COUNTRY EVALUATION:
ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS
BANGLADESH

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Foreword

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) report for Bangladesh presents the findings and recommendations of an independent evaluation conducted by the UNDP's Evaluation Office with a team of senior consultants. The ADR is an independent, forward-looking assessment of UNDP's support to Bangladesh in the last five to eight years and is designed to inform future programme directions. The focus is on assessing the UNDP's contribution to the development priorities of Bangladesh through outcomes in core thematic areas of support, identifying the lessons learned, and identifying possible areas of future support.

The experience of Bangladesh is particularly significant for evaluation purposes because it is one of the largest recipients of UNDP core funding. Bangladesh is also one of the largest least developing countries. Lessons arising from this evaluation should, therefore, have relevance for other similarly placed countries. The report assesses UNDP's performance and experience in Bangladesh since 1995. It looks at the results in relation to UNDP's engagement with the country's key development challenges as well as its ability to adapt itself to meeting these challenges.

In our view, the Bangladesh ADR presents a number of critical findings and recommendations. It underscores that Bangladesh has made significant progress in reducing human poverty and improving macro-economic fundamentals as well as social indicators. However, preventing reversals and sustaining gains achieved over the past decade face challenges on many fronts, including accelerating inequalities, a deteriorating governance situation, environmental degradation, recurring natural disasters and the impending phase out of the Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA). The Country Cooperation Framework I (CCFI) and Country Cooperation Framework II (CCFII) provided a framework for UNDP to engage with these development challenges. The Bangladesh ADR highlights a number of results produced in the key thematic areas of governance, poverty reduction and the environment. The report concludes that the country office has overcome the programme delivery challenges that UNDP faced in the mid 1990s and has effectively mobilized external resources. It has also succeeded in increasing the focus on strategic areas by reducing the number of projects from 123 in 1992 to 32 in 2004, thus putting the limited resources of UNDP to better use.

The report identifies areas where UNDP could strengthen its activities, in order to address the emerging priorities of the country, including championing policy alternatives for pro-poor growth to counter the accelerating rise in inequalities. Increased support from UNDP headquarters and strengthened partnerships with relevant local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are considered critical for these efforts.

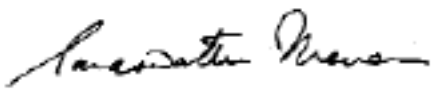
The research and preparation of this report relied heavily on the open sharing of information by the UNDP Country Office in Bangladesh, led by the then Resident Representative Mr. Jorgen Lissner and the Deputy Resident Representative Mr. Larry Maramis. The strong support and interest from UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific led by the Regional Director and Assistant Administrator Mr. Hafiz Pasha is also highly appreciated.

The Evaluation Office and the ADR team wish to express special thanks to the government, political leaders, several ministers of the country, parliamentarians, heads of government agencies, NGO leaders, think tanks, policy research institutes and many others for their support and openness in discussing the past and present challenges of Bangladesh, as well as UNDP's response to them.

The Evaluation Office is greatly indebted to the ADR team including Soheil Malik, Jawad Anani, Peter Metcalf, Ruby Sandhu-Rojon and Suppiramaniam Nanthikesan. The analyses was based on a number of local in-depth studies carried out by Shaheen Malik in the area of governance, Ansarul Karim in the area of environment and the Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies. The support of the national consultant Salahuddin Aminuzzaman is also gratefully acknowledged. Within the Evaluation Office, preparation of this report was facilitated by research support from Nuru Lama, technical support from Anish Pradhan and administrative support from Margarita Bernardo.

By providing an independent assessment of UNDP's contribution to Bangladesh's development results, we hope that this ADR has provided useful lessons and recommendations to strengthen the new country programme. While the draft version of the report was used by UNDP Bangladesh to develop the Country Programme Document (October 2005), we hope that the report will also be of value to the Government of Bangladesh and to UN agencies, civil society, donors and other partners.

Saraswathi Menon



DIRECTOR
UNDP EVALUATION OFFICE

Executive Summary

As the world's second largest less developed country, Bangladesh is clearly a crucial player in the global fight against poverty and, as such, is one of the largest recipients of UNDP's core funding. In these circumstances, Bangladesh is without question one of UNDP's most significant partner countries and UNDP is committed to supporting Bangladesh in building upon its strengths, facing potential threats and resolving its paradoxes. This report is expected to provide useful input to the next programming cycle of UNDP Bangladesh, which will start in 2005.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assist UNDP in continuing to build upon its strengths and, within the terms of its comparative advantage, enhancing its contribution to effective development in Bangladesh. The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) covers the time period of the Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) I (1996-2000) and CCF-II (2001-2005) to the end of 2004. Recommendations are based on the ADR's identification of the status of outcomes, the factors affecting outcomes and UNDP's response to development challenges. The lessons learned are designed to be forward looking and to suggest the best use of UNDP's comparative advantage in the years to come.

METHODOLOGY

A major aim of the ADR is to draw a credible link between overall development results and UNDP's contribution to their achievement. The emphasis on higher level results is intended to improve understanding of the outcome, its status, and the factors that contribute to change. There are also important lessons to be learned about how UNDP operates, opportunities and constraints UNDP faces, and UNDP's effectiveness as a client-oriented institution. This country evaluation, therefore, also includes a "bottom-up" analyses of a sample of the most important programmes, projects and non-project activities.

The preparatory work for the evaluation started with extensive desk research including programme mapping and a documentation review by the UNDP Evaluation Office (EO). This was followed by an exploratory mission to Bangladesh, which consisted of direct consultations with the UNDP Country Office (CO) and key stakeholders, and provided a basis for the Terms of Reference (TOR).

The main evaluation was undertaken in two parts. The first mission visited Bangladesh in July 2003 and lasted two weeks. It consisted of two international external consultants, one external national consultant and one member of UNDP's EO. A second validation mission took place in October 2004 consisting of one international external consultant, one external national consultant and

one member of UNDP's EO. Both missions consulted a wide range of stakeholders from the government, civil society and donors. To validate and broaden observations made in Dhaka, field visits were also made to projects in Sirajganj and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Following standard evaluation procedures developed by UNDP's EO for ADRs, the team drew upon three major sources of information: perception, validation and documentation. The criteria used to assess results (drawing on qualitative and quantitative information) are presented in Chapter 1.

The report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the rationale for the ADR and outlines the methodology. Chapter 2 presents a brief outline of the national context and of UNDP's role. Chapter 3 covers the development results achieved in Bangladesh and UNDP's contributions towards them. Chapter 4 locates the UNDP in terms of its strategic positioning and the relevance of its programmes. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and makes recommendations for the future based on this country evaluation.

NATIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Bangladesh is a country of paradoxes. Income poverty levels have decreased (albeit modestly) in the last decade while inequalities in income and consumption have increased. Serious governance issues face the country, yet social indicators have shown dramatic improvements. The parliamentary system has become increasingly dysfunctional, yet the macro-economic fundamentals have improved and are currently on a sound footing. Both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition are women, yet women continue to be disadvantaged in accessing the social, political and economic opportunities that provide the social basis for self-respect. Frequent incidents of intimidation and violence against journalists are observed while the print media remains relatively free. An innovative and well established non-governmental organization (NGO) sector is active in service delivery to supplement the government, yet donor organizations are saddled with serious delivery issues. These contradictions point to a complex development context. As such, a nuanced and comprehensive understanding is necessary for UNDP to contribute effectively to Bangladesh's efforts to achieve its development targets.

Despite having the third largest population living in poverty in the world (as of 2004, an estimated 71 million of the 143.8 million population was deemed poor), Bangladesh is on track or ahead in its pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in several areas of social development. The human poverty index (HPI) fell from 47.2 in 1993-1994 to 34.8 in 1998-2000. The human development index (HDI) showed one of the fastest rates of increase in the sub-region, increasing at a rate of 8.8 percent per annum in the 1990s.[1]

In addition, Bangladesh has moved away from being an aid-dependent economy to becoming a trade-dependent economy. The official development aid (ODA) to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio declined from 7 percent in 1990 to 1.9 percent in 2002. Conversely, exports as a percentage of GDP increased from 8.6 percent in the first half of the 1990s to 16.9 percent in 2001-2002. In other words, current export earnings are 10 times the ODA received.

However, challenges persist. There are three key development challenges facing Bangladesh that UNDP initiatives need to take into account:

- Sustaining human development in the face of rising inequality
- Sustaining the macro-economic momentum in a changing development context and deteriorating environment
- Deteriorating governance, a dysfunctional parliament and institutionalized political violence

Poverty reduction during the 1990s was accompanied by a worsening of income distribution. Research conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) shows that the Gini coefficient based on income as well as consumption has risen for both urban and rural areas. Clearly, the initial dynamism that fuelled economic growth appears to be accompa-

[1] Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), "Fighting Human Poverty, Bangladesh Human Development Report 2000," Bangladesh, 2000.

nied by high inequalities, and there is a growing concern that such high inequalities may not only make it difficult to sustain the past rate of achievements, but also may even reverse the gains if specific attention is not paid to addressing rising inequality.

Progress from very low initial levels of human development often involves low cost solutions such as oral rehydration technology for diarrhoea treatment (leading to a decrease in child mortality) or creating awareness regarding immunization and contraception.[2] This has been aided by the density of the population, the accessibility for even distant villages and the political commitment to make a difference.

Yet, as the potential of low cost solutions is fully exploited, the level of public expenditure and the quality of services becomes more critical. For example, further lowering the maternal mortality rate would require more costly health services; and translating increased school enrolment into improved educational standards would require significant improvements in the education system itself. Both of these would require significantly higher levels of spending. Thus, it is essential to sustain the macro-economic momentum.

As argued by a recent UNDP study,[3] growth in the non-tradable sector, exports (particularly ready made garments [RMGs]), and remittances from migrant labour in industrialized countries contributed to this growth momentum. The international Multi Fiber Agreement (MFA) that had given Bangladesh a guaranteed market in the industrialized countries came to an end in December 2003, posing further challenges to maintaining the growth momentum.

Economic growth in Bangladesh has come at the cost of considerable stress on the environment and ecology. This is particularly important, as approximately 80 percent of Bangladesh population depend directly or indirectly on natural resource management in the primary sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries), which can be categorized as environmental resources. Common property resources, such as open water and marine fisheries, wetland based flora and fauna, and government land and forests, are also a significant source of livelihood for the poor. As the population grows, these resources have come under intense pressure—including soil degradation and toxic impact of agrochemicals.

There are signs that, unless there are urgent institutional reforms, sustaining the rate of achievements in human development is not only unlikely to be sustained but also past gains may also be eroded. In 2001, an opinion survey conducted by the World Bank[4] showed that breakdown in law enforcement (particularly, corruption in the police and delays in the courts) was the top concern of ordinary citizens and entrepreneurs alike. The deterioration of the governance system can be observed in various aspects of the state machinery, including:

- The disorganized public administration system
- Weak local governance institutions
- A dysfunctional parliamentary system and regulatory framework
- A judiciary system where, although the higher-level courts are considered relatively independent and impartial, law enforcement is generally seen as serving the interests of the status quo

The government cannot strengthen governance by itself. Civil society already plays an increasingly active role in strengthening governance in Bangladesh through education; monitoring; policy advocacy; training of candidates, elected members and government officials at the national and local level; and facilitation of public-private dialogue on national development issues.

In light of the challenges listed above, it is clear that a policy of "more of the same" will not work. These challenges and priorities are reflected in the CCF documents as well as the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) document.

UNDP SUPPORT

According to the TOR, this report shall focus on three of the sectors in which UNDP is involved, namely environment, governance and poverty alleviation. As mentioned earlier, a desk review of all key interventions was studied and documented as part of the background information for the team. In addition, the team conducted in-depth analyses of select interventions that offered adequate evaluative evidence and were deemed by the ADR team as illustrative cases of best or worst practices.

In the environment sector the following initiatives were considered:

- Support of the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas automobiles in Dhaka City
- Support for the ban on polythene bags

[2] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004.

[3] UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty, "Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh," September 2003.

[4] World Bank, "Bangladesh, Improving Governance for Reducing Poverty," 2001.

- Support to the community-based environmental sanitation project by the NGO Waste Concern

In the poverty alleviation sector, the following two initiatives were considered:

- Community empowerment and microfinance for poverty alleviation
- Sustainable Human Development Project (SHD) conducted in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) Planning Commission

Finally, in the governance sector, the following initiatives were considered:

- Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project
- Human rights initiative in the Ministry of Law of GoB
- Human Security Report Project
- UNDP Support to Parliament
- Conflict resolution and development promotion in the CHT

Based on an analyses of these initiatives, which included desk reviews, field visits, and stakeholder consultations, the following lessons were drawn and recommendations were proposed. These provide both an evaluation of UNDP's ongoing and planned activities during the period 1996 to 2005 and a vision for future UNDP cooperation.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons learned

A close study of UNDP initiatives provides many lessons that may be drawn on to improve the effectiveness of UNDP's support to Bangladesh to achieve its development goals.

Contributing to development results

Broad-based ownership matters. Growth and development of NGO sector and civil society mobilization have greatly contributed to the human development achievements of Bangladesh. UNDP has been able to facilitate the efforts of this sector to bring about significant results. UNDP initiatives in the environmental sector that responded to the development needs articulated by the civil society have proved to be successful (for example, National Environmental Action Plan [NEMAP] and the ban on polythene bags). UNDP efforts at coordinating and advocacy as a neutral UN agency have provided a useful platform for active NGOs to engage in dialogue with the government on a number of environmental issues. Despite moments of tensions (for example, the development of the Sustainable Environmental Management Plan [SEMP]), UNDP efforts have benefited from strong government commitment and broad-based ownership of environmental reform policies.

Innovative initiatives are critical in a dynamic development context. Successful sub-national level initiatives have demonstrated the viability and effectiveness of promoting the links between NGOs and the private sector (such as the Solid Waste Management Project, a component of SEMP). They have also shown the need to integrate local communities in design and implementation and assessment of their own development initiatives for good governance (such as Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Programme [SLGDP]). UNDP experience also shows the difficulties in undertaking large, multi-sectoral initiatives (such as SEMP), particularly, in terms of managing relationships with the government and coordinating a number of NGO partners.

Complex contexts require nuanced approaches to development support. UNDP support to Bangladesh in addressing the deteriorating governance situation points to the effectiveness of the dual strategy followed. In a politically polarized context, UNDP has chosen on the one hand, to undertake "neutral" initiatives to institute changes that would help the poor (such as SLGDP), while on the other hand, it has taken sensitive issues head on (such as the Human Security Report and CHT), maintaining strict neutrality between contending factions. In order to maintain credibility among donors and civil society as a neutral partner and to be faithful to its human development mandate, UNDP should continue to strike a strategic balance between these two types of approaches.

Enhancing effectiveness of UNDP's support to Bangladesh

Managing partnerships

Government

Cultivating relationships with pro-development elements in the government sharing UNDP's goals has proved to be an asset (such as in the Police Reform Project). The relationship with the government has positioned UNDP to take bold leadership steps, such as in CHT, and make inroads into the sensitive governance area through the Human Security Report. The ADR team finds that the UNDP relationship with the government balances the recognition that the government is led by the elected

representatives of the people with the fact that serious concerns over the state's accountability to its constituents persist.

Civil society

Discussions with civil society indicate that UNDP has benefited from the service delivery capabilities of the NGOs. Experience shows that UNDP could benefit from close collaboration with proactive and credible NGOs (such as NEMAP). Given their experience, established NGOs could serve as valuable partners when identifying and conceptualizing appropriate initiatives to help UNDP avoid mistakes such as community empowerment projects (CEPs) or reduce the gender imbalance in Union Parishad (UP) level meetings of SLGDP. The practice of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) group of the CO in setting up an expert panel to advise on designing initiatives would be a useful model to mainstream within the CO.

Experience (e.g. under the governance programme) shows that, when UNDP has gained a high level of respect in a given area, it can go beyond advocacy to consensus building and coordination of multi-partner inputs (e.g. the Human Security Report is being followed by the Police Reform Project).

Effective programming

Enabling conditions within UNDP for improved effectiveness

UNDP CO management is often faced by a conflict between the headquarters' requirement to spend TRAC resources to the available ceiling and the need to move upstream and engage in more advocacy and policy formulation initiatives. Upstream activities consume much more of the CO's staff time but are unlikely to generate high TRAC expenditures. Downstream projects are more likely to relieve delivery concerns.

National execution (NEX) is an important instrument for creating a sense of national ownership of UNDP supported programmes and projects. However, the quality of the management of NEX projects will inevitably be influenced by the local environment and particularly by prevailing levels of capacity of the public administration in the host country. A rigorous approach to NEX management is crucial for UNDP's reputation within the country.

Strengthening micro-macro linkages

Strengthening the two-way link between local-level initiatives and upstream efforts is vital to the effectiveness of UNDP support. UNDP programming provides useful lessons for micro-to-macro linkages as well as macro-to-micro linkages. UNDP's upstream efforts can help formulate effective downstream interventions (for example, work on the Human Security Report helped identify the Police Reform Project and SPPD helped identify SLGDP).

Experience at the field level lends credibility for UNDP to become a player at the national level. For instance, in the environmental sector, the Ministry of Environment identified UNDP as a partner in many national efforts, such as formulating the national forestry master plan, and in conjunction with NEMAP, its disaster management, conservation of natural resources, and bio diversity due to its experience at the ground level in the early 1990s.

Strengthening the development effectiveness focus of programming

In selecting pilot initiatives, the CO should keep in mind the following:

- UNDP's comparative advantage in the selected field
- The potential for influence on national policy making
- The cost effectiveness of the intervention for replicability
- The potential for strengthening local capacity in a sustained way (rather than as displacement or substitution)
- The potential for strengthening broad-based participation

Strengthening a culture of assessment

Strengthening UNDP's contribution to development effectiveness is only possible if there is rigorous use of available evidence about what works and what fails. With the Management for Results framework, it is no longer adequate to verify whether the appropriate processes are in place, but it is necessary to assess whether UNDP's efforts are actually changing people's lives.

Even successful programmes need evidence to identify the extent of benefits and potential areas for improvements in future implementation. For example, how significant is the reduction in air pollution in Dhaka City as a result of the Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) conversion programme and how much has it reduced the burden of disease? To this end, the ADR team believes that existing monitoring systems must be systematically expanded to cover outputs and, where possible, indicators of success associated with delivery. As observed in the SLGDP case, in many instances, such expansion could be readily accommodated.

Evidence need not be collected only from within UNDP's own evaluation and assessment mechanisms. There are NGOs active in practically every village that could be sources of information where information gaps exist.

Evidence gathered must be integrated into the decision-making processes at all key stages of implementation. The SLGDP and SEMP initiatives benefited from their mid-term evaluations and were able to correct their course, while the failed replication of microcredit-based CEPs during the CCF-I period neglected to do so.

Recommendations

As mentioned earlier, even though CCF-II predates the I-PRSP, it provides a good reflection of emerging national priorities. The broad focus of CCF-II is on track, particularly in keeping poverty alleviation on the agenda while increasing the emphasis on governance issues. One of the aims of this report is to point to the possibilities, if any, for a sharper focus on areas within these identified priorities.

These recommendations are intended as a set of key strategies from which UNDP Bangladesh could choose based on a full assessment of its own resource constraints and available opportunities.

These recommendations are derived from the analyses of the sectors studied by the ADR team, namely, environment, poverty alleviation and governance. They do not speak of the other areas of interventions of UNDP Bangladesh, such as risk reduction and disaster management.

