaluation process.

The ADR has collected and analysed evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results during the 2002-2007 (previous) and 2008-2012 (current) programme cycles. It focuses on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of programme activities in achieving intended programme outcomes, as well as the potential sustainability of the results achieved. The ADR also assessed UNDP’s strategic positioning and approaches, drawing general conclusions and recommendations to improve UNDP’s future strategy and approaches have been made.

The evaluation team adopted a case study approach and selected 31 programmes and projects implemented during the period for in-depth review. These programmes and projects were selected to ensure the evaluation covers all strategically or financially significant interventions and all thematic areas of the country programme. The evaluation team set-up a data collection strategy and conducted:

- Individual and group interviews of nearly 150 stakeholders, including policy makers, programme and project managers, project implementing agencies and partners, representatives of beneficiaries or those representing their views, and other stakeholders such as local government officials and private sector associations.
- Ten group discussions of beneficiaries, particularly of the wide-scale Transition and Recovery Programme (TRP) that was implemented directly by UNDP.
- Desk studies of all relevant documents and studies, including 15 existing evaluation reports on UNDP programmes and projects.
- Visits to 11 out of 25 Districts in Sri Lanka to observe the results achieved by field activities. For every programme or project that involved field activities, at least one location was visited.

**KEY FINDINGS**

UNDP has supported the Government to incorporate the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs) and the Managing for Development Results (MfDR) approach into the national planning framework. Introduction of the MDGs in the early 2000s was highly relevant and there has been a steady but slow progress since then. Application of MfDR has yet to achieve necessary depth and breadth to be effective. Dynamic linkages of MfDR systems between national and sub-national entities, and between the central units and other parts of the Government were still largely missing.

UNDP has undertaken several projects to facilitate poverty-reduction in specific sectors and regions. Generally, these projects had limited impact and the sustainability of any results achieved was questionable.

To promote democratic and inclusive governance, UNDP has aimed to strengthen human rights institutions, decentralization of governance and access to justice by the people. Initiatives such as localisation of the MDGs, the introduction of a Citizen’s Charter, and provisions of
However, reliance on foreign funding leaves the future of the project uncertain.

A gender dimension was well mainstreamed into UNDP’s programmes, especially its field operations. The standalone project to increase representation of women in decision-making processes has had some contributions but no real impact as yet.

**MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

**Conclusion 1.** Over the past decade, UNDP’s programme has responded well to evolving government priorities and the needs of the country, particularly in dealing with the effects of the war and the tsunami. UNDP thus remained an important partner to the country and has had a tangible impact. Today, UNDP faces the challenge of repositioning itself within a changing context. With post-conflict regions soon moving from a transitional to a developmental phase, UNDP must set out a clear course for its future in these regions. With the country solidifying its middle-income country status and developing its own capacity, UNDP is expected to strengthen its policy advice, advocacy and partnership building roles while focusing capacity development on supporting national efforts. New social, economic and environmental issues are also emerging, in which UNDP could contribute through policy support.

**Conclusion 2.** UNDP’s approach to poverty reduction was opportunistic. Interventions aimed at poverty reduction were isolated and impact was limited. Most of UNDP’s contributions to reduce poverty occurred where poverty reduction was not a primary objective, such as in post-tsunami and post-conflict recovery, the localisation of the MDGs, and the establishment of local disaster response capacities. These programmes, which mainstreamed not only poverty reduction but also human rights and gender, had a considerable impact on the lives of the poor and the vulnerable.

**Conclusion 3.** National capacity developed with UNDP’s support has not always been fully utilised
Recommendation 5. In all areas of its programme, UNDP should more systematically consider how partnerships with the private sector could facilitate the achievement of development goals and build those partnerships into the programme design.

Recommendation 6. UNDP’s capacity development should encompass support to the development of systems and mechanisms that would make use of the capacity developed.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should ensure that capacity developed in national institutions is sustainable after the completion of the engagement, and an exit strategy should be built into every project design.

Recommendation 8. In promoting accountable and transparent public service delivery mechanisms, UNDP should systematically involve both decentralized and devolved structures of local governance as well as community-level organizations, take on a policy leadership role in coordinating varied donor initiatives in this area, and take a holistic approach to democratic governance encompassing its work on human rights, access to justice, local public service delivery and RBM at national and local levels.

Recommendation 9. For post-conflict regions, UNDP should set up an exit strategy for its transition and recovery programme, on which a common understanding with partners should be developed. In this regard, it should consider retaining some capacities at the province level to monitor the socio-economic situation and coordinate the capacity development and recovery support during the transition period.

Recommendation 10. UNDP should re-examine where it could make a critical contribution to gender equality within the context of UNDAF, and provide focused support therein.