1. In order to address the rising inequalities in income (and some social sector indicators), UNDP Bangladesh should continue to target the poorest of the poor. To this end, it should continue its course on CHT efforts and hopefully, after completing the initial investment in establishing the organizational infrastructure, more of the resources will directly flow towards development of the "safer" areas within CHT. While the team clearly recognizes the risks involved and the need to move with caution, it should be possible to set a clearer picture by conducting a needs assessment in partnership with other actors and developing a coherent development strategy.
2. Given the political sensibilities, a National Human Development Report (NHDR) may not be feasible and may not be even a priority in Bangladesh. However, given the rise in inequalities, particularly geographic inequalities, UNDP may make a significant contribution using its comparative advantage and initiate developing a Human Development (HD) atlas – a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based statistical compendium that could provide detailed disaggregated indicators at UP level. Such information should help transparent procedure in targeting and provide valuable base information for advocacy efforts and debates on policy alternatives for the vibrant civil society in the country. This HD atlas could be developed as a partnership effort with the GoB, its statistical bodies, and local think tanks and NGOs.
3. UNDP has made significant headway in the environmental sector at the upstream and downstream level. Clearly, its contributions have been greatly strengthened by its partnership with the proactive NGOs and the media. UNDP could institutionalize this link by inviting key NGO actors in the field to be part of its advisory panels in designing new strategies.
4. In the post-MFA Bangladesh, UNDP Bangladesh needs to support the ongoing country efforts to diversify exports and to strengthen the non-tradable sector (a CCF-I priority that was omitted in CCF-II), which has contributed greatly to past growth momentum. Already, UNDP Bangladesh has lost its high profile in policy dialogue. To regain its profile, UNDP Bangladesh needs to shift gears in planning its poverty alleviation strategies and advocacy efforts. Clearly, as the first step, additional capacity in the form of trained economists is needed. Avoiding the past pitfalls of its CEPs, UNDP should seek to establish its own comparative advantage in specializing in capacity development of the non-tradable sector. For instance, as the analyses in Chapter 2 points out, links between remittances of migrant labour and capacities of the non-tradable sector could be explored.

   In this regard, UNDP headquarters should provide active support to the CO in its effort to champion human development alternatives in relation to the post-MFA development strategies.
5. In the increasingly volatile immediate future, UNDP should focus its limited resources more on "safe" initiatives in its area of comparative advantage. Thus at the upstream level, it should continue its support to election monitoring efforts but emphasise strengthening local capacities to undertake monitoring. At the downstream level, it should focus more on local governance issues. Following its successful SLGDP, UNDP Bangladesh should continue its innovative experiments in strengthening transparency and accountability of local institutions. This focus will be consistent with the I-PRSP priorities of the country as well as the CCF-II agenda. To this end, UNDP Bangladesh should focus its effort in this area on a key

pilot exercise and identify arenas in local governance that could be derived from its macro-initiatives (such as Human Security Report) and linked to its efforts on the HD atlas (if undertaken).

1 Introduction

Poverty alleviation is Bangladesh's major development challenge and the overarching objective of the government. During the past decade, Bangladesh has achieved an average GDP growth rate of 5 percent per year that has led to gains in HDI and decline in human poverty. However, Bangladesh continues to be the home of the third largest population of poor. Bangladesh has always been a major recipient of ODA, but it is now starting the transition from being an aid-receiving nation to a trading nation.

Indeed, Bangladesh is a country of paradoxes. Income poverty levels have decreased (albeit modestly) in the last decade, while inequalities in income and consumption have increased. Serious governance issues face the country, yet social indicators have shown dramatic improvements. Both the prime minister and the leader of opposition are women, yet women continue to be disadvantaged in accessing social, political and economic opportunities that provide the social basis for self-respect. Frequent incidents of intimidation and violence against journalists are observed, while the print media remains relatively free. Bangladesh faces enormous challenges in its pursuit of sustainable human development, but its achievements to date provide some basis for optimism.

However, Bangladesh's development is accompanied by accelerating inequalities in income, which is a threat to further progress. Progress also faces threats from the deteriorating governance situation, specifically:

- An extensive patronage system, widespread corruption and a weak public administration
- An increasingly dysfunctional parliamentary system
- Escalating institutionalised political violence and *hartals*

These factors pose significant difficulties for channelling resources to alleviate human poverty and sustain human development, and discourage investment in productive economic activities. Frequent natural disasters, the impact of which are exacerbated by environmental degradation, also undermine development progress.

As the world's second largest less developed country, Bangladesh is clearly a crucial player in the global fight against poverty and, as such, is one of the largest recipients of UNDP's core funding. In these circumstances, Bangladesh is without question one of UNDP's most significant partner countries and UNDP is committed to supporting Bangladesh in building upon its strengths, facing any threats, and resolving its paradoxes. This report is expected to provide useful input to the next programming cycle of UNDP Bangladesh, which will start in 2005.

Like Bangladesh, UNDP has, during the past decade, presented a number of contradictions. It is a small player in the Bangladesh context (UNDP core funds contribute only 1 percent of total ODA flows), yet in the mid 1990s, it had serious problems in delivering. UNDP regularly speaks out against corruption, yet in 2000, it was obliged to conduct an in-depth review of the transparency of its own processes. It is committed to NEX, yet it is modifying its NEX approach to suit the country context. It is committed to being a knowledge-based organization, yet its staff still spends the major part of its time on process activities.

Yet UNDP is an active member of the development community in Bangladesh. In 2000, it conducted a major exercise to enhance UNDP CO effectiveness and programme delivery and, as of 2004, it has overcome many of the process weaknesses that characterized it during the 1990s. It is still a small contributor in financial terms, but it is generally respected by its partners in government and the ODA community and, during the current CCF, it has started to make greater use of its comparative advantage to make its presence felt. In particular, UNDP has launched several initiatives in areas considered too sensitive by other donors. It is aware of the need to strengthen its knowledge base, and efforts are being made to streamline processes.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assist UNDP in building upon its strengths and, within the terms of its comparative advantage, enhance its contribution to development effectiveness in Bangladesh. The ADR covers the time period of CCF-I (1996-2000) and of CCF-II (2001-2005) up to the present. Recommendations are based on the ADR's identification of the status of outcomes, the factors affecting outcomes, and UNDP's response to development challenges. The lessons learned are designed to be forward looking and to suggest the best use of UNDP's comparative advantage in the years to come.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this evaluation is an integral part of UNDP's Results Based Management (RBM) approach, focusing on outcomes defined as changes in specific conditions through contributions from various development actors.[5] A major aim of the ADR is to draw a credible link between overall development results and UNDP's contribution to their achievement. The emphasis on higher level results is intended to improve understanding of the outcome, its status, and the factors that influence or contribute to change. There are also important lessons to be learned about how UNDP operates, the opportunities and constraints UNDP faces, and UNDP's effectiveness as a client-oriented institution. This country evaluation, therefore, also includes a "bottom-up" analyses of a sample of the most important programmes, projects and non-project activities.

The overall objectives of the ADR are to:

- Support the UNDP Administrator's substantive accountability function to the Executive Board and serve as a vehicle for quality assurance of UNDP interventions at the country level
- Generate lessons from experience to inform current and future strategy and programming at the country and corporate levels
- Provide the programme stakeholders with an objective assessment of results that have been achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key actors for a given multi-year period

The preparatory work for the evaluation started with extensive desk research including programme mapping and a documentation review by the UNDP EO. This was followed by an exploratory mission to Bangladesh, which consisted of direct consultations with the UNDP CO and key stakeholders. The exploratory mission aided in determining the focus of the evaluation and provided a basis for the TOR.

In preparation for the main evaluation mission, two targeted, detailed background studies were commissioned:

1. UNDP's role and contribution in supporting governance reforms, both in parliamentary and electoral processes and in the decentralization process, with an assessment of issues on improving transparency and accountability.[6]
2. Effectiveness of UNDP's assistance in the areas of sustainable environmental management, with additional focus on disaster management.[7]

   This background work entailed the review of programme and project documentation, interviews, focus group discussions and field visits. The results from these studies were available to the ADR evaluation team at the outset of the first main mission and served as a valuable input into the analyses of the focus areas of governance and poverty.

The main evaluation was undertaken in two parts. The

[5] For more detailed information on methodology, see the TOR in Annex I.

[6] Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), "Assessment of Development Results: Bangladesh— The Role Played by UNDP in the Areas of Poverty, Gender, HIV/AIDS and CHT," Bangladesh, June 2003.

[7] A report prepared for the Evaluation Office, UNDP by Dr. Ansarul Karim titled "Assessment of Development Results, Bangladesh Country Evaluation, Environmental Study," Bangladesh, June 2003.

first mission visited Bangladesh in July 2003 and lasted two weeks. It consisted of two international external consultants, one external national consultant and one member of UNDP's EO. It also benefited from the participation of the former director of the EO and the Director of the Bureau of Development Policy and Assistant Administrator. A further validation mission took place in October 2004, consisting of one international external consultant, one external national consultant and one member of UNDP's EO. Both missions consulted a wide range of stakeholders from the government, civil society and donors. To validate and broaden observations made in Dhaka, field visits were also made to projects in Sirajganj and the CHT.

Following standard evaluation procedures developed by UNDP's EO for ADRs, the team drew on three major sources of information: perception, validation and documentation. The criteria used to assess results (drawing on qualitative and quantitative information) are presented below.

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING UNDP PROGRAMME RESULTS

- UNDP's relevance and strategic role in national development efforts
- Clear links of programmes to UNDP's global strategic positioning
- Contribution to strengthening national ownership of UNDP programmes
- Strong scope for learning, replication and scaling-up of projects and programmes
- Positive contribution by UNDP to national level policy analyses, formulation and implementation processes
- Positive contribution by UNDP to capacity building for sustainable human development
- High quality (that is, transparent, accountable and innovative) partnerships
- Timely and effective monitoring and evaluation of lessons learned, including failures and lost opportunities

The remainder of the report is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 2 presents a brief outline of the national context and of UNDP's role. Chapter 3 covers the development results achieved in Bangladesh and UNDP's contributions towards them. Chapter 4 locates the UNDP in terms of its strategic positioning and the relevance of its programmes. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings and makes recommendations for the future based on this country evaluation.

2

A Country of Paradoxes—Development Challenges and UNDP Support

Bangladesh is a country of paradoxes. Income poverty levels have decreased (albeit modestly) in the last decade, while inequalities in income and consumption have increased (see Table 1). Serious governance issues face the country, yet social indicators have shown dramatic improvements. The parliamentary system has become increasingly dysfunctional, yet the macroeconomic fundamentals have improved and are currently on a sound footing. Both the prime minister and the leader of opposition are women, yet women continue to be disadvantaged in accessing the social, political and economic opportunities that provide the social basis for self-respect. Frequent incidents of intimidation and violence against journalists are observed, while the print media remains relatively free. An innovative and well-established NGO sector is active in service delivery to supplement the government, yet donor organizations are saddled with serious delivery issues. These contradictions point to a complex development context. As such, a nuanced and comprehensive understanding is necessary for UNDP to contribute effectively to Bangladesh's efforts to achieve its development targets.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH: CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

UNDP initiatives in Bangladesh need to take into account the following three challenges:

1. Human poverty has declined over the past decade, yet rising inequalities in the dimensions of human development raises concerns about how to sustain the growth momentum of the last decade and how to prevent the reversal of the gains thus far achieved.
2. On the macro side, fuelled by uninterrupted economic growth during the last decade, Bangladesh has also been able to move away from being an aid-dependent economy to becoming a trade economy that is increasingly integrated into global markets. Sustaining this momentum depends on how well Bangladesh is able to support and strengthen the factors that contributed to the growth performance of the last decade (namely, growth in the non-tradable sector in the rural areas, export of

TABLE 1. TRENDS IN POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN THE 1990s

	1991-1992	2000	Change per year (%)
Headcount ratio			
National	58.8	49.8	-1.8
Urban	44.9	36.6	-2.2
Rural	61.2	53.0	-1.6
Poverty gap			
National	17.2	12.9	-2.9
Urban	12.0	9.5	-2.5
Rural	18.1	13.8	-2.8
Squared poverty gap			
National	6.8	4.6	-3.8
Urban	4.4	3.4	-2.7
Rural	7.2	4.9	-3.8
Gini index of inequality			
National	0.259	0.306	2.1
Urban	0.307	0.368	2.3
Rural	0.243	0.271	1.4

manufactured goods and the rise in remittances from migrant labour), while managing and reversing the intense pressure on the environment and ecology generated by this growth spurt.

3. These tendencies are embedded in a deteriorating governance situation. The weak capacity of the public administrative system and corruption are compounded by an increasingly dysfunctional parliamentary system and escalating institutionalized political violence and *hartals*. This continues to pose significant difficulties for channelling resources to alleviate human poverty and sustain human development.

Sustaining human development in the face of rising inequality

Despite having the third largest population living in poverty in the world (as of 2004, an estimated 71 million of the 143.8 million population was deemed poor), Bangladesh is on track or ahead in its pursuit of the MDGs in several areas of social development. The HPI fell from 47.2 in 1993-1994 to 34.8 in 1998-2000 (see Figure 1). The HDI showed one of the fastest rates of increase in the sub-region, increasing at a rate of 8.8 percent per annum in the 1990s[8] (from 0.445 in 1995 to 0.509 in 2002 according to HDR 2004). Many factors contributed to this success (see subsequent discussion).

Income Poverty

The progress made by Bangladesh in reducing income poverty is quite notable. From 1991-1992 to 2000, the percentage of people below the poverty line[9] declined from 58.8 percent to 49.8 percent, indicating a modest but steady rate of decline of 1.8 percent per year (see Table 1).

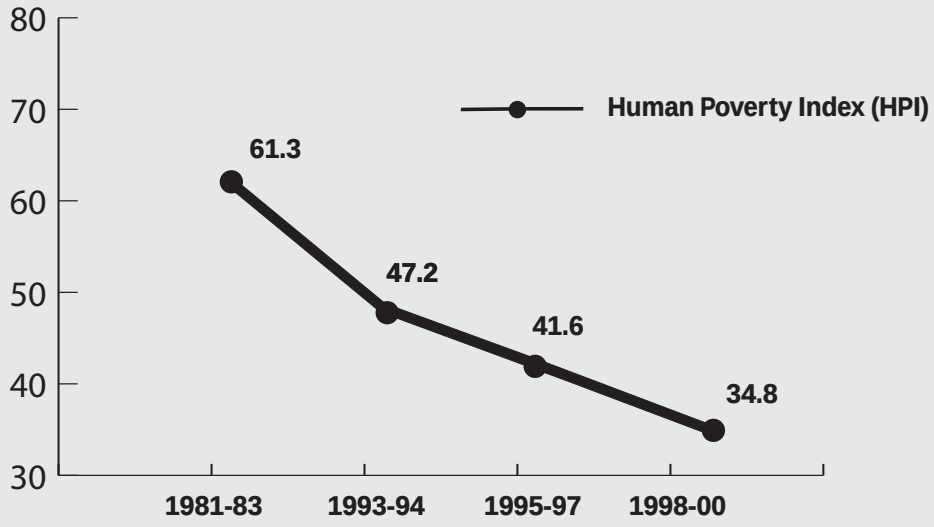
A steady fall in poverty measures, however, does not mean that there is room for complacency about the phenomenon of extreme poverty in Bangladesh. In absolute terms, poverty incidence continues to be high. Next to China and India, Bangladesh has the highest number of poor in the world. While having one of the highest rates of growth in the HDI, Bangladesh continues to be ranked 138 among 177 countries—only three countries in Asia rank below Bangladesh in HDI terms.

Moreover, in 2000 at least 45 percent of the poor lived in extreme poverty (defined as consuming less than 1,800 kcal per day). Within this broad category of extreme poverty, there are several chronic poverty groups, such as the

[8] Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), "Fighting Human Poverty, Bangladesh Human Development Report 2000," Bangladesh, 2000.

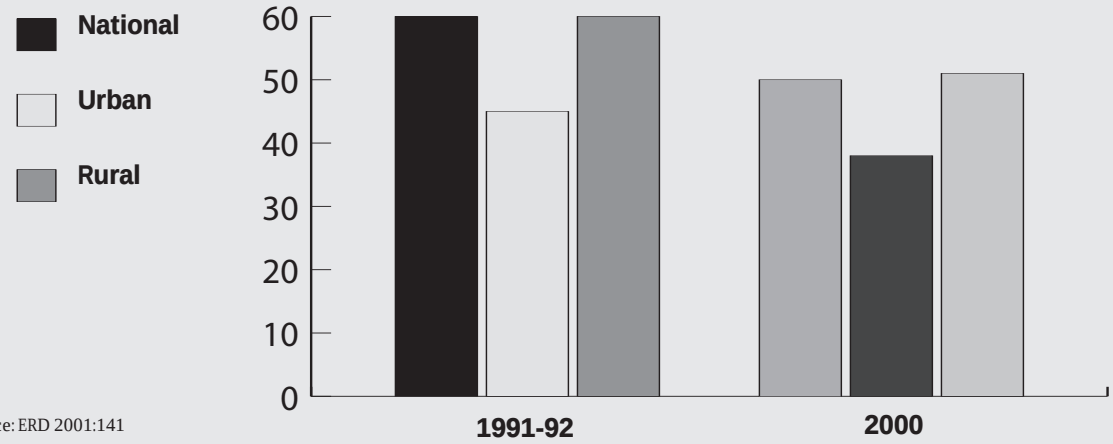
[9] Based on the Unit Record Data of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES).

FIGURE 1. TRENDS IN HUMAN POVERTY



Source: ERD 2003:9)

FIGURE 2. TRENDS IN POVERTY—RURAL AND URBAN



Source: ERD 2001:141

elderly poor, the homeless, the disabled, female or child-headed households, and socially or geographically marginalized ethnic groups, to name but a few. Progress in attacking extreme poverty in general and the poverty of various vulnerable groups in particular has been limited. Any future social policy agenda should give special priority to dealing with this problem.

Progress in reducing the poverty head count ratio has not been evenly divided between the urban and rural areas. In urban areas between 1991-1992 and 2000, poverty declined at the rate of 2.2 percent per year from 44.9 to 36.6 percent. In contrast, in rural areas, where most of the poor people reside, the rate of decline was only 1.6 percent per year, from 61.2 percent to 53 percent (see Figure 2).

The rural areas, however, showed a greater reduction in the depth and severity of poverty, as captured by the declining trends in the poverty gap and squared poverty gap indices. The national poverty gap declined from 17.2 in 1991-1992 to 12.9 in 2000, while for the corresponding period the poverty gap in the rural areas declined from 18.1 to 13.8 compared to a decline from 12.0 to 9.5 in urban areas. While this could be due to growth in the non-agricultural economy in the rural area, it could also be due partly to migration by the poorest to the cities.

In addition to the urban-rural divide, a severe gender disparity and regional variation in income poverty exist[10]. The incidence of extreme poverty is generally higher for female headed, female supported and female managed households. Female workers also earn considerably less than male workers (HDR 2004 estimates the ratio of female to male earned income at 0.56). Moreover, the persistent gender inequality in nutrition, mortality and morbidity also indicate lower average consumption by females.

It should also be noted that, despite the serious existing inequalities and cultural constraints in overcoming such inequalities, Bangladesh apparently performs relatively well compared to other developing countries. According to the latest Human Development Report (2004), while the HDI ranking of Bangladesh is 138, its GDI[11] ranking is 110 and the ranking based on the Gender Empowerment Index (an index that maps the actual opportunities available for women) is 76.

Regarding regional variations in poverty, in 2003 the ERD noted that the Dhaka and Khulna Divisions have a much lower incidence of poverty than the Rajshahi Division (see Table 2). There is also considerable district level variation in poverty. People residing in the CHTs and ethnic groups residing in other parts of the country are also more deprived in terms of economic and other social entitlements. Regional variations in poverty are also influenced by the incidence of natural hazards and tend to be higher in the more disaster-prone areas.

To sum up, poverty reduction during the 1990s was accompanied by a worsening of income distribution. Research conducted by BIDS shows that the Gini coefficient based on income as well as consumption has risen for both urban and rural areas (see Table 3). Clearly, the initial dynamism that fuelled economic growth appears to be accompanied by constraining factors[12] and there is a growing concern that such high inequalities may not only make it difficult to sustain the past rate of achievements, but also the gains may even be reversed if specific attention is not paid to addressing rising inequality.[13]

Health

Life expectancy at birth in Bangladesh has improved dramatically since the 1970s, while the gender gap in life expectancy has been reversed. In 1972, the average life expectancy was 45.2 years (46 years for males, 44 years for females).[14] In 2002, the average life expectancy was 61.1 years (60.7 years for males, 61.5 years for females).[15] During the same period, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) also declined from 250 to 83 per 1,000 births.[16] If the present progress continues, Bangladesh and Maldives will be the only countries in

TABLE 2. REGIONAL TRENDS IN POVERTY

	Poverty headcount rate (%)			Annual growth in mean per-capita expenditures
	1991-92	2000	Change	(%)
All divisions	**58.8**	**49.8**	**-9.0**	**2.4**
Chittagong	46.6	47.7	1.1	1.5
Dhaka	59.3	44.8	-14.5	3.2
Khulna*	59.6	47.0	-12.6	2.1
Rajshahi	71.9	61.0	-10.9	2.4

*Including Barisal division

Source: BBS and World Bank staff estimates (from The Bangladesh MDGR Progress Report 2004)

[10] Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, "A National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction," Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2002.

[11] GDI is similar to HDI, but it penalizes for gender inequality.

[12] UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty, "Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh," September 2003.

[13] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004.

[14] World Development Indicators.

[15] Human Development Report, 2004.

[16] Latest estimate provided by the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2000. Infant Mortality Rate in Bangladesh has declined from 153 per thousand lives during the mid 1970s to 62 per thousand lives in the year 2000.

South Asia to achieve their MDGs of reducing the infant mortality rate and U5MR by two thirds by 2015.

The rural-urban gap in infant and child mortality has also declined between the DHS 1994 and DHS 2000. However, significant gender disparity is observed within these trends. In the age one to four years group, female mortality is about one third higher than male mortality and the difference remained nearly unchanged between DHS 1994 and DHS 2000. There also exist considerable socioeconomic differences in mortality. Infant mortality is approximately 70 percent higher for the poorest quintile than for the richest group. The mortality gap for those less than five years of age is even higher.

The provision of quality reproductive health services continues to remain a major weakness in the healthcare system in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Maternal Mortality Survey indicates a very high mortality rate of 320 deaths per 100,000 live births in the period 1998 to 2001. In particular, the urban poor have very little access to reproductive health services. The socioeconomic differential is also very wide—69 percent of households belonging to the lowest wealth quintile do not access any anti-natal care compared with 22 percent in the richest quintile.[17]

The rate of morbidity in Bangladesh is as high as 188 per 1,000 people according to the DHS 2000—that is, nearly one fifth of the population is suffering from recent sickness. The poor are more prone to illness and disease than the non-poor, irrespective of gender or other dimensions of social classification. Moreover, the diseases of the poor represent a much wider band of vulnerability than are covered by the government's Essential Services Package. Although morbidity figures for some traditionally widespread diseases—such as diarrhoea, malaria, tuberculosis, polio, and diphtheria—have improved, there is also the menacing emergence of major public health problems, such as dengue fever, arsenicosis and HIV/AIDS. There is also considerable sex differential in morbidity. The prevalence rate is approximately 11 percent higher for females than males.[18]

Bangladesh now provides safe water to 97 percent of the population.[19] However, the campaign to dig tube wells to present an alternative to contaminated surface water is facing new challenges from unsafe levels of arsenic found in the ground water. An estimated 35 to 75 million people are expected to be affected.

Nutrition

The nutritional status of the country has started to improve since the mid 1980s. The rate of stunting for children in the age group of six to 71 months fell from 68.7 to 49 percent between 1985-1986 to 1999-2000 according to DHS data. During a similar period, the proportion of underweight children has also decreased from 72 to 51 percent. Despite these improvements, the overall level of child malnutrition

TABLE 3. GROWING INEQUALITIES IN INCOME AND COMSUMPTION

Gini coefficient based on consumption

	1991-92	2000
Rural	0.28	0.31
Urban	0.36	0.41

Gini coefficient based on income

	1991-92	2000
Rural	0.27	0.36
Urban	0.33	0.44

Source: BIDS personal communications

[17] Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh, "A National Strategy for Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction," Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2002

[18] Latest estimate provided by the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2000.

[19] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004, p. 4015.

in Bangladesh is still one of the highest in the world.

There is also widespread socioeconomic inequality in malnutrition. The poor are 2.15 times as likely to suffer from stunting and underweight. The female disadvantage in malnutrition is not only persistent but also has increased over time. The gender gap for the severely stunted increased from 10 percent in DHS 1997 to 16 percent in DHS 2000. The gender inequality is found to be sharper in the case of severe malnutrition as compared to moderate malnutrition. Child malnutrition is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. According to DHS 2000, 47 percent of rural children were stunted and 49 percent were underweight. The comparable figure for urban areas was 35 and 40 percent respectively.

The rate of maternal malnutrition is also very high in Bangladesh, although according to the DHS estimates, the proportion of malnourished mothers decreased from 52 percent in 1996-1997 to 45 percent in 1999-2000. The rural-urban gap in maternal malnutrition has increased during the same period from 50 to 63 percent.

Education

Literacy rates in Bangladesh continue to be low—adult literacy in 2002 was only 41.1 percent, and the female literacy rate of 31.4 percent was much lower than that of men (50.3 percent).[20] During the 1990s, Bangladesh made notable progress in expanding basic and elementary education and overall adult literacy improved from a level of 34.2 percent in 1990. Gross enrolment in primary schools increased from 59 percent in 1982 to 96 percent in 1999 according to Department of Primary Education estimates. Incentives for withdrawing children from the labour market and investing in education have been available through an array of activities—the Food for Education programme directly provided incentives and the expansion of microcredit, which primarily targeted women, expanded their opportunities and strengthened their willingness to withdraw their children from the labour market and send them to school.[21] Women who had taken loans were also more likely to send their daughters, as well as their sons, to school.

Thus both DHS and Household Income and Expenditure Survey data point out a clear female edge over males at primary and junior secondary enrolment levels. However, from the higher secondary level and upwards, the trend is reversed and females are at significant disadvantage. At the primary level, there are no significant rural-urban disparities in enrolment, but at the secondary level and above, these disparities exist in favour of the urban areas.

The enrolment gap at the primary level between rich and poor has fallen considerably and the gender gap no longer exists. But the rich-poor gap at enrolment widens rapidly from the junior secondary level and upward. There is also the problem of a large number of dropouts from the system, especially among the extreme poor.

The rapid pace of quantitative expansion has not been accompanied by a concomitant increase in the quality of education. An assessment conducted by ADR research observed that absenteeism and neglect of duty by primary school teachers is a common occurrence and that the high dropout ratio among the extreme poor points towards an apparent lack of incentive to learn. There has also been a rapid expansion of generalist higher education, but this may have been of very little social benefit, given the extremely inadequate teaching and other facilities and the consequent low quality of the output. Public funding of such education benefits mainly a narrow section of the population, namely the urban middle class, and is, therefore, extremely inegalitarian. The content of education at all levels has very little emphasis on raising awareness about different health or environmental issues and is often unresponsive to evolving market opportunities in this age of globalization.

The above discussion illustrates that growth in Bangladesh during the past decade is accompanied by rising inequalities in many (not all) arenas of human development. In the context of these inequalities, sustaining the gains in human development requires improving the strategies of partnerships to maintain and sustain the rate of gains. It would be useful to pay close attention to the country's record of investment in human development and its effectiveness.

Investment in Human Development

Sustained economic growth during the past decade (4.4 percent in the first half of the 1990s and 5.2 percent in the second half) was complemented by policies of substantial budgetary allocations for health and education (although within a small total resource base), as shown in Table 4.

However, the key to effectively translating growth into human development goals lies in institutional innovations such as microcredit and partnerships with civil society and the private sector. This has helped to develop a human capital base from very poor initial conditions.

[20] Human Development Report, 2004.

[21] Kabeer N., "Making Rights Work for the Poor: Nijera Kori and the Construction of 'Collective Capabilities' in Rural Bangladesh," Working paper no. 200, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK, 2003.

TABLE 4. TRENDS IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE

Public expenditure (% of GDP)	1990	1999-2001
Education	1.5	2.3
Health	0.7	1.5 (2001)
Military	1.0	1.1 (2002)

Source: Human Development Report 2004.

TABLE 5. PER CAPITA SPENDING ON HEALTH AND EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA (USD)

Country	1997	2000
Bangladesh	11	12
India	15	19
Pakistan	15	12
Sri Lanka	32	35

Source: World Bank 2003.

The progress in social-sector indicators in Bangladesh took place not only in absolute terms but also in relative terms compared to other developing countries. Significant gains compared to other countries have been made particularly in the areas of infant mortality rate, primary enrolment ratio, improved water access, access to sanitation, immunization rates and life expectancy. A recent study compares the trend improvements during the past 25 years in nine developing countries with a similar per capita income ($PPP) in 1975.[22] The countries selected were Benin, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, Republic of Congo and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh's relative rank in terms of per capita income remains the same from 1975 to 2000. However, every social indicator listed above its rank improved in relation to the others including those that had higher incomes. For instance, for immunization rates, Bangladesh moved from the lowest rank in 1975 to the second best performer in 2000. As shown in Table 5, Bangladesh was able to achieve these gains in social indicators with less per capita social expenditure compared to its South Asian neighbours.

Part of the reason for this effectiveness lays in the establishment of innovative partnerships for implementing human development policies. The conventional approach of increasing public expenditure in the social sectors has been complemented by the participation of NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in the process of social inclusion and empowerment. Compared to its South Asian neighbours, Bangladesh has included NGOs either by design or by default in cases where social entrepreneurs such as microcredit institutions provide services in areas where the state does not have the means or the capacity.

The role of NGOs and CBOs

The origins of the phenomenal growth of NGOs in Bangladesh can be traced to the early years after independence. At that time, a number of NGOs emerged to assist the government in its efforts to rehabilitate the victims of the war of independence and of natural disasters. As the state remained weak but provided an enabling environment, many NGOs found their niche in the business of social development, particularly at the local level, and NGOs and CBOs emerged as alternative mechanisms to deliver social services and micro credit to the poor.

In particular, public financing and partnerships with local communities and NGOs have contributed to the expansion and delivery of primary and secondary education (which has also contributed to reducing the gender disadvantage). NGOs under contract to the government have

[22] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004.

been particularly effective in family planning and immunization services. In addition, NGOs were effective in delivering safe water—until arsenic emerged as a serious health hazard. In other sectors, such as livestock and fisheries, women and youth development, and environment and disaster management, the government has also entered into successful partnerships with NGOs.

The practice of using social capital as collateral for microcredit lending has proven to be an effective response to the problem of perverse risks and information asymmetry affecting the poor. The formation of the Palli Karma Shahyak Foundation in 1990, which acts as a wholesaler to the microfinance institutions (MFIs), offered a significant increase in the space available for NGO activities and encouraged many new MFIs to surface in smaller geographical territories. As of 2004, the Grameen Bank and other MFIs, including NGOs, served more than 14 million families across the country.

In view of the success of many of these entities, various multilaterals and other donors have opted to use them for channelling foreign assistance to Bangladesh, a trend that began in the 1980s but accelerated in the 1990s (see Table 6). In 2002-2003, nearly 18 percent of ODA was disbursed through 1,751 NGOs registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB).[23] Except for the major players, such as BRAC, ASA and Proshika, most of the local NGOs registered with the NGOAB remain largely dependent on aid for their programmes and institutional survival.

NGO activity in service delivery covers a wide variety of areas including community empowerment, nonformal education, microcredit, health, family planning, nutrition, legal aid, relief, rehabilitation, and environment. Active community participation in these types of service delivery has also made it easier to use them to promote social change.

However, the role of NGOs is not restricted to service delivery and community empowerment. There is a long history of NGOs serving as watchdogs to ensure the state's accountability and acting as think-tanks to provide in-depth knowledge on development issues.

However, the issue of NGO accountability has been a topic of debate for sometime. While the government is answerable to its constituents and private companies to their shareholders, NGOs are, for the most part, accountable mainly to the donors who are responsible for the financial sustainability of the NGOs. There is also an apprehension that NGO expansion at the local level may bypass the state and inhibit the development of local government institutions in providing basic public services.

In recent years, tensions have risen between the government and some NGOs over the perceived partisan role of prominent NGOs during the election campaign of 2002. This has led the government to attempt to pass the NGO bill that purportedly aims to hold NGOs accountable. This bill would have also restricted the independence of NGOs and their activity.

Other factors contributing to development effectiveness in Bangladesh

Progress from very low initial levels of human development often involves low-cost solutions such as oral rehydration technology for diarrhoea treatment (leading to a decrease in child mortality) or creating awareness regarding immunization and contraception.[24] This has been aided by the density of the population, the accessibility of even distant villages, and the political commitment to make a difference.

Yet, as the potential of low-cost solutions is fully exploited, the level of public expenditure and the quality of services becomes more critical. For example, further

TABLE 6. GROWTH OF THE NGO SECTOR

Year	Total number of NGOs	Foreign NGOs	National NGOs	Amount of Allocation (Tk, millions)
1991	494	99	395	4,264
1995	919	129	790	8,380
2000	1,518	164	1,354	9,847
2003	1,751	176	1,575	11,340

Source: NGO Affairs Bureau.

[23] Sobhan Rehman."Political Economy of Aid," Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2004.

[24] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004.

lowering the maternal mortality rate would now require more costly health services, and translating increased school enrolment into improved educational standards would require significant improvements in the education system itself, which would need significantly higher levels of spending. In short, a policy of "more of the same" will not work.

Sustaining macro-economic momentum in the changing development context and deteriorating environment

The Bangladesh economy showed modest accelerated growth in the 1990s compared to previous decades. In the 1980s, per capita GDP grew slowly at the rate of about 1.6 percent per annum. The growth rate accelerated to 2.4 percent in the first half of the 1990s, and then to 3.6 percent in the second half of the decade—a noticeable growth by South Asian standards. However, as pointed out in the previous section, this modest growth was accompanied by a pronounced increase in income inequality. The acceleration in the growth of per capita income was possible because of a slowdown in population growth[25] and a sustained increase in the rate of GDP growth[26] (see Table 7).

Thanks to population control policies, fertility rates fell from 6.3 in 1975 to 3.3 in the mid 1990s. Consequently, population growth was reduced from 2.2 percent in the 1980s to 1.6 percent in the latter half of the 1990s.[27] In addition, real growth became possible as the Consumer Price Index was brought under control at the modest average increase of 5 percent per year.[28]

Consequently, Bangladesh has moved away from being an aid dependent economy to becoming a trade dependent economy. The ODA to GDP ratio declined from 7 percent in the 1990 to 1.9 percent in 2002. Conversely, exports as a percentage of GDP increased from 8.6 percent in the first half of the 1990s to 16.9 percent in 2001-2002 (see Table 8). In other words, current export earnings are ten times the ODA received.

Sources of acceleration in GDP growth in the 1990s

Studies show that two thirds to three quarters of the growth during the last decade derives from the non-tradable sector.[29] In the context of Bangladesh, this includes the service sector, construction activities and even small-scale industries (the quality of the products of such industries is too low for them to be traded in the international markets). The factors that contributed to the expansion in aggregate demand that sustained this growth are discussed below.

The increase in exports in the last decade (from USD 3.3 billion in 1991-1992 to USD 10.4 billion in 2002-2003) also contributed to this growth performance.[30] In the 1990s, the outward-looking macro-economic policy pursued by Bangladesh played a part in stimulating export growth and contributed from one quarter to one third of the incremental growth in the last decade.[31] In addition, growth in exports also created a demand boost in the non-tradable

TABLE 7. GROWTH OF BANGLADESH ECONOMY: 1980-1981 TO 1999-2000 (ANNUAL AVERAGE GROWTH RATES)

Sector	5-year average			10-year average		
	1980-81 to 1984-85	1985-86 to 1988-89	1990-91 to 1994-95	1995-96 to 1999-2000	1980-81 to 1999-2000	1990-91 to 1999-2000
GDP	3.72	3.74	4.40	5.21	3.73	4.81
Population	2.13	2.19	1.98	1.60	2.16	1.79
Per capita GDP	1.59	1.55	2.41	3.61	1.57	3.01

Source: Computed from BBS (2000, Annex Table 8) and BBS (2001a, Annex Table 8)

[25] Thanks to population control policies, the fertility rates fell from 6.3 in 1975 to 3.3 in the mid 1990s. Consequently, population growth reduced from 2.2 percent in the 1980s to 1.6 percent towards the latter half of the 1990s (see UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty, "Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh," September 2003).

[26] Growth rate in income rose from an average of approximately 3.7 percent in the 1980s to 4.4 percent in the first half of the 1990s and 5.2 percent in the second half of the decade.

[27] UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty, "Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh," September 2003.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Sobhan Rehman "Political Economy of Aid," Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2004.

[31] UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on Macroeconomics of Poverty, "Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh," September 2003.

TABLE 8. MACRO-ECONOMIC BALANCES, 1990-2002 (AS PERCENTAGE OF GDP)

	1990-1991 to 1994-1995	1995-1996 to 1999-2000	2001-2002
Exports of goods and services	8.6	12.7	16.9
Trade deficit	5.4	6.2	5.9
Current account deficit	2.1	1.9	-0.4
Budget deficit	4.8	4.4	4.7
Worker's remittances	2.9	3.6	5.8
Debt service ratio	15.9 (1990-91)		8.9 (2002-03)
ODA	7 (1990)		1.9 (2002)

Source: *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, 2004, p. 4024.

Box 1. How sustainable is the growth momentum?

Studies show that the same factors that contributed to the growth momentum (tradable sector, remittances, wages in the nontradable sector) also contribute to the acceleration of inequalities (e.g. UNDP 2003).

setor.[32] However, export earnings come mainly from the export of a single commodity—RMGs, including knitwear. The share of RMG exports grew rapidly from approximately 4 percent in 1983-1984 to nearly 76 percent of total export earnings during the 1990s. The MFA assured guaranteed access to the EU and North American markets and this was fully capitalized by the export sector. Indeed, the United States and the European Union currently account for 76 percent of all exports.[33] However, with the termination of the MFA in December 2004, the future of RMG production will depend on its competitiveness at the international level.

Another factor that contributed to the boost in demand in the non-tradable sector is the increase in remittances from Bangladeshi workers living abroad. As noted in Table 8, remittances grew from an average of 2.9 percent of GDP in the first half of the 1990s to 5.8 percent in 2002. In absolute numbers, the remittances in 2003-2004 were USD 3.4 billion (74 percent of remittances originate in West Asia).[34]

The UNDP study takes a close look at the rural non-farm sector in recognition of the fact that most of the poor live in the rural areas[35] and notes that, while remittances and the export-oriented economy have helped to increase the growth rate, they have also contributed to the rising inequalities of the 1990s.

For example, remittances from migrant workers outside the country, while contributing towards poverty reduction, have also accounted for 19 percent of overall rural income inequality. Similarly, the growth in non-tradable non-farm enterprises has resulted in an increase in salaried wage employment, which in turn has contributed to the faster rate of poverty reduction. Conversely, the poor are often unable to access fully the opportunities opened up by the expansion of the non-farm sector. Various impediments, such as a lack of education, physical assets or a supporting social network, prevent them from entering the non-formal sector either as salaried employees or as self-employed in more profitable relatively large enterprises. Consequently, to prevent this growth in inequality, nurturing the growth of the non-tradable sector must be accompanied by capacity building for the poor.

[32] Many factors contributed to the demand boost required for the growth of non-tradable sector. Throughout the 1990s, the government maintained a fiscal policy that, although not expansionary in nature, averted any potential contraction in demand and thus provided a conducive environment for demand driven growth.

[33] Sobhan Rehman, "Political Economy of Aid," Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh, September 2004.

[34] Ibid.

[35] According to the 2004 HDR, 74.1percent of the population lived in rural areas as of 2002.

Sustaining the macro-economic momentum (persistent pressure on the environment)

Economic growth in Bangladesh has come at the cost of considerable stress on the environment and ecology. This is particularly important as approximately 80 percent of the Bangladesh population depends directly or indirectly on natural resource management in the primary sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries) which can be categorized as environmental resources. Common property resources, such as open water and marine fisheries, wetland-based flora and fauna, and government land and forests, are also a significant source of livelihood for the poor.

As the population grows, marginal lands are being further exploited and forestlands are being turned into farm areas. While Bangladesh has managed steadily to increase food production, intensive farming has taken its toll in terms of soil erosion and loss of soil fertility. However, recent evidence indicates that the growth rate of food crop production and rice yields are stagnating, partly as a result of environmental degradation arising from conflicting patterns of land use, soil degradation and the toxic impact of agrochemicals. Freshwater wetlands are threatened by agricultural encroachment, and marine resources are being degraded by inappropriate fishing methods.

All forests in Bangladesh are under threat of destruction owing to demographic pressures, scarcity of agricultural land, expansion of rural and urban settlements, and illegal logging. The area of tree cover has been reduced by more than 50 percent during the last 20 years to a total of only 7 percent of legally declared forestland, while closed-cover forest does not exceed 3 to 4 percent. Approximately 55 percent of Bangladesh's energy consumption is based on traditional biomass resources, such as fuel wood, crop residue and animal waste. This high demand for biomass has both environmental and health costs. It fosters soil degradation, lowers agricultural yields, degrades forests (which in turn contributes to the loss of biodiversity), and leads to high levels of indoor air pollution, with a health impact that has yet to be measured on a national scale.

Urban environmental quality degradation, resulting from inadequate urban water supply and sanitation, inefficient solid waste disposal systems, and worsening transport related air pollution, are problems faced by all urban cities. The capital city Dhaka is one of the most polluted cities in the world with 1,773 micrograms per litre suspended particulate matter (SPM), sulphur dioxide being five times higher than the national standard. In 2000, the level of lead content in the blood of street children was found to be in the range of 90-200 µg/dlitre, which is far above the WHO recommended maximum of 25µg/dlitre.

In short, the over exploitation of natural resources—such as land, forests, water (both marine and inland), surface and ground water; pollution from urban sources; and the impact of global warming—are considered as to be a major potential threat to economic growth. Sustainable development policies would require striking a realistic balance between the existing livelihood requirements of the people and sound environmental resource management.

Sustaining macro-economic momentum in the face of natural disasters and climate change

Natural disasters undermine progress in poverty alleviation and other development efforts, partly by the destruction they cause and partly by the need to divert scarce resources to relief and rehabilitation. Regional variations in poverty levels are also influenced by the incidence of natural hazards and are likely to be higher in disaster prone areas.

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries of the world. Because of its geographical location and for other environmental reasons, the country is frequently exposed to cyclones, floods, riverbank erosion, tornadoes, droughts and earthquakes. Such disasters have direct effects, such as the loss of life and property, and indirect effects, such as the loss of employment and income and reduced access to products and services. The largest recorded flooding in Bangladesh's history occurred in 1998 when nearly 70 percent of the country was under water for several months. This affected more than 30 million people and caused 918 fatalities. Economic losses were estimated to be USD 3.3 billion, equivalent to 8 percent of GDP. However, the critical issue is not that Bangladesh suffers from more disasters than other countries. It is that its communities are more vulnerable to their impact and the consequences are, therefore, more severe.

Bangladesh is also potentially one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and sea level rise. With a low-lying exposed coastline, high population density, and an economy highly dependent on primary natural production, such as agriculture and fisheries, the lives and livelihoods of people are threatened by sudden climatic shocks that can have devastating effects on the poor. For example, the impact of the El Nino phenomenon depleted the fish population off the coast, thereby destroying the livelihoods of the local fishing communities.

The vulnerability of women to disaster situations is much greater owing to their subordinate position in the family due to patriarchy and traditionally embedded cultural values. Yet, they are also generally excluded from efforts to manage disaster relief and manage risks. For example, the community-based Cyclone Preparedness Programme

observed that women were not involved in the level disaster preparedness committees that are responsible for maintaining cyclone shelters and transmitting warnings, even though they made up the highest proportion of cyclone victims. In Cox's Bazar in the eastern part of the country, where women are now fully involved in disaster preparedness and support activities (education, reproductive health, self-help groups, and small and medium enterprises), there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of women killed or affected.[36]

The actions of neighbouring countries can have an adverse impact on Bangladesh as, for example, when the opening of a spillway in India leads to downstream flooding in Bangladesh. Greater international cooperation by India, Nepal, Bhutan and China in data and information sharing would strengthen early warning systems and disaster management.

Deteriorating governance, a dysfunctional parliament and institutionalized political violence

Currently, there is growing concern about how far the economic growth momentum can withstand the perceived weakening of economic and political governance institutions. In particular, there are signs that, unless there are urgent institutional reforms, sustaining the rate of achievements in human development is not only unlikely to occur but also past gains may also be eroded.

This deterioration of governance has continued even after democracy was restored in 1991. In 2001, an opinion survey conducted by the World Bank[37] showed that breakdown in law enforcement (particularly, corruption in the police and delays in the courts) was the top concern of ordinary citizens and entrepreneurs alike. There was also a widespread feeling that poor people had greater difficulties than the rich in accessing resources and opportunities. The prevalence of widespread "informal taxation" for receiving loans from financial institutions, obtaining licenses to do business, and for public provisioning of education and healthcare were some of the other concerns expressed in the survey. The deterioration of the governance system can be observed in various aspects of the state machinery.

Public administration system: The need for accountability and transparency

The bureaucracy has become a source of considerable "leakage"[38] and its capacity to provide social welfare is weak and provisioning is dominated by pervasive patron-client relations. Decision making and implementation lack transparency. Efforts to make the public administration accountable to the legislature and the people are lacking, or when they exist they are ineffective (the Credit Risk Guide rates the quality of bureaucracy in Bangladesh as the lowest possible, 1 on a scale of 0 to 6). Many factors contribute to the perpetuation of these weaknesses in the public administrative system, including an inadequate incentive structure. This has, in turn, adversely affected the quality of the government's service delivery to the people, particularly to the poor.

Weak local governance institutions

Local governance has not been responsive to local needs. For instance, the Annual Development Plan (ADP) block grants (see Box 2) to local government institutions are channelled through a slow and allegedly leakage-prone bureaucratic structure. In addition, the central government determines specifically in which sectors the block grants should be used. This pre-determined sectoral allocation seriously limits the scope of local-level planning as well as the flexibility of local bodies to apply the financial resources to satisfy the immediate needs of the community. Responsive and effective local governance is seen as the best way to exercise transparency and accountability controls over the system of service delivery.

Dysfunctional parliamentary system and regulatory framework

The two-party system in Bangladesh has permitted three highly competitive elections in 1991, 1996 and 2001, which by South Asian standards have been relatively free and fair. The first government was elected in 1991 against the expectations of the political forecasters, and in both subsequent elections, the incumbent lost. The electoral system in place has ensured smooth regime changes in 1996 and 2001.

However, this bipolar system has contributed to a confrontational style in national politics that is rendering the parliamentary system dysfunctional. Indiscriminate use of walkouts and boycotts has meant that the incumbent governments were not subject to due scrutiny. During the present parliament (8th Parliament) the major opposition party, Awami League, has so far participated in only 76 workdays out of a total of 226. Between the two parties,

[36] The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "World Disaster Report: Focus on Reducing Risk," March 2002.

[37] World Bank, "Bangladesh, Improving Governance for Reducing Poverty," 2001. The survey involved 3,000 households and 1,500 business enterprises.

[38] Transparency International has rated Bangladesh with the highest Corruption Perception Index in the world for four years in a row. For more information, visit the URL http://www.transparency.org/surveys/index.html#cpi.

Box 2. Decentralization in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is divided into six divisions and four metropolitan areas. Each division is further subdivided into zilas (districts), city corporations and municipalities. There are a total of 64 zilas with an average population of 1.9 million and an average size of 2,150 square kilometre.

These zilas are further subdivided into Upazilas—460 in total (average population about 250,000 and average size 300 square kilometres). The Upazilas are divided into Union Parishads (UP) (about 4,500 in total with average population abut 27,000 and average size about 30 square kilometres). Each UP represents a number of villages (usually around 20) and is organized around nine wards as well as three blocks. There are altogether 68,000 villages, with average populations of 1,500-1,750 occupying average land areas of two square kilometres.

There are two types of local governance institutions in Bangladesh; urban and rural. At the urban level, there are two types of local governments: Paurasabha (Municipality) and City Corporation. At the rural level, there are three: UP, Upazila Parishad and Zila Parishad. There are three elected local government bodies: UP, Paurasabha and City Corporation— zilas and Upazilas do not have elected representatives. Each ward elects one member to the UP. One seat from each block is reserved for women. In addition, a chairperson for the UP is elected by the entire UP separately. Thus, each UP has a total of 13 elected members, of which at least three will be women.

UPs can raise revenues but have not been very effective in this regard (mobilization is around 30 percent). To carry out local development needs, they are also allocated ADP block funds from the ministry of local government, which are currently channelled through the zilas and Upazilas.

during 1991 to 2002 there were 827 *hartals*.[39] The estimated figure for the average cost of *hartals* to the economy during the 1990s is 3 to 4 percent of GDP. Thus, the prevailing confrontational politics is not only hindering democratic consolidation, but also carries the risk of causing serious economic disruption and adversely affecting the substantial gains in the social sector.

Judiciary

The higher-level courts are considered relatively independent and impartial by many NGOs and CSOs. However, law enforcement is generally seen as serving the interests of the status quo. Political violence has become increasingly prevalent and has serious consequences for human security. Both parties seem to rely on violence to ensure electoral victory and to retain political authority in their constituencies.[40] Partisan law enforcement in favour of the ruling party serves as the key element that institutionalizes this practice.[41]

The World Bank Survey[42] is in agreement with the Human Security Report published by the UNDP, which observes that the poor, women and other marginalized people have low expectations of law enforcement. For example, the report identifies how the bail system is anti-poor, how the practice of "safe custody" of women victims or witnesses violates their rights, and how the poor prefer the intervention of community leaders to resolve disputes and go to the police only as a last resort.

Other partners share many of these concerns as well. Three priority governance issues that were raised in the Bangladesh Development Forum[43] in May 2003 include the following:

- Anti-corruption efforts
- Criminal justice sector reform, including institutional strengthening of the police and separation of the Judiciary and the Executive
- Local governance and decentralization

The government cannot strengthen governance by

[39] *Hartal* refers to temporary suspension of work in business premises, offices and educational institutions and movement of vehicular traffic nationally, regionally or locally as a mark of protest by a political party or other demand groups. News Network, a civil society group has carried out an opinion poll that shows that 88 percent of the respondents noted that *hartals* contribute to deteriorating law and order in the country and severely affect the socioeconomic life of people.

[40] *Economic and Political Weekly*, September 4-10, Vol XXXIX No. 36, Sameeksha Trust Publication, India, 2004.

[41] Ibid.

[42] World Bank, "Bangladesh, Improving Governance for Reducing Poverty," 2001.

[43] This is a collective of donors and the government.

itself. Civil society already plays an increasingly active role in strengthening governance in Bangladesh through education; monitoring; policy advocacy; training of candidates, elected members, and government officials at the national and local level; and facilitation of public-private dialogue on national development issues.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND UNDP SUPPORT

The government's development priorities during the period covered by the ADR can be determined from the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and the Interim PRSP (2002), which has replaced the five-year plan as the major development strategy document. The draft of the full-scale PRSP document is to be discussed among CSOs and to be finalized early in 2005. Clearly, UNDP's CCF-I and CCF-II were prepared before the Fifth Five-Year Plan and the Interim PRSP. Nevertheless, as the following discussion shows, the CCFs and UNDP programming reflect national priorities for sustainable development.

Government development priorities: I-PRSP

The I-PRSP was prepared by local development experts upon request from the government. It was prepared without external assistance and there were no significant public debates around it. The report was presented to parliament in June 2004. It appears to have been scrutinized by the donors.

The document recognizes the widespread concern about the sustainability of Bangladesh's recent achievements and addresses many of the related concerns, including the lack of effective local government; the need to improve the quality of education, health and social services; deteriorating law and order amidst the growth of organized crime and economic violence; and the need to strengthen the democratization of the political process.

The I-PRSP aims to provide a national strategy for economic growth towards poverty reduction and social development, which includes the inter-related issues of human development, gender equality, social deprivation and environmental sustainability. The strategy recognizes the links between the environment and poverty and the factors influencing poverty, such as inadequate access to physical asset bases, preponderance of risks, uncertainties and vulnerabilities, and spatial problems affecting livelihoods and crisis coping capacities—particularly for women and children who bear a disproportionate share of human poverty and environmental degradation.

The strategy outlined in the I-PRSP is premised on a rights-based framework that has five broad "avenues" for achieving poverty reduction:

1. Pro-poor economic growth
2. Human development
3. Women's advancement and closing of gender gaps
4. Social protection against all shocks including disaster and environmental degradation
5. Participatory governance

This strategy gives special emphasis to building local and national capacities for self-reliance. Incorporating people's knowledge, perceptions and attitudes in planning and implementation are taken as vital for sustainable development. The I-PRSP also recognizes the variable impact of the environment across the ecological zones of the country and across different social groups. The strategy gives emphasis to policies and institutional actions designed to reach out to the poorest, to remote rural areas that are vulnerable to adverse ecological processes (including chars and river-erosion affected areas), and to those with high concentrations of socially disadvantaged and marginal ethnic groups. Special attention is to be given to the development problems of the hill people of CHT and tribal populations residing in other parts of the country.

UNDP support

The CCF-I was drafted in the mid 1990s and predates the Fifth Five-Year Plan. Nevertheless, there are continuities in the development challenges faced by the country and, in broad terms, UNDP's CCF-I strategies reflected the stated national priorities. The CCF-I treated poverty alleviation as the paramount objective. There were four other supportive and interrelated objectives that reflected the government's national priorities and UNDP's mandate:

1. Improved environmental management
2. Non-formal employment generation
3. Advancement of women
4. Improved public management for good governance

The Fifth Five-Year Plan and the analyses in the preceding section echo the validity of these priorities. In attaining these five objectives, UNDP planned to intervene at the community and sub-national level as well as at the national level. Support at the community and the sub-national level was expected to contribute towards decentralization, local democratic control, and accountability with respect to the development activities of governmental and non-governmental actors. This was, in turn, expected to suggest national-level action for policy and strategy reform. The main thrust of the CCF-I was to develop and implement a strategy that is anchored on social mobilization and empowerment of local communities with special focus on

human poverty alleviation. Various community empowerment programmes were lunched based on the experience of the South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme (SAPAP) of the mid 1990s. In addition, UNDP continued to help build up national capacities and institutions to develop a comprehensive national poverty alleviation strategy.

The CCF-II predates both the I-PRSP and the task force report on poverty alleviation that was prepared by a leading civil society think tank, the Centre for Policy Dialogue, before the last parliamentary election.[44] Nevertheless, CCF-II provides a good reflection of emerging national priorities.

UNDP identified five complementary focus areas for the CCF-II period:

1. Decentralized governance for poverty reduction
2. Enabling environment for sustainable human development
3. Environment and food security
4. Gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women
5. Complementary pro-poor interventions

UNDP's overall focus on poverty alleviation has remained unchanged, but there has been a policy shift in selecting the means to attain this objective. More emphasis has now been put on improving governance both at the national and sub-national levels. This is a reflection both of the lessons learned by UNDP during the implementation of the CCF-I and of the global shift in perspectives on development—namely the growing consensus among development experts and partners that strong and representative government machinery, in general, and a supportive local government, in particular, is a *sine qua non* for the realization of development goals such as those currently enshrined in the I-PRSP targets. A strong local government machinery is necessary both for policy formulation with a "bottom up" approach and implementation of those policies at the sub-national or community level with deeper connectivity with and accountability towards the poor and the marginalized. The CCF-II's stress on "decentralized governance for poverty reduction" should, therefore, be regarded as positive. More than half the resources channelled through UNDP initiatives are now directed towards strengthening democratic governance and improving human rights, transparency and accountability in Bangladesh.

The other significant development in Bangladesh is in the environment sector. During the last few years, both government and citizens have shown an increasing awareness of the linkage between environment and sustainable development. Sustainable environmental management has now emerged as a key factor in national economic planning and poverty reduction initiatives. This is reflected in the Fifth Five-Year Plan and the recent I-PRSP document. The Fifth Five-Year Plan also made participatory and community based environmental resource management one of the plan's objectives. To achieve this, the government increasingly creates partnerships with NGOs in environmental protection programmes such as tree plantation and social forestry, infrastructure maintenance and repair, and sanitation and urban slum improvements.

UNDP was active in the environmental sector in Bangladesh even before the creation of the Ministry of Environment in 1989, and throughout the years, it appears to have developed a close partnership with both the government and NGOs to address environmental issues. In the early 1990s, the UNDP Country Programme responded to national priority issues by supporting the Forestry Master Plan that led to the development of the 1994 National Forest Policy. This was followed by UNDP's collaboration with NGOs and the government that led to the NEMAP in 1997.

The UN system also supports a framework for the protection of Bangladesh's environment. As in the case of governance, this support is to be provided through specifically targeted interventions and mainstreaming environmental considerations in decision making in other thematic areas. The issue of environmental sustainability will be integrated in a number of UN system interventions in the area of rural development through, for example, the promotion of integrated crop management, sustainable forestry, and the environmentally sound development of the country's economy.

During the CCF-I and CCF-II periods, UNDP underwent a reprofiling exercise and streamlined its capacity to deliver support to Bangladesh. It has also tried to rationalize its programme by focusing more on priority areas. Consequently, the number of UNDP projects in Bangladesh has decreased from a scattered portfolio of 123 in 1992 to 32 in 2004.

Resource flows for development assistance and UNDP support

As mentioned earlier, Bangladesh is moving away from aid dependence. Today, Bangladesh receives more in overseas remittances than in foreign aid. Not only in terms of GDP (as show in Table 8) but also in absolute terms, international aid flows to Bangladesh have decreased from approximately USD 2 billion per year in 1991 to USD 1.24 billion in 2001-2002. In the early 1990s, aid financed almost 100 percent of the government's ADP budget, while in 2004 it makes up slightly less than half of ADP or approximately

[44] Sobhan Rehman, "Bangladesh Facing the Challenge of Globalization: A Review of Bangladesh's Development 2001," IRBD Team, CPD, 2001.

15 percent of total government expenditure.

UNDP's contribution to total ODA is only 1 percent. During the four-year period from 1997 to 2000, Bangladesh received USD 6.8 billion in ODA,[45] of which approximately USD 72 million (1 percent) came from the UNDP while the UN system (excluding the international finance institutions) contributed about USD 300 million (4.4 percent).[46] This small relative size adds an additional level of difficulty and complexity for UNDP, which is already operating in an environment where the government has access to much larger donor resources that require much less "effort" per unit of resource to administer.

Poverty alleviation in Bangladesh is the overall objective of all donors but approaches vary—from an emphasis on infrastructure development among the large donors to support from the smaller bilateral donors to the social sectors for social mobilization and human rights. Of the estimated USD 1.6 billion of aid disbursed in fiscal year 2002, food aid, commodity aid and project aid constituted 6 percent, 12 percent and 82 percent of the total respectively.[47] The top seven donors in 2000 and their areas of focus are noted in Table 9 and Figure 3.

Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway also have significant bilateral aid programmes in Bangladesh. In fiscal year 2002, the World Bank approved approximately USD 321 million in low-interest credits for four new projects. In October 2002, the Asian Development Bank announced that it plans to lend USD 1.18 billion to Bangladesh over 2003-2005 (that is, approximately USD 390 million per year).

While the strong macro fundamentals of Bangladesh continue to attract donors, the ground-level difficulties in service delivery, corruption, limited administrative capacity and lack of security pose serious constraints to donor initiatives. Increasingly, many donors are entering into partnerships with UNDP to take advantage of UNDP's links to the government and track record of delivery. Consequently, UNDP continues to mobilize resources with relative ease from among the donor community. For instance, non-core resource mobilization of UNDP jumped from USD 11 million in 2000 to USD 40 million in 2002.[48]

The programme emphasis of UNDP Bangladesh in terms of budget allocation reflects the priorities of CCF-II. Governance and poverty (which includes local gover-

TABLE 9. BANGLADESH—THE STRUCTURE OF ODA

Donor	Aid in 2000 (USD million)	Focus Areas
World Bank	275	Health, education, rural development and private-sector growth
Japan	202	Energy, agriculture, rural development, health and disaster
Asian Development Bank	198	Agriculture, education, health, urban management and infrastructure
United Kingdom	103	Enterprise development, fisheries, education, democracy and health
European Commission	68	Poverty reduction, food security, heath and education
United Nations	68	Education, health, food, decentralization, democracy and disaster management
United States	63	Health, agriculture, water resources, energy and democracy

[45] Approximately 18 percent of all aid is channeled to national NGOs. One NGO, BRAC, accounts for a large proportion of such donor assistance, followed by Proshika, ASA and a handful of other NGOs.

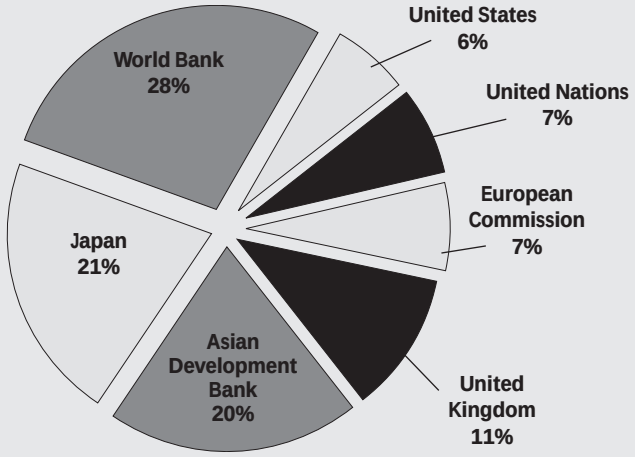
[46] UNDP Bangladesh, "Performance Audit Report: UNDP Bangladesh," Bangladesh, August 2002.

[47] Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh, "Memorandum for Bangladesh Development Forum 2002-2003," Bangladesh, March 2002.

[48] "Re-engineering UNDP Bangladesh: A Report on the Programme Re-profiling Exercise in UNDP Bangladesh," December 2002.

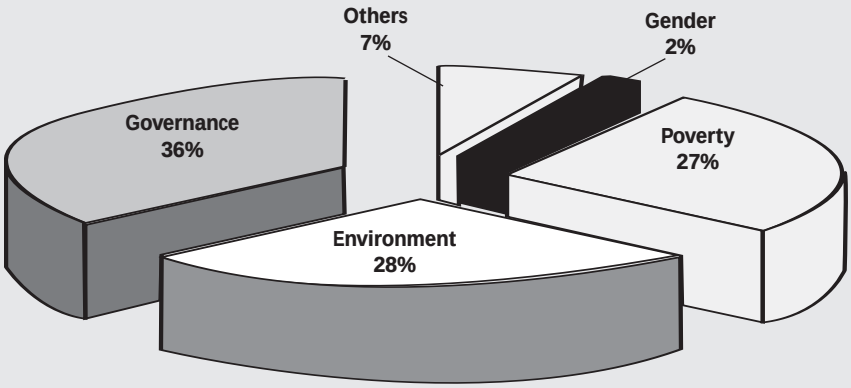
nance) account for 63 percent of the budget. The three major areas, governance, poverty and environment, together account for 91 percent of the budget (see Figure 4). The fundamental challenge facing UNDP in Bangladesh is how best to leverage its small size into significant macro impact on poverty reduction and development effectiveness in a challenging environment.

FIGURE 3. BANGLADESH—ODA BY DONER 2000



Source: UNDP Office Bangladesh Performance Audit Report, Issued: August 8, 2002.

FIGURE 4. UNDP BANGLADESH—PROGRAMME EMPHASIS BY BUDGET ALLOCATION 2003



Source: UNDP Project Database New York.

3 UNDP's Contribution to Development Results

This chapter attempts to identify UNDP's contribution to development results. From the outset, however, it should be clear that there are at least two methodological difficulties associated with this exercise.

First, there is the issue of how to evaluate the intended results. In the development of physical infrastructure, it is easy to assess whether a road has been constructed or a bridge has been built. But it is difficult to assess whether a community has been mobilized or women have been empowered. In other words, much deeper understanding of the results are necessary, and not all results lend themselves to an easy analyses.

The second difficulty lies in establishing credible links between UNDP's activities and the results achieved. In Bangladesh, there are often several actors, whose financial commitment often dwarfs that of UNDP, involved in activities with overlapping goals. This makes it difficult to assess or verify UNDP's real role and impact. Moreover, several disparate factors could contribute to the outcome. For instance, a desired change in policy could be due to changes within the government itself (such as a new minister or secretary) or to advocacy by civil society groups, or it could be a combination of both. Alternatively, the government's decision to scale up a particular UNDP pilot project could either be due to the demonstrated results of the project or to appease "reform-hawks" among key donors and have less to do with the merits of the project.

As the objective of the ADR is to draw strategic lessons, the initiatives studied in this chapter have been selected where the results can be evaluated and links between UNDP activities and results can be verified. Hence, this exercise does not attempt to perform a comprehensive analyses of all initiatives undertaken by UNDP Bangladesh but aims to select the most relevant.

In addition, owing to the time constraints, selection of key initiatives is restricted to those falling under the three key thematic areas identified in the previous section, which constitute 91 percent of UNDP expenditure—environment, poverty alleviation and governance.

ENVIRONMENT[49]

As noted earlier, approximately 40 percent of UNDP's core resources in Bangladesh have been allocated to the environment sector. Therefore, in order to assess the development effectiveness of these interventions, the ADR has closely examined two key outcomes of the national environmental programmes (increased awareness of environmental issues and incorporation into policies), UNDP's contributions to these outcomes, and the factors and conditions that facilitated these contributions.

Increased awareness of environmental issues in the population and among decision makers

Since the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development, awareness of environmental issues has been steadily increasing in Bangladesh. Following the conference, national and international NGOs and civil society organizations became active in environmental campaigns and began to raise awareness among citizens and decision makers alike. At the same time, awareness of the potential dangers of environmental damage was increased at all levels of society by the real-life experience of natural catastrophes such as floods, cyclones, desertification and rising levels of salinity in agricultural areas.

UNDP, given its longstanding support for environmental initiatives,[50] seized this opportunity to partner with NGOs and the government in preparing a NEMAP—something similar to an environmental PRSP. UNDP acted as convener, coordinator and facilitator of the whole process and provided technical advice. It also ensured that the NEMAP was developed through an intense participatory process that created broad based ownership.

During the early phases of developing the NEMAP, UNDP was the sole international agency supporting in the process. In 1996, to operationalize some of activities foreseen in the NEMAP, UNDP launched a USD 26 million initiative known as the SEMP, which channelled approximately 16 percent of its budget towards supporting a subprogramme for advocacy and awareness raising.

Indicators of increased awareness

One possible indicator of the level of awareness raised on environmental issues is the increasing coverage given by the media and its influence on decision makers. Another is the level of partnerships developed between UNDP, NGOs and civil society organizations with the aim of increasing awareness and policy change.

To take one example, the media has played a decisive role in the campaign against urban pollution in Dhaka and helped to lay the groundwork for policy change. At the same time, with support from Bangladesh's vibrant civil society organizations, the media has also contributed to reversing the government's earlier decision to fell trees in urban areas.

The campaign to reduce pollution in Dhaka is a success story and shows how political leaders, civil society organizations and the media can work together to make a difference. Civil society had been urging anti-pollution measures for a number of years, and in 2001, the newly elected government decided to take action. UNDP's main role in the campaign was to convince the government of the need for a campaign of awareness raising (to generate buy-in) and to facilitate and financially support the efforts of NGOs to muster public opinion in favour of the government decision.

In concrete terms, Dhaka's urban pollution has mainly been attacked through two separate initiatives. First, the production and use of polythene bags have effectively been banned, and second, two stroke engines have been withdrawn and replaced by compressed natural gas (CNG) operated vehicles. The effects on the city are dramatic. At its peak, Dhaka city was consuming 600 million polythene bags a day, with their potential to clog the drainage and sewage systems, while tens of thousands of "motorised rickshaws" (three-wheelers) were belching exhaust fumes into the streets throughout working hours.

It should be noted that, in any awareness-building exercise, it is very difficult to separate the role of UNDP from a large number of civil society organizations and local media initiatives that never received UNDP funding. It can, however, confidently be stated that SEMP's leadership in the organized awareness-building campaign was highly relevant and added value to the national awareness campaigns. Successful partnerships with NGOs and civil society organizations have also been very effective in producing results.

[49] The date for this section relies on the findings of the Independent External Evaluation Mission of SEMP conducted during February 2001 and interviews with the programme staff regarding subsequent changes implemented as well as discussions with government officials and NGOs.

[50] Such as the Forestry Master Plan, which led to the development of National Forest Policy in 1994, and the Flood Action Plan (that brought together the donors to assess and conduct feasibility studies of controlling floods), which led to Water Resource Management Plan.

Incorporation of environmental concerns into decision making, policy frameworks and capacity building

The heightened public awareness of environmental concerns is also reflected in the plethora of environmental reform policies passed by Parliament and implemented by the government. In 1995, a comprehensive Environment Protection Law was enacted and, as mentioned above, the NEMAP was published in 1996. These measures have been followed during the past five years by further environmental legislation and rules (including the anti-pollution measures in Dhaka mentioned above) and by the establishment of environmental courts. The government has also ratified several major international environmental conventions and agreements, such as the UNCED Agenda 21 and the Conventions on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

During the last five years, Bangladesh has achieved considerable progress in creating environmental legislation and rules and establishing environmental courts. In addition to banning plastic bags, Bangladesh has also promulgated a law banning the two stroke engines. Use of catalytic converters and introduction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles has contributed to the improvement of air quality in Dhaka city. For instance, according to the data received from the Department of Environment, the 24-hour average in Dhaka city for Inhalable Particulate (PM10) declined from 131 in October 2002 to 65 in September 2004. Box 3 indicates how this policy affects the health of the population.

Another indication of incorporating environmental concerns in decision making was the 1998 decision by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to declare six Bangladeshi wetlands to be "ecologically critical areas," where globally significant biodiversity required protection. With Global Environmental Facility (GEF) financing, UNDP supported a Pre-Investment Feasibility (PRIF) study and contributed technical expertise for preparing the project document on ecologically critical areas, which supported the policy dialogue that led to this declaration.

Following its support for NEMAP, UNDP undertook an experiment with the SEMP programme that was UNDP and GoB's first experiment on "programme approach." SEMP was built on priorities set by NEMAP. Despite the many coordination problems encountered by this mammoth programme,[51] it had its share of successes including banning plastic bags, community-based solid-waste management and introductions of CNG. UNDP has also played a key role in the following areas: developing the Water Resources Management Act and the National Forestry Policy; developing the conservation of the Sundarbans, a unique mangrove ecosystem on the Bangladeshi/Indian border; promoting a national environmental policy on integrated pest management through the Integrated Pest Management Project (BGD/97/041); and promoting a National Land Use Policy.

Box 3. Policies that change people's lives

Following the National Environmental Action Plan (initiated by the local NGOs and supported by the UNDP), the government of Bangladesh introduced the conversion to CNG in Dhaka. Air pollution in the city has declined dramatically. For instance, the 24-hour average in Dhaka city for Inhalable Particulate (PM10) declined from 131 in October 2002 to 65 in September 2004.

PM10 are any airborne particles with a diameter less than 10 microns. Such particles are able to penetrate deep into the respiratory tract and make breathing more difficult. The people who are most sensitive to the impacts of PM10 include children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing lung and heart disease.

The latest research indicates that for each increment of 10 (when the Air Quality Index exceeds 20) there are the following health outcomes related to PM10: 0.8 percent increase in hospitalizations and a 1 percent increase in ER visits for respiratory illnesses, 9.5 percent increase in days of restricted activity due to respiratory symptoms, and 4.1 percent increase in school absenteeism, and a 1.2 percent increase in reporting of cough.

Source: Health Effects of Inhalable Particles: Implications for British Columbia available at the following url http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/air/particulates/heoipifb.html#particle

[51] See the mid-term evaluation of SEMP.

Factors influencing outcomes

Experience in the environmental arena—Upstream and downstream

UNDP's contribution at the policy level has been facilitated by its image with both government and NGOs as a neutral partner. It has also been enhanced by its role in the UN system with its commitment to creating an international environmental protection framework, e.g. the Rio Conference of 1992.

Strong partnerships

UNDP has also been able to use the above advantages to support the efforts of the relatively newly created ministry of environment and of local NGO partners. Through its involvement in the NEMAP framework, UNDP has forged partnerships with several of the committed and active NGOs in the environment sector and it also mounts advocacy campaigns with the proactively environmentalist print media.

Innovative pilot projects to support policy

Through innovative pilot experiments, such as the community-based solid-waste management scheme in Dhaka, UNDP has also been able to show that local capacities can be strengthened through public/private partnerships to address critical environmental problems.

Community-based environmental sanitation

Community-based urban waste management, particularly the development of a community-based solid-waste management system, is one of the significant achievements in the environmental sector in Bangladesh. The outputs produced under SEMP have made a clear contribution to an effective and sustainable management of urban solid waste in selected areas of the Dhaka metropolitan area and can be claimed to be conducive to the achievement of policy outcome.

The mega city of Dhaka produces 4,000 tons of solid waste per day (more than 50 percent of which is disposed of in ways that are damaging to the environment) and the World Bank forecasts that 47,000 tons of waste will be produced per day by the year 2025. Existing dumping sites are already reaching full capacity and urban waste management is increasing as a serious health and environmental issue.

The NGO, Waste Concern, supported by UNDP, has undertaken an innovative project to remove solid waste. The organization's 120 workers service 30,000 individuals daily by collecting garbage from door to door. The garbage is collected and separated using labour-intensive methods and inorganic components are sorted for recycling. The organic components are kept for 40 days while they convert into a nutrient rich fertilizer, which sells for Tk 2,500 per ton. Waste Concern started by supplying fertilizer companies with 200 tons of compost a year and this figure has now expanded to approximately 700 tons, while current demand from the fertilizer companies alone is approximately 15,000 tons a year. Waste Concern today is self-reliant and does not rely on aid for its day-to-day operations.

The GoB, the Dhaka City Corporation and the Department of Public Health Engineering are replicating the Waste Concern model in 14 municipalities across Bangladesh. The Mayor of Dhaka has shown great interest in the composting scheme and granted land to the NGO for a composting plant. This year, the government has requested Waste Concern be part of the effort in drafting a waste management policy for the country so that the concept can be replicated nationally.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Poverty is an overarching theme for UNDP interventions in Bangladesh and poverty alleviation is also a particularly important objective within the governance and environment programmes. Poverty has, of course, also been the ultimate concern of recent Five-Year Development Plans as well as of the I-PRSP.

During the past decade, UNDP has followed a two-pronged-approach to poverty reduction: community empowerment/local economic development initiatives in rural and urban areas, and strengthening local governance. The latter will be addressed under the governance section below.

Community empowerment and microfinance for poverty reduction[52]

As discussed in Chapter 2, growth in the non-formal economy was key to the overall growth achieved in Bangladesh during the last decade. UNDP's poverty alleviation initiatives aimed, therefore, to boost the aggregate demand base for the non-formal economy and to empower and mobilize the poor to sustain their gains through collective action. Unfortunately, however, there is no evidence that UNDP efforts during the last decade (CCF-I and CCF-II periods) contributed to these gains and its interventions in this field must be judged largely unsuccessful. This failure will exam-

[52] As these were formulated before the introduction of SRF, intended (specific) outcomes were not available.

ined in some detail as UNDP's community empowerment projects consumed approximately 40 percent of its core resources (amounting to USD 55 million)[53] during the CCF-I period.

UNDP's poverty alleviation programme included one urban and four rural CEPs. The CEPs sought to develop the skills for self help and leadership through social mobilization and had two core elements: creating sustainable village groups and improving the livelihood strategies for the poor.[54] The following discussion focuses on the rural CEPs. They were started as a single pilot project as part of the SAPAP in 1994 and then replicated in 15 similar initiatives beginning in 1997-1998.

The rural CEP initiatives began with the creation of Village Organizations that, through the introduction of democratization, decentralization of decision making and mobilization of resources, were intended to empower communities and make their anti-poverty efforts more effective. In 1997, UNDP introduced microfinance in what was meant to be an auxiliary component in the programme. This was apparently a response to the widespread recognition in Bangladesh that sustainable access to microfinance increases self-empowerment and promotes asset creation for the poor by allowing poor and low-income entrepreneurs to make productive use of their skills and opportunities by starting or expanding business activities. Soon after its introduction, microfinance emerged as the as the prime focus of almost all the CEPs, and by the end of the decade, USD 21.6 million or nearly two thirds of the total budget of USD 33 million was earmarked for microcredit grants.[55]

In 2001, the CCF-II document claimed that, despite delays in project formulation, approval and implementation, important progress was being achieved in the area of poverty reduction through UNDP's microfinance-oriented programme interventions.[56] However, the CEP mid-term evaluation and other studies took a less positive view and found that UNDP Bangladesh had no comparative advantage in microfinance and had contributed virtually no value in this area. These observations were taken seriously by the GoB and UNDP and microfinance components were phased out. Ten years after their inception, there is a much clearer understanding within UNDP of the weaknesses associated with these initiatives. These are elaborated as follows.

As was noted in several evaluations,[57] the CEP programme fell short of delivering its outputs. For example, out of the targeted 4,900 villages, only 1,380 Village Organizations were created. Moreover, while some instances of individual empowerment were achieved, community empowerment (as reflected by the degree of sustainability of the Village Organizations) was generally lacking. At the level of outcomes, the initiative also failed to add value. At the policy level, it had no obvious impact and at the local level, both the Village Organizations and the microcredit initiatives were found to be unsustainable. As the immediate objectives were not achieved, it stands to reason that the CEPs did not contribute towards the overall development objective outlined in the project document, that is, the empowerment of village communities for improved governance and poverty alleviation.

Several of the key shortcomings that contributed to this failure were identified.[58] Some of these were linked to a lax selection criteria, for example determining in advance whether UNDP had a comparative advantage in microcredit in Bangladesh, identifying the potential policy implications of the pilot programmes, and analyzing the cost issues that are important for replicability. In the next chapter, some structural factors contributing to this lax selectivity will be discussed.

The evaluation findings also point to the following design and implementation issues.

- *Inadequate attention to cost considerations:* It is not clear whether cost considerations were an integral part of project design but, in any case, the Kishoreganj Sadar Thana (KST) Poverty Alleviation Project (which is a SAPAP initiative) incurred very heavy management overhead costs that were not affordable elsewhere[59] and meant that the project could not be replicated in its original form.
- *Lack of exit strategy:* The project shared a weakness observed in other UNDP projects. It did not have a

[53] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

[54] Huntington Richard, Philpott Susan, Ali Syed Ashraf, Kalimullah Nazmul Ahsan and Rehana Zeenat, "Bangladesh Community Empowerment Projects (BGD/96/001, BGD/96/002, BGD/96/003, BGD/00/009), Mid Term Evaluation," July 2001.

[55] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

[56] Huntington Richard, Philpott Susan, Ali Syed Ashraf, Kalimullah Nazmul Ahsan and Rehana Zeenat, "Bangladesh Community Empowerment Projects (BGD/96/001, BGD/96/002, BGD/96/003, BGD/00/009), Mid Term Evaluation," July 2001. These programs were clear deviations from both SAPAP and original project design.

[57] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002; Ministry of Planning Evaluation Unit, "Evaluation of Kishoreganj Sadar, Thana Poverty Alleviation Project," Bangladesh, June 2001; Huntington Richard, Philpott Susan, Ali Syed Ashraf, Kalimullah Nazmul Ahsan and Rehana Zeenat, "Bangladesh Community Empowerment Projects (BGD/96/001, BGD/96/002, BGD/96/003, BGD/00/009), Mid Term Evaluation," July 2001.

[58] Huntington Richard, Philpott Susan, Ali Syed Ashraf, Kalimullah Nazmul Ahsan and Rehana Zeenat, "Bangladesh Community Empowerment Projects (BGD/96/001, BGD/96/002, BGD/96/003, BGD/00/009), Mid Term Evaluation," July 2001.

clearly spelled out exit strategy that would not only have provided a sound framework for project activities but also would have nurtured the sense of local ownership and promoted sustainability in the longer term.

- *Inadequate attention to capacity constraints:* The replication of KST also strained the existing capacity to train beneficiaries. UNDP lacked the necessary complement of Social Organizers to train all Village Organizations under the replicated CEPs. Consequently, the training of Village Organization members (e.g. in trade activities and credit utilization), a critical aim of the empowerment programme, was not successful. For instance, in KST, 75 percent of the Village Organization members reported that they had not received any training.[60] In particular, the male to female ratio of Social Organizers was very high (7:1), making it more difficult for potential women beneficiaries to access information.[61]
- *Inadequate attention to institutional and management conflicts:* The dual structures (UNDP/government) imposed by the CEPs led to conflicts. At the macro level, the government wanted to maximize the number of beneficiaries during the life span of the CEPs while UNDP emphasized strengthening the capacity of stakeholders. This was compounded by problems of dual leadership (UNDP/government) and the dual salary structure. In particular, government personnel outside the project never felt ownership and had misgivings about government officials who were serving the project (under secondment or by taking temporary leave from government service) and earning considerably more money than their civil-service counterparts outside the project.

The lessons that may be drawn from the CEPs demonstrate the complex issues of macro-ownership of development initiatives. Ownership cannot simply be ensured by a formal legal agreement between UNDP and the government. It depends crucially on the level of cooperation between the national executing agency and the various concerned government units. In the context of Bangladesh, the finance ministry, ERD, the planning ministry, the line ministry under which the project is actually run, and the audit department all have a determining influence on the running of such projects. For successful government ownership, therefore, UNDP needs to recognize the relationship between the source of demand for the initiative and other relevant government units.

In addition to these design and implementation issues, the main reason for the failure of the CEPs is the microfinance focus. The microfinance aspect had originally been introduced as an auxiliary component but emerged as the prime focus of each of these projects. The evaluation[62] identified the following problems:

- None of the 15 UNDP supported projects with a microfinance component were able to provide access to microfinance for poor and low-income people on a sustainable basis
- None of the projects adhered to international best practices in microfinance and UNDP added little value through the projects to the development of the microfinance sector in Bangladesh

A close study of these initiatives leads to three concerns:

1. *Selectivity: UNDP's decision to undertake microcredit initiatives.* In 2000, no less than 585 NGOs and several financial institutions such as the Grameen Bank, DYD, BRDB and WEDP served more than 15.5 million borrowers in Bangladesh (92 percent of them in the rural areas).[63] The most influential MFIs, such as BRAC, ASA, PROSHIKA and Grameen, have a combined market share of 68 percent and are reaching commercial viability.[64] Since it is clear that UNDP has no comparative advantage in delivering microfinance in Bangladesh, and since its initiatives in this area offer no added value, UNDP's criteria for selecting programmes should be further examined to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

   As discussed in the next chapter, one possible explanation for UNDP's decision to support large-scale interventions in community empowerment and microcredit is linked to the acute delivery problems (perhaps compounded by the NEX modality) that the CO experienced during this period. Between 1996 and 2000, the average delivery rate was only 56 percent and this resulted in an accumulated carry-over of TRAC resources that peaked USD 58 million. Clearly, the sustained accumulation of carry-over resources creates an environment for lax selection criteria for identifying and selecting initiatives.

[59] Ministry of Planning Evaluation Unit, "Evaluation of Kishoreganj Sadar, Thana Poverty Alleviation Project," Bangladesh, June 2001.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

[62] Ibid.

[63] CDF Statistics, Vol. 11, Dhaka, December 2000.

[64] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

2. *Need for partnerships in the absence of local knowledge and expertise.* Entering the microfinance area should have required UNDP to have financial and organizational systems for credit management, which it does not. In light of this inexperience, to reduce the risk of failure, it should have sought substantive partnerships with credible NGOs and MFIs in this area from the very beginning (that is, at the design stage).
3. *Culture of assessment: Reliance on monitoring and evaluation.* The KST was replicated before a Mid-Term Review had been completed and thus the critical challenges of sustainability, cost and management issues, and lack of adequate monitoring, among other things, had been properly reviewed. The cost of this mistake could have been reduced if adequate monitoring systems had been in place[65] and if a results-based approach that relies on a culture of assessment had been available in time to provide feedback that might have avoided the need for early termination of the project.

Poverty initiatives: Upstream efforts

As a technical assistance agency leveraging its limited resources, UNDP seeks to provide upstream assistance that may lead to policy changes. In particular, UNDP undertakes supportive research activities/technical studies to suggest and facilitate policy making over both macro and micro issues. A notable example of UNDP support at the macro level is the SHD Project with the Government Planning Commission.

The SHD Unit of the Planning Commission was set up at UNDP's initiative in 1995. The Unit has come up with a sophisticated general equilibrium working model for the Bangladesh economy that is expected to account for sustainable human development outcomes of policy changes in inter-related areas and to support formulation and monitoring at the macro and the sectoral level. Contacts with planning ministry officials indicated that this model is to be used by the ministry to undertake costing both for the MDGs and for PRSP initiatives. If the model proves to be valid, UNDP will have indeed helped the government to strengthen its capacity to plan and forecast the costs and outcomes of its overall development plans.

Analyses of upstream efforts points to the following three areas in which further exploration could benefit UNDP Bangladesh.

Partnerships and culture of assessment

This collaboration between the government and UNDP could have had a wider impact if more of the country's development experts had been brought into the discussion. UNDP and the Planning Commission appear not to have shared this model for testing and validation with a wider expert audience and, as a result, experts outside the ambit of the SHD Unit are unaware either of the methodology and assumptions behind the model or of the basis for the choice of the model's parameters. Discussions in an open forum could have alleviated any concerns regarding the validity of the national database that was created for the model. Such exposure to criticism (again part of a culture of assessment) would also go a long way towards helping the model attain its full potential and strengthen civil society's capacity to participate substantively in the PRSP processes. In short, UNDP should strive to enhance this successful collaboration by broadening its network of dialogue and discussion.

Multi-Fiber Agreement

Another area in which UNDP's services and the SHD project would have been useful is in studying the human development consequences of the ending of the Multi-Fiber Agreement. Research work is currently underway at UNDP, but other partners had already initiated studies as early as 1999-2000. The delay in entering this critical arena will tend to reduce UNDP's potential contribution to related development thinking.

Alternative vision for development

It has already been noted that UNDP Bangladesh studies show that the sustained growth of the past decade has helped reduce poverty levels but has also served to widen income inequalities in the tradable and non-tradable sectors and has put into question the sustainability of past strategies. The existing development strategies are based on reforms along the lines of liberalization and privatization (albeit introduced in a controlled manner). UNDP's own work has not translated into upstream efforts to provide an alternative vision to the current development approach. This is an area where UNDP's experience in other parts of the world could have become useful.

The ADR team wishes to stress that no one expects UNDP to take on every single development challenge. Selection of upstream efforts will always be constrained by CO capacity. To some extent, this shortfall in capacity could be compensated by more systematic and genuine partner-

[65] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

ships with relevant NGOs assisted by a critical engagement (culture of assessment) with its own activities.

GOVERNANCE

Responding to the pressing development needs of the country, Bangladesh UNDP supports the GoB governance efforts at two levels: strengthening local governance (e.g. Sirajganj District Local Governance Project), and strengthening democratic governance and promoting human rights and human security at the national level. UNDP is also supporting governance and development in the post-conflict situation of the CHTs.

Local governance: Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project

As pointed out earlier, the realization of I-PRSP targets crucially hinges on an improvement in the effectiveness, quality and availability of basic public services and on their being more responsive to the needs of all sections of the poor. This requires a degree of local participation, representation and empowerment of the poor that the existing government machinery is unable to deliver.

As a technical assistance agency with limited resources, UNDP focuses on providing assistance that could lead to policy changes and has adopted the concept of "decentralized governance for poverty reduction." Carrying out pilot projects is one way to demonstrate to the central government that increased fiscal decentralization can be utilized by the local government at the UP level in an effective, sustainable and participatory manner. In this regard, therefore, the ADR visited the SLGDP, as it has attained considerable acclaim among development partners and has been selected by the government for scaling up and replication.

Typically, a UP gets an average of Tk. 400,000 a year as a block grant from the central government for development activities in the UP—including in the health and education sectors. This money is channelled through line ministries and the *Zila* (district) and *Upazila* (sub-district) to the UP level. During this process there is considerable "leakage." Moreover, mainly because the central government gives specific instructions as to how the money should be allocated, local participation is not solicited to assess needs, set priorities and be involved in implementation. It is in this context that UNDP and UNCDF, in collaboration with the government, initiated the SLGDP to incorporate the participation of ordinary people in the local development process.

The project started in July 2000 with joint UNDP/UNCDF financing for a tentative duration of four and a half years. The total project cost is USD 8,923,950 and the government's contribution is Tk. 100,000 (in kind).[66] The objective of the project is to contribute to poverty reduction by increasing access to basic services and infrastructure for the rural population of Sirajganj District. To do so, UNDP and UNCDF provide the UPs directly with block grants that can be used as they see fit to support local development initiatives in an effective, sustainable and participatory manner.

This pilot project aims to demonstrate to policy makers the feasibility and desirability of the following:

- Fiscal devolution at UP level is feasible and desirable. ADP block grants are allocated directly to UPs without having to be channelled through *Zila* and *Upazila*, thus preventing possible leakages. At the UP level, through effective participation from people, it is possible to identify priorities, allocate resources and implement initiatives that directly reflect the needs of the UP's population.
- Performance-based incentives can improve the effectiveness of UPs. Mechanisms to hold the UPs accountable and transparent processes to plan, manage and implement projects have been instituted. A 15 percent increase in funds is allocated to UPs that are considered by participatory processes to have performed well in these areas.

The project team, proceeding in phases, has established its presence in more than 80 of the 82 UPs and is on target towards complete coverage of the Sirajganj District. The team has developed working relationships with local communities, established appropriate logistics arrangements, and communicated the concepts and procedures of the project. Mechanisms to establish and adopt direct fund transfers to the UP level are in place. Participatory planning and scheme implementation processes at the local level are operational and the system of participatory assessment of the performance of the project administration at the UP level is functioning.[67]

Relevance and achievements

As noted above, the project is appropriate and relevant in the context of Bangladesh. Despite the continued absence of elected bodies at *Upazila* and *Gram* (village) levels, the location of the administration of the project at national,

[66] UNDP, "Mid-term Evaluation – Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project (Draft Report)," Dhaka, Bangladesh, January 2003, p 4.

[67] Ibid, p 4.

Zila, Upazila and, above all, at the UP level, enables it to have some influence at all levels of the local government and development system.[68]

The mid-term evaluation of the project conducted in 2002 observes that:[69]

- The project allocations and the system of performance-based supplementary funding support have improved the UPs' performance, even in the politically difficult areas. The participatory performance assessment shows that the average score (out of 100 marks) of the SLGDP UPs improved from 66 in 2000-2001 to 85 in 2002-2003.[70]
- The project is welcomed by its stakeholders for its introduction of transparent and accountable procedures associated with the transfer of the block grants what are under the control of the local people.
- Revenue mobilization has increased in SLGDP areas, partly due to increased participation in the processes and partly to increased trust in the system. In fact, collection efficiency increased by 42 percent between 1999-2000 and 2001-2002.

Many development partners consider the project to be successful. For instance, a World Bank Institute report[71] rates SLGDP as the only local governance initiative in Bangladesh that covers most of the aspects of civic participation in local-level expenditure, policy making and budgetary processes. One of the most important achievements of the project is that the government has adopted performance-based funding for its grant allocations for all local government bodies.[72] Indeed, contacts with line ministry officials revealed that participatory planning and implementation at the UP level and performance-based fund allocation are to be replicated throughout the country with effect from next year.

The ADR team chose to make this a case study in order to understand better what works and why. The choice also allowed the team an opportunity to validate the last ROAR submitted by the Bangladesh CO and to assess the progress made since the mid-term evaluation.

Field visit

The ADR mission visited the project headquarters at Sirajganj and two UPs, Dhubil and Purnimagathi. Dhubil was selected since a participatory assessment was taking place during the mission's visit and Purnimagathi because it was one of the 19 original UPs covered by the SLGDP project and (according to the mid-term evaluation) it was one of the four UPs where the largest investments had been made.[73]

The ADR team observed the participatory assessment process in Dhubil and interviewed the UP chairman (an elected official) in his office in Purnimagathi. Because 50 percent of UP scheme funds are invested in building earth roads,[74] the ADR team visited a road that had recently been constructed by the project. On site, the mission met the local person responsible for project implementation and interviewed a number of beneficiaries.

Notwithstanding the overall success of the project, there are several areas where performance could be further strengthened—some of which had already been identified in the mid-term evaluation:

Low participation by women

The mid-term evaluation noted that there was considerable variation in the levels of participation in the local planning process and that women and the poor were particularly badly represented. For its part, the ADR team found that female participation in the performance assessment meeting in Dhubil was less than 4 percent. While one visit is far from being a statistically significant sample, overall statistics confirm the need for improvement in this area. Of the 77 participatory performance assessments conducted in 2003, there were 7,401 male and 1,945 female participants (just more than 20 percent).[75] The ADR team was informed that since the mid-term evaluation the project has aggressively sought to increase women's participation but clearly the problem persists. This raises the following two issues:

- *Better utilization of the synergies within the CO.* The mid-term evaluation suggested that "sensitivity to

[68] UNDP, "Mid-term Evaluation – Sirajganj Local Government Development Fund Project (Draft Report)," Dhaka, Bangladesh, January 2003, p 4.

[69] Ibid., p 5-6.

[70] ADB, UNCDF, "Local Governance and Service Delivery to the Poor: A study conducted for presentation in Manila," February 9-13, 2004.

[71] Rahman Atiur, Kabir Mahfuz, and Razzique Abdur, "Civic Participation in Sub-National Budgeting in Bangladesh," World Bank Institute, May 2004.

[72] Ibid, p 6.

[73] Clearly, studying two UPs out of 82 UPs where the project was carried out does not provide an adequate sample to verify results statistically. However, the purpose of the field visit was to better understand the implementation of the project and its functionings.

[74] UNDP, "Mid-term Evaluation—Sirajganj Local Governance Development Project Fund (BDG/97/C01)," November 2002.

[75] Data were obtained from project monitoring and evaluation database.

cultural norms and imagination to increase the incentives for women to participate are required" and recommended separate meetings for men and women to improve women's participation, both at the Ward and UP levels. The ADR team was informed that there have been changes at the Ward level in response to the mid-term evaluation but observed no corresponding changes at the UP level meeting it attended. The CO gender group (within the human development taskforce) is undoubtedly familiar with the cultural norms that inhibit women from expressing themselves freely in public meetings, but it is not clear whether they were systematically involved in the CO's follow-up to the evaluation mission report. In such cases, it is clearly in UNDP's interests to make maximum use of the professional resources available within the CO and to institutionalize cross-synergies among the CO taskforces to ensure that this takes place.

- *More and effective partnerships with experts and relevant NGOs at project design stage.* NGOs in Bangladesh have extensive experience in community mobilization. It would serve the interests of project design teams to convoke an advisory panel of NGOs and experts to ensure the best possible project design quality and the inclusion of contemporary best practices.

Focus on development effectiveness

Project impact could be enhanced by going beyond establishing bench marks for processes and addressing the issue of how the project contributes to development effectiveness. While local villagers have gained voice in determining what they consider is best for them, it is necessary to track if and how the initiative has transformed their lives. To do so, it would be necessary to go beyond monitoring processes and assess outputs and examine outcomes.

Culture of assessment

To focus on development effectiveness, there needs to be continued and sustained performance assessment at all stages of project planning and implementation. The changes that are assessed by beneficiaries could be expanded to incorporate key indicators to identify substantive changes in lives (see subsequent discussion for details). The project team should be able systematically to identify the outcomes as UP schemes are completed and to provide feedback for other schemes.

In this connection, the evaluation team visited a UP scheme site that involved the construction of an earth road connecting two adjacent villages (according to the mid-term evaluation more than 50 percent of the resources were allocated to constructing earth roads). The team interviewed the beneficiaries who cited greater respect from others and increased mobility of women, particularly girl students during floods (they cannot pull up their clothes, as men do, to avoid getting wet), as two of the benefits accruing from the project. Needless to say, the first alleged benefit cannot possibly be evaluated. To verify the second alleged benefit, the ADR team interviewed the headmaster at a high school close to the project site. He indicated that the road had made it possible for seven more villages to be connected to the school during flood season with the result that enrolment in his school had increased by nearly 30 percent. While these results would need to be verified and tested, they point to possible ways in which the project team could assess how UP schemes are changing people's lives.

The ADR team also obtained data from the Ullapara Upazila office where the Purnimagathi UP is located. The Ullapara Upazila consists of 13 UPs (117 Wards) in which the SLGDF project has been implemented. As of October 2004, 20,990 people have participated in participatory planning sessions and 151 schemes have been implemented. Table 10 presents the changes in health and education indicators since the project was introduced.

Taking these as tentative preliminary results subject to validation, improvements at the *Upazila* level in access to sanitation and child mortality rates stand out. These improvements, particularly, in child mortality, could be the result of an aggressive vaccination campaign by the government. However, project efforts to build latrines in the area have certainly supplemented government efforts to increase access to sanitation.

Alternatively, and to supplement such surveys, the SLGDP participatory performance assessments could go beyond process and procedural details (such as how long the UP office was open) and add questions about if and how the scheme had changed people's lives.

It is also important to note that more than 75 percent of rural Bangladesh is covered by major NGOs and MFIs, which often have strong monitoring and evaluation systems. Exchanging data and harnessing synergies between projects with similar goals would also strengthen UNDP's contribution to development effectiveness in Bangladesh.

Strengthening local capacity

The mid-term evaluation pointed out that the financial management capacity at the local level did not meet accept-

TABLE 10. SELECTED SOCIAL INDICATORS IN ULLAPARA UPAZILA—SIRAJGANJ LOCAL GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT FUND PROJECT

Social Indicators	2000	2004
Child mortality	2.13	1.87
Immunization rate	97%	99%
Maternal mortality rate	1%	1%
Access to drinking water	95%	98%
Access to sanitation	20%	34%
Net enrolment rate (primary education)	94%	96%

Source: Upazila Project Coordinator's Office, Ullapara. Data need to be validated and sources identified before used for evidence.

able standards. According to the project team, a subsequent audit had withdrawn 80 percent of the citations. However, it is not clear to the ADR team what specific measures have been taken to strengthen the local capacity in this area. This becomes a critical issue as the project is replicated through out the country.

Upstream efforts: Democratic governance, human rights and human security

It is useful to address some of UNDP's upstream initiatives in the governance sector—particularly in the human rights and human security areas which, as pointed out in Chapter 2, are increasingly becoming critical for the well being of the people and sustained economic development.

Human rights

At the beginning of the ADR reporting period, UNDP started a human rights initiative in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and through this Ministry reached out to other parts of the government, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs. The project started with a lengthy preparatory period that included a pioneering research effort to assess the level of understanding of human rights in the rural areas and among poor and marginalized groups. This was followed by the active inclusion of civil society in the drafting of a bill for the creation of a National Human Rights Commission (the bill was not adopted however). Over the years, the project has undoubtedly had a wide (if difficult to measure) impact on awareness of human rights in Bangladesh, but when in government, neither political party has moved beyond rhetoric to endorse the actual creation of the Commission. In view of this lack of political will to carry the initiative to its intended conclusion, UNDP continues advocacy as appropriate. It is ready to become more involved when or if the government decides to move forward on the Commission.

Human security

In a highly sensitive area, UNDP has taken an initiative that could in the long run have considerable influence on governance issues in general and on human rights in particular. This is the Human Security Report, which was finalized in 2002 after several years of work by local experts (financed by UNDP). The report provides an in-depth analyses of the human security situation and legal framework for human security in Bangladesh. In view of the report's potential importance for UNDP's SHD and governance agendas, some key findings of the report are summarized as follows:

- In a country where more than 78 percent of the population earns less than USD 2 per day, many laws and practices of the criminal justice system disadvantage the poor. For example, the costs of going to court, added to frequent delays and lack of access to legal aid, result in most people simply being "priced out of the justice system." As a result, people prefer the non-formal judicial system and an estimated 60 to 70 percent of local disputes are resolved through the *shalish*, or traditional courts. The Report recommends numerous measures to improve the situation, including setting time limits to speed up trials, improved training for judicial officials and easier access to legal aid.
- The poor are also shown to be at a disadvantage when dealing with police who, according to the report, are highly responsive to influential members of the community. On the whole, the effectiveness of the police is hindered by lack of training, large numbers of false cases, insufficient monitoring and evaluation, poor motivation, budgetary constraints, and understaffing. In response, the report recommends improved monitoring of the police services, training that is more oriented towards the poor and disadvantaged, and more focus on community policing.

- Despite constitutional guarantees and legislative safeguards, violence against women, which includes acid throwing, murder, rape and trafficking, is a serious problem. A number of recommendations are made to ensure that the issue receives adequate attention, including setting up a help line, increasing the number of women officials and launching a systematic campaign to raise awareness of the issue.
- Awareness among the general population of laws and rights related to human security overall is low. For example, 40 percent of the people surveyed thought that police could torture detainees and 10 percent of interviewees thought that police could hold a person in custody for as long as they wished. A national awareness campaign was recommended to dispel current myths.
- The Report also calls for a review of legislation and practices that are often misused, such as the Special Powers Act, arrest without warrant and preventive detention. Data in the report shows that between Independence in 1971 and 1995, almost 90 percent of preventive detention cases to come before the High Court were either illegal or without any lawful authority.

During the first half of 2002, the Human Security Report was expanded as part of a broader assessment as to how UNDP could best fulfil the objective of "promoting respect for human rights." This goal features explicitly as one of the areas to be addressed under CCF-II.

In 2004, the report was launched with considerable publicity. It is to be translated into Bangla and a second "launch" and media campaign for the Bangla version is planned for the near future. Launches of the report are also planned for all 64 districts.

In conclusion, the ADR would like to draw attention to the fact that the Human Security Report has created the space for UNDP to initiate a Police Reform Project in collaboration with DFID and the GoB. This is an example where an upstream initiative provides the vision to choose strategic pilot projects at the downstream level.

Elections

UNDP has sought to strengthen the electoral component of the democratic process by capacity building for three focal groups: the Electoral Commission, election officials (especially at the local level) and the electorate. This initiative has been strongly supported by the bilateral donors who consider that UNDP's neutrality gives it a natural comparative advantage in this field. With regard to impact, virtually all parties concerned, including government, donors, civil society and the media, confirmed that UNDP's support to the electoral process had been a success.

The ADR would also like to highlight the importance of UNDP's role in supporting the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division in monitoring the 2001 Parliamentary elections. The public activities (meetings, visits, exchanges and media coverage) of the election observers enhanced accountability and transparency, and the positive declaration by the observer team on the day after the elections enhanced their legitimacy and demonstrated the clear impact of the process.

Parliament

UNDP support to Parliament is provided through a project for the Strengthening of Parliamentary Democracy, which includes the following components: reforming the procedures and functions of Parliament and of the Parliamentary committees, providing training for Members of Parliament, and strengthening the Parliamentary Secretariat. The objectives are ambitious but are based on a consensus at all levels that action is required to make Parliament more effective, transparent and responsive.

The mid-term evaluation reported that the technical aspects of the project, such as establishing the security apparatus, the printing press, the information centre at the library and training different stakeholders, had proceeded relatively smoothly, although in a delayed manner. However, on the more fundamental issue of changing the way Parliament functions—including reform of the Rules of Procedures, the formation and functioning of the committees, and the allocation of more time to the opposition—success has been much more limited. This is largely because decisions on these issues are taken on political rather than technical considerations.

Conflict resolution and development promotion in the CHT

The CHT is located at the southeast corner of Bangladesh and has a population of about 1.3 million. It has been largely outside the mainstream of development assistance for more than 25 years due to instability and an insurgency originating from tensions among the indigenous hill tribes, outside settlers and the government. Today, more than 40 percent of the Hill Tracts population is unemployed and only 30 percent live above the national poverty line. Fifty percent of children drop out of school sometime during their primary education and the infrastructure, such as roads and health facilities, has deteriorated almost beyond use.

Despite a peace accord signed in 1997 between the

government and rebels, peace remains fragile, and in 2001, three European engineers on a Danish funded project were kidnapped. This provoked the withdrawal of most international and national development agencies and a scaling down of their activities.

Restoring peace is a priority for the government and is reflected in the I-PRSP. At the request of the government, therefore, in 2002, UNDP initiated a risk assessment in the region and identified 22 out of 27 *Upazilas* as minimum risk areas, 4 as being at medium risk and one as a high-risk area where no development assistance could for the time being be initiated. Based on this information, UNDP started a new initiative titled, "Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the CHT." This is the only UNDP initiative in Bangladesh that is subject to Direct Execution modality (DEX). The implementation agency is the CHT Development Facility, which works in close cooperation with the Ministry of CHT Affairs.

Development in the CHT is seen as the best means both to consolidate peace and stability in the region and to create opportunities for a better life for its inhabitants. There appears to be unanimity in the CHT that poverty reduction is the overarching goal of development and that it should be pursued by means of youth employment, expansion of agro-based production, small enterprise development, rural infrastructure development and improved social services.

The objective of the project is to support government and local initiatives to create an enabling environment for accelerated socioeconomic development. This is to be accompanied by measures aimed at encouraging a resumption of international assistance. It also includes confidence-building activities that both promote a dynamic economy for poverty reduction and contribute directly to improved relations among conflicting groups in the CHT. The immediate activities of the project include the following:

- Creating and operationalizing a modest institutional infrastructure with UNDP providing high-quality professional support
- Strengthening the capacity of government institutions directly involved in the promotion of development in the CHT
- Empowering communities for self-reliant poverty reduction
- Facilitating multi-donor collaboration

It is too early to judge the possible impact on outcomes of this initiative. Yet it provides a clear example of UNDP taking the lead and using its position as a neutral partner and honest broker to intervene to help preserve a fragile peace in the poorest region of Bangladesh. To the knowledge of the ADR team, no one else was willing or able to act in the CHT. In addition to helping the poorest of the poor, this effort also opens the way for other partners to move back to CHT.

It should be recognized that the CHT remains extremely volatile as internecine fighting continues. UNDP's initiative is being built on the premise of using alternative dispute resolution mechanisms along with its development interventions. This will require a combination of effective conflict management skills together with expertise in development management. While this initiative is still at the pilot stage, the ADR strongly recommends a close monitoring of this project with an assessment at the end of the pilot year. Hopefully, the feedback provided will help to strengthen development work in the area in the years to come.

As identified in Chapter 2, sustaining the current gains in human development faces many hurdles, including the deteriorating environment. It is clear that in the environmental sector, the government and the civil society are committed to positive changes, and UNDP has provided a catalytic support and coordinating function in aiding policy formulation and implementation. While a full analyses of the reasons behind Bangladesh's exemplary commitment to protecting its environment is beyond the scope of this exercise, it would provide the CO useful insights into the reasons.

The country also faces a deteriorating governance situation, dysfunctional parliament and institutionalizing of political violence. As identified by I-PRSPs, this hinders translating growth into human poverty reduction. UNDP seems to be active in these fronts, both in terms of advocating policies at the upstream level and demonstrating through pilot projects which policies would work. Through its report on human security and the work on *hartals*, it opens up space at the upstream level and downstream level to address issues of institutionalized political violence and dysfunctional parliament. Through its downstream activities such as SLGDP, it has successfully convinced the government of the need to strengthen decentralization and introduce incentives for performance in local governance.

While this may be regarded as contribution towards human poverty reduction, in terms of activities that support human development in the face of rising inequality, UNDP has taken a backseat. Perhaps, this caution is well founded in its downstream efforts after the failed microcredit efforts. Upstream successes of UNDP elsewhere could be diversified by addressing capacity constraints at UNDP Bangladesh. UNDP could become a more forceful advocate of alternative visions for future development of Bangladesh, particularly in the areas of poverty alleviation and develop-

ment strategies (for instance, the policies to strengthen capacity of the poor in the non-tradable sector mentioned in Chapter 2). UNDP's bold initiative in the CHT region is the first and courageous step in the right direction in making a difference in the lives of the poorest of the poor.

4 UNDP's Strategic Positioning and Programme Relevance

The ADR approach is part of the overall shift from assessing aid effectiveness to a perspective that puts development first. Thus, the UNDP/Bangladesh ADR is about whether UNDP is contributing to Bangladesh achieving its development goals. Specifically, it aims to assess the effectiveness of UNDP's approach to supporting Bangladesh and whether UNDP is making the best use of its resources and comparative advantage in this endeavour. To this end, the ADR focuses on UNDP's strategic positioning in Bangladesh and on the challenges that need to be addressed. Strategic positioning is about achieving the most impact on human development goals and priorities of the country with the limited available organizational capacity and resources; it is about leadership, innovation and forward looking strategies that pave way for future action; it is about risk-taking that forges space where none existed for other partners to act.

This chapter discusses the major issues and challenges that UNDP has faced in this strategic positioning effort and examines how best it can proceed in the future.

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

As discussed in Chapter 2, in the past decade, Bangladesh made significant progress in improving social indicators and reducing income poverty. It is also well on its way to transitioning from being an aid-dependent to being an export-oriented economy. Progress is being made in aggregate terms towards achieving the MDGs.

Yet as mentioned earlier, the growth strategies that fuelled the reduction in human poverty during the past decade face many challenges. One such challenge that has gained much national attention is the impending termination of the MFA by the end of 2004. As RMG exports constitute 76 percent of the total export earnings, it is of great national interest to study the consequences of the termination of MFA and much research on this topic has been underway in Bangladesh since 1999. Another challenge, as pointed out earlier, is that the current growth strategies are associated with increasing inequalities in income that may reverse the growth momentum if unchecked. The poor lack the capacity to access the opportunities opened up by the expansion

of the non-farm sector (adequate education, supporting social networks, etc.) and an enabling policy environment, for example, trade policies that help small to medium industries access raw materials and import machines or industrial policies to support small businesses.

The uninterrupted growth has also led to environmental degradation. The future development of Bangladesh offers fewer and fewer low-cost solutions that have characterized the improvements in social indicators of the past decade. This means that following the same strategies is unlikely to sustain the current momentum in sustainable human development and may even run the risk of reversal of the gains achieved over the past decade.

The last decade also ushered back democracy, but the political parties are sharply polarized and high levels of corruption continue in the public administration. An increasingly dysfunctional parliament, weak governance and escalating political violence seriously undermine strategies for sustainable development. Environmental degradation and natural disasters pose added obstacles to benefits from development reaching the poor and the marginalized. Conversely, strong civil society organizations play an important role in the development effectiveness of Bangladesh through their innovative solutions and contributions to service delivery, promoting pro-poor growth and empowering the weak and the poor.

These development challenges are echoed by the government in its recent I-PRSP document discussed in the parliament in June 2004. The document attempts to provide the framework for development activities and will be replaced by a full-scale PRSP in 2005. UNDP initiatives are fully in conformity with the priorities articulated in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) and the I-PRSP.

UNDP'S STRATEGIC POSITIONING IN THE CONTEXT OF BANGLADESH

The development needs of Bangladesh are many. UNDP makes only a very small contribution (1 percent) to total ODA flows to Bangladesh. To best use its limited resources, UNDP has brought greater focus to its activities in Bangladesh (by cutting down the number of projects from 123 in 1992 to 32 in 2004) and it is now concentrating 91 percent of its core resources in the areas of governance, environment and poverty alleviation.

The ADR considers that UNDP's concentration in the areas of governance, environment and poverty alleviation is entirely consistent with the SHD framework and provides a sound basis for contributing to development effectiveness in Bangladesh.

Environment

In rising to the challenge of sustaining the current growth momentum against the deteriorating environment, UNDP has been at the right places at the right time doing the right things. Capitalizing on their prior experience—ranging from supporting a forestry plan that led to a national forest policy in 1994, flood action plan, water resources management plan and NEMAP—UNDP has continued to support upstream efforts such as the ban on CNG and polythene bags. Clearly, these initiatives were driven by local actors and UNDP used its convening power and its reputation as a neutral partner to fill the necessary gaps. As pointed out in Chapter 3, these actions resulted in concrete legislations that changed people's lives and improved air quality in Dhaka.

The commitment of the Ministry of Environment went a long way in a number of legislations being passed and successfully implemented. A full analyses of the reasons behind Bangladesh's exemplary commitment to protecting its environment is beyond the scope of this exercise. Yet it is possible to identify that, unlike issues such as land reform and asset redistribution, the environmental arena is seen as less threatening to established interests and power brokers within the country. Given that the manufacturing base is emerging in this young country that is environmentally conscious, this sector provides room for vibrant activism.

This is not to say that operating in the environmental sector was without obstacles. Indeed, in 2000, the standoff between the government and the USD 26 million SEMP project led to a temporary suspension of the project—indicating that governance issues continue to be a factor.

UNDP's success in the environmental sector is also linked to its partnership with credible NGOs. In many initiatives, UNDP was able to join forces with NGOs with common goals as equal partners (for example, NEMAP and conversion to CNG). These efforts got additional support from a sympathetic and proactive media. Thus, equal and strategic partnerships with civil society were key to the success.

Governance

Another area where UNDP is active is governance. There is widespread recognition among all actors—the government, civil society and donors alike—that governance efforts, while addressing corruption and decentralization, must expand to address issues of dysfunctional parliament and institutionalizing political violence. UNDP seems to be active in these fronts both in terms of advocating for policies at the upstream level and demonstrating through

pilot projects the need for new policies. For example, the Human Security Report highlighted the issue of access to justice and has lead to "human security"[77] initiatives including the police reform. These initiatives create room for discussion and debates around the issues of institutionalised political violence and dysfunctional parliament. UNDP's ongoing work on assessing the political and economic consequences of *hartals* points to its awareness of the pressing need to address the issue of a polarized party system. In this area, UNDP's support for parliament has included creating a knowledge base. This will not only help members of parliament to be better informed about issues and the needs of their constituents, but also provides space for cross-party contacts.

At the sub-national level, UNDP has managed to demonstrate convincingly to government policy makers and the community at large that UPs are capable of determining their needs, and with direct allocation of block grants, of budgeting and implementing initiatives in a responsible and participatory manner (SLGDP). The ADR team was informed by the government that this project is going to be replicated in every district beginning next year. While this should be heartening, the team noted that such rapid replication may be indicative of factors outside the merits of the pilot project.

As mentioned earlier, the CHT initiative is a response to a post-conflict situation and a DEX initiative with full government backing. It involves UNDP in an area from which other donors have withdrawn for security reasons. While the success or failure of the CHT programme may not be known for quite some time, UNDP took a leadership role in support of the poorest in Bangladesh and paved the way for development processes to replace conflict and for other donors to return to the region.

Poverty alleviation

In the area of championing human development alternatives, there is potential for UNDP to use its comparative advantage to make a greater contribution. The SHD model could become an instrument to analyze policy alternatives that enable the poor to access the benefits from growth in the non-tradable and tradable sectors. In this regard, UNDP CO needs additional capacity and proactive support from headquarters to provide additional capacity.

Through discussions with NGOs, the ADR team learned that the civil society would prefer more vibrant and direct discussions with the government on the PRSPs. UNDP could provide the forum for the civil society and the government to engage in constructive dialogue around the development priorities and strategies identified in the proposed PRSPs.

The subsequent section will focus on some of the challenges faced by UNDP in making the best use of its comparative advantage in Bangladesh to confront the principal strategic challenges.

CHALLENGES TO STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND UNDP'S RESPONSE

During the 1990s, UNDP's strategic positioning in Bangladesh was dictated as much by its own institutional priorities as by the need to contribute to Bangladesh's development effectiveness. The programme approach, NEX, and the need to meet TRAC expenditure targets had a profound influence on UNDP's programme orientation and led it to approve large community empowerment and microcredit projects that were later closed down on the grounds that they did not conform to UNDP's comparative advantage and were better undertaken in Bangladesh by donors and NGOs with more experience in these areas. Since 2000, however, UNDP Bangladesh has, by and large, managed to give greater prominence to issues of substance and, as of 2004, it is better positioned strategically than at the beginning of the ADR reporting period.

Nevertheless, the ADR identified several areas where it considered that the CO could introduce measures to enhance the effectiveness of its support for Bangladesh to achieve its development goals:

- Managing key partnerships (especially with donors and civil society)
- Managing UN system coordination
- Promoting advocacy
- Strengthening the CO capacity

Managing key partnerships

A UNDP CO's partnerships are normally with the government, the donor community, civil society organizations and possibly the private sector.

Government

Bangladeshi officials confirmed that the CO has strong partnerships with government institutions and is widely trusted in the policy area. This may be validated by noting the CO's interventions in highly sensitive and visible areas,

[77] UNDP Bangladesh appears to identify with the notion of human security that equates human security to the physical threats and violation of rights. This should be distinguished from the view expounded by the Human Security Commission and the Japanese government--namely, human security includes all down-side risks due to deprivation due to human poverty in the social, economical and political arenas.

such as support to Parliament and police reform. The government's agreement on a number of occasions to dismiss UNDP national project directors and other officials found guilty of corruption (described elsewhere in this report) also underlines the strength of the relationship between UNDP and the government.

At the operational level, there were several criticisms from government officials about the choice of consultants, especially where UNDP had apparently favoured internationals over nationals. It is useful to recognize that, if 10 percent of ODA is used for consultant fees, this is a significant fraction of the whole aid package (approximately USD 160 million). When foreign consultants are hired, this 10 percent is lost to Bangladesh. Clearly, this is an area where both the government and the CO need to examine each case on its merits, unbiased by preconceptions, and make a choice between nationals and internationals based on the needs of the assignment—internationals where non-Bangladeshi experience can bring value added and nationals where an understanding of Bangladeshi culture and language is required.

Given the institutionalized polarities in the governance system in Bangladesh, UNDP's relationship with the government is like walking a tightrope. There is considerable risk in being perceived as too close to the government in power because, if the opposition wins the next election, UNDP may not be accepted by the new government. Thus far, UNDP has been able to maintain its reputation for neutrality, but there is always a risk of losing favour with one or another of the political parties.

National execution

Given the history of difficulties in programme delivery in the 1990s under NEX, the CO introduced measures to strengthen programme impact and sustainability through improvements to the NEX processes.

In Bangladesh, NEX was initially introduced in 1992. By 2002, 93 percent of UNDP funds utilized the NEX modality. Nine years have passed since NEX was fully introduced in Bangladesh (1995), and experience so far demonstrates that NEX needs further strengthening before it realizes its full potential in the country.

There is no question that NEX is an important modality for promoting government ownership and the sustainability of UNDP programmes. However, upon its introduction, there have been repeated instances of mismanagement and misuse of funds. Since 2000, there have been nine occasions (documented by the CO) on which the national project directors have been obliged to resign or the project has been suspended or transferred to another implementing agency. There is a strong feeling in UNDP Bangladesh that incidences of abuse would have been limited if NEX had been introduced with the appropriate accountability, transparent work procedures, and more comprehensive support to the government institutions that were using the NEX modality.

In any case, to restore the legitimacy of the NEX modality, UNDP organized three main initiatives aimed at strengthening counterpart government institutions in NEX management and introducing tools to facilitate in-house NEX monitoring:

1. S*upport to the government implementing agencies through the recruitment of two accountancy firms.* The office recruited two local accountancy firms to carry out visits to all NEX projects in order to ascertain project compliance with NEX financial and accounting rules and procedures.
2. *NEX training and revision of the manual.* The CO organized a series of NEX workshops to develop management capacities of national project directors and project counterparts. A draft manual is already in use and the final version will be published at the beginning of 2005.
3. *Tighter monitoring and proactive management.* Closer scrutiny and monitoring enabled the office to gain a better understanding of the relative state of each project, thereby allowing it to take a series of management actions to address problems that could not be resolved by training or administrative support.

A preliminary feedback on improvements in UNDP's programme and in its internal management is the OAPR audit, which rated the CO's performance as satisfactory for the period January 2001 to March 2002 for the first time in more than 10 years. Since the external management audits in the 1990s had consistently rated the office as either marginally deficient (1993 and 1996) or deficient (1995, 1999 and 2001), this is considered a very positive outcome.

Donors

UNDP's strong partnerships with donors may be noted from the following examples.

- UNDP is the only multilateral organization to be a member of the Tuesday Group, which comprises ambassadors from the main donor countries and plays an active role in the discussions. This group was originally established to discuss election issues, but it continues to meet regularly as a forum to maintain a dialogue with the government on general democratic governance issues.

- Building on its neutrality and proven areas of comparative advantage, UNDP has provided the coordination mechanism for donor participation through cost-sharing or parallel funding in support of national, sub-national and local elections.
- UNDP took the lead in organizing international observers for Bangladesh's October 2001 national elections. (U.S. Secretary of State at that time, Colin Powell, formally commended UNDP's role in ensuring that these elections were free and transparent.)
- UNDP provided coordination for a programme aimed at containing and mitigating the negative impact of arsenic contamination in Bangladesh's drinking water.
- UNDP provided leadership through the United Nations Disaster Management Team for mobilizing USD 204 million of assistance for the 1998 floods—the worst floods of the century.
- UNDP was instrumental in coordinating development partners after the 1997 landmark treaty that brought peace to the CHT.

One donor elaborated on the difficulties of working with UNDP with criticism at two levels: policy and operational. At the policy level, the donor found that UNDP was too ready to accommodate the government and was not forceful enough in imposing conditions that the donor thought had been agreed upon from the outset. These observations underline the importance of recognizing from the start of a joint project that bilaterals and UNDP work under different constraints. The bilateral (as was made clear during the interview with the ADR team) is answerable to its Ministry of Finance, parliament and media and is more likely to seek clear-cut solutions within a relatively short time frame. It is, therefore, more likely to be impatient if conditions are not met. However, UNDP's relationship with the government is based on a partnership deriving from the government's membership in the United Nations and not on conditions. However, if the CO is successful in its strategic positioning for partnerships, it is more likely to enjoy a position of trust. This trust, for its part, allows UNDP to move into more sensitive areas and, as in Bangladesh, is able to take the lead in such projects as police reform, where bilateral leadership would not be accepted. When a joint project is set up with a bilateral it is clearly important for these differences of approach to be made explicit up front.

Operational difficulties that occur in partnerships with bilaterals should (as in other cases) be captured by a culture of assessment and rapidly corrected on the basis of feedback.

Civil society

As noted elsewhere in this report, civil society in Bangladesh is extremely active and there is a wide range of independent think tanks and NGOs that operate both in Dhaka and throughout the country. Within the framework of advocacy, policy dialogue, programme development and service delivery, possible partnerships with these civil society organizations would focus on tapping into existing knowledge, using local capacity and capacity building. The CO has established on a relatively ad hoc basis different degrees of relationships with a number of these organizations (especially within the framework of SEMP). Indeed, as pointed out earlier in this chapter, UNDP has entered into equal partnerships with NGOs that have produced successful outcomes in the environmental sector. Currently, UNDP does not have a specific partnership strategy that could be used for institutionalizing its relationships with NGOs.

In this context, the CO also drew attention to two types of practical difficulties that beset the development of formalized partnerships with civil society organizations. First, there is the general problem that successive governments have often been suspicious of the NGO community and fear that they may have links to the political opposition or be inclined to usurp the government's prerogatives. This can be an issue if an NGO is to be used in project execution, as, under NEX, the government becomes the executing agency and the NGO becomes the sub-executing agency. Second, according to UNDP rules, if UNDP funds are involved in any type of direct partnership with civil society organizations, the CO is obliged to use competitive bidding procedures and to formalize the relationship through a contract. This is often considered to be too cumbersome a procedure for practical application.

Managing UN system coordination

The resident coordinator (RC) function in Bangladesh is now supported by a separately allocated budget of USD 100,000. This is a clear expression of the importance accorded by UN headquarters to UN system coordination and has the effect of empowering the UNDP RC in his coordination activities.

The Country Team consists of twelve members (including the World Bank and IMF representatives) and meets on a monthly basis. However, it is clear that in Bangladesh (as elsewhere), UN agencies do not systematically emphasize to their representatives the importance of the Country Team. The quality of their support depends largely on the personality of individual representatives. It is

also suggested that agencies that are focused only on one ministry are less likely to join in collaborative actions than those that have a wider purview.

The Country Team has made one experiment in joint programming (a Safe Motherhood Project) that was unfortunately a failure, but some other joint activities such as the Best Practice Handbook for the and collaborative efforts in the 2004 floods have proved that the Country Team can pull together when necessary. The Country Team acts as a development service provider with its Website.

As in other countries, the personal capacity of the RC to provide moral and intellectual leadership without appearing to dominate is the basis for successful strategic positioning by UNDP in the management of the RC function. The RC is well aware of this requirement.

Promoting advocacy

During the reporting period, the CO has achieved a significant level of visibility in Bangladesh and takes a lead in advocacy. The CO Public Information Unit is staffed by one full-time professional who works with the development teams to establish an advocacy strategy. The incumbent expatriate staff member is shortly to be replaced by a Bangladeshi who will have the advantage of also being able to operate in the national language.

The global Human Development Report (HDR) is the subject of an annual advocacy event and other UNDP initiatives are used for advocacy purposes. In many countries, the (NHDR) is UNDP's flagship knowledge product and a key element in the CO's advocacy strategy and for promoting greater visibility. In Bangladesh, however, the CO considers that the national ownership of the report was achieved at the expense of objectivity, and since 2000, production of the report has been abandoned. According to the CO, the annual MDG report provides much of the statistical information that would have been published in the NHDR. It also considers that such CO knowledge products as the Human Security Report and the (forthcoming) report on *hartals* provide the basis for advocacy campaigns that might otherwise have been offered by the NHDR. The CO stressed that it has no objection in principle to the NHDR, but it does not consider it to be a useful exercise if the product does not have full credibility with its target readership. The ADR recognises the importance of the other initiatives but considers that, given the lapse of time since the last NHDR, it might be possible to find a new modality for producing the NHDR that would ensure its independence and objectivity. Alternatively, the CO could produce sub-national reports, including one on the CHT area.

With regard to UNDP's advocacy role, it may be noted that, by and large, UNDP's culture does not understand the importance of systematic and long-term marketing of its products and there is no budget line in the normal budget structure for advocacy and social mobilization. As a result, the CO is obliged to seek finance for each separate advocacy campaign and the momentum is often lost after the main launch.

Strengthening the Country Office capacity

The Country Office

Given UNDP's decentralized structure, the leadership and capacity of the CO are crucial factors in determining the organization's success in areas such as strategic positioning, advocacy and programme implementation. With regard to leadership, it is regrettable, therefore to note that, despite the importance of Bangladesh to UNDP and the size of its programme, in 2000 the resident representative (RR) post was vacant for 10 months and the deputy resident representative (DRR) post was vacant for eight months, part of this time overlapping with the vacancy in the RR post.

Once the new RR was in place, he reacted vigorously to solve the problems of low delivery that had dogged the Bangladesh programme since the mid 1990s and address the numerous negative audit report observations on several NEX projects. As a corrective measure, he instituted a major re-engineering of the CO and reorganized the CO's approach to the management of NEX projects. The transformation exercise was carried out in five main areas:

1. Programme reprofiling
2. Developing a new delivery and resource mobilization strategy
3. Strengthening programme impact and sustainability by improving NEX processes
4. Addressing governance issues within the UNDP programme
5. Innovations in CO management

In October 2002, in order to gain a better grasp of the linkages between the policy issues addressed by UNDP and the programme portfolio, the CO created five taskforces: poverty, including local governance; environment; governance; disaster management; and crisis prevention and human development, including ICT, gender and HIV/AIDS. The taskforces are clearly an important new element in the structure of the CO and over time should be able to enhance its capacity to deliver a quality programme in Bangladesh. Group leaders for the two key taskforces—poverty and governance—continue to remain vacant. It is not always clear, however, to what extent the taskforces collaborate with each other and create synergies between

their activities in a way that would strengthen the impact of the office as a whole. In addition to a "culture of assessment" a "culture of synergy" would benefit the CO.

Promoting a culture of assessment

Since the introduction of the Results Based Management in 1999, UNDP at the corporate level has been actively promoting a culture of assessment at all levels of the organization and has introduced assessment instruments to measure UNDP's influence on development outcomes. Within this framework, the CO prepares annual work plans on the basis of the MYFF and contributes to the ROAR.

As in other field offices, there are signs that the CO has not fully internalized these instruments and that the staff may be more concerned by the forms that they impose than by the substance they represent. At the project level (such as the SLGDP visited by the ADR mission), while tripartite reviews continue to be held and regular reporting activities are undertaken, there still seems to be a greater emphasis on monitoring processes rather than assessing outputs/outcomes. Consider the SLGDP example: The existing performance assessment mechanism addresses the openness and transparency of the elected body in administering the project funds. However, to be effective, such an assessment should equally examine if and how the implemented schemes have changed the lives of the beneficiaries (outputs and outcomes), and whether the desired changes (such as increasing female school enrolment) result from the scheme itself or are due to other factors.

There is also evidence that the recommendations of the mid-term evaluations could have been more rigorously followed up (as in the case of SLGDP and SEMP). For instance, the SLGDP mid-term evaluation pointed to the need to build local capacity for financial management and the need to get more women to participate in UP level meetings, but neither issue was fully addressed.

Project design sets the overall framework for specific activities. It is imperative that, from the beginning of a project, the CO programme staff explicitly recognize the intended outputs/outcomes and how these outcomes are linked to the broader goal of contribution to development effectiveness. This focus on development effectiveness can only be sustained by a culture of assessment in which baseline data is collected and indicators are determined to assess outputs and outcomes or progress towards attaining these outcomes and outputs. In an evolving situation, monitoring and, where possible, evaluations are required to assess the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Feedback will not only assist in correcting possible design errors but also in keeping the initiative on track towards development effectiveness.

A more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation would enable the CO to contribute to UNDP's strategic positioning and to learn from feedback at all levels of its operations. The appointment of a monitoring and evaluation focal point in the office might contribute to promoting a culture of assessment. In addition, identifying relevant indicators to track progress and final outputs and outcomes at the design stage would be required.

Managing resources for maximum contribution to development results

UNDP's strategic positioning in Bangladesh is also significantly affected by programme delivery and resource mobilization concerns. The allocation of UNDP core resources to Bangladesh is in absolute (although not per capita) terms among the highest among UNDP member countries. NEX within the context of weak governance was a major factor in slowing down delivery, and as a result, the substance of programming became increasingly dominated by raising levels of expenditure. The CO is, therefore, constantly obliged to undertake a balancing act between the requirement to spend a fixed amount of resources each year (currently about USD 19 million dollars) and the equally important obligation to spend this money in areas of UNDP's comparative advantage. As the first requirement is expressed in quantitative terms and the second one is entirely qualitative, it is perhaps inevitable that delivery remains a key imperative in the terms of office management.

In 2000, it was realized that in the late 1990s in an attempt to liquidate the carryover, a relatively large proportion of UNDP's resources had been committed to downstream projects that did not meet UNDP's comparative advantage criteria and were underperforming. For instance, programmes for community empowerment and microcredit were replicated on a large scale in the late 1990s without waiting for evaluative evidence from pilot projects. As a result, during 2001 and 2002, under the leadership of the newly arrived RR, a series of evaluations was carried out including 14 project evaluations covering almost 90 percent of UNDP resources in Bangladesh, two thematic evaluations covering the microcredit and community empowerment projects, as well as several ad hoc personnel and financial audits. The main objective was to evaluate these projects in light of their policy significance, to identify factors hindering smooth implementation and identify solutions, such as project reformulation or management support.

As a result of this exercise, UNDP, with the agreement of the government, closed nine non-performing projects for

which no realistic solutions had been found. Approximately USD 25 million was returned to the TRAC for the formation of new projects, mainly concentrated in upstream initiatives such as human security, macro-economic policies for poverty reduction, climate change risk reduction and post-conflict management. Three large projects (SEMP, Urban CEP and Parliament) amounting to USD 50 million were reformed to remove implementation obstacles and to strengthen their policy impact.

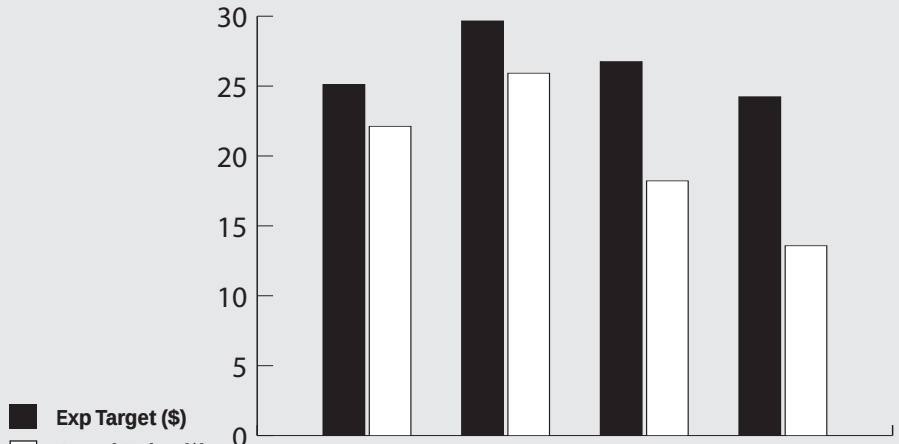
Following the programme reprofiling exercise, more than 90 percent of the existing UNDP portfolio has been re-activated and a delivery rate of USD 19 million was achieved in 2004 (see Table 11 and Figure 5).

However, according to current projections, once the current carry over is expended, the programme ceiling is likely to be reduced substantially (to about USD 10 million per year). In order, therefore, to prevent a resource crisis in the near future, fund mobilization efforts have been resumed and are being accelerated. In line with projected TRAC resources in the coming years, up to USD 15 mil-

TABLE 11. DETAILED ANALYSES OF UNDP/BANGLADESH'S DELIVERY: 1981 - 2010 (USD MILLIONS)

	1981–1985	1986–1990	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010
Carry-over from previous cycle	35.00	15.58	19.53	58.07	50.07	10.00
New allocations for current cycle	91.18	132.73	114.22	63.12	45.70	45.70
Total funds available	126.18	148.31	133.75	121.19	95.77	55.70
Annual average amount available	25.12	29.66	26.75	24.24	19.15	11.14
Actual average annual delivery	22.12	25.92	18.22	13.58	17.15	10.60
Average delivery rate	88.07%	87.39%	68.11%	56.03%	89.6%	95.2%
Delivery rate against new allocation	100.0%	97.6%	79.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Change in carry-over (in dollars)	-19.42	+3.13	+23.12	-4.78	-40.07	
Change in carry-over (as % of total carry-over)	-55.5%	+2.0%	+118.4%	-8.2%	-80.0%	

FIGURE 5. DELIVERY RATES FOR IPF/TRAC RESOURCES (USD MILLIONS)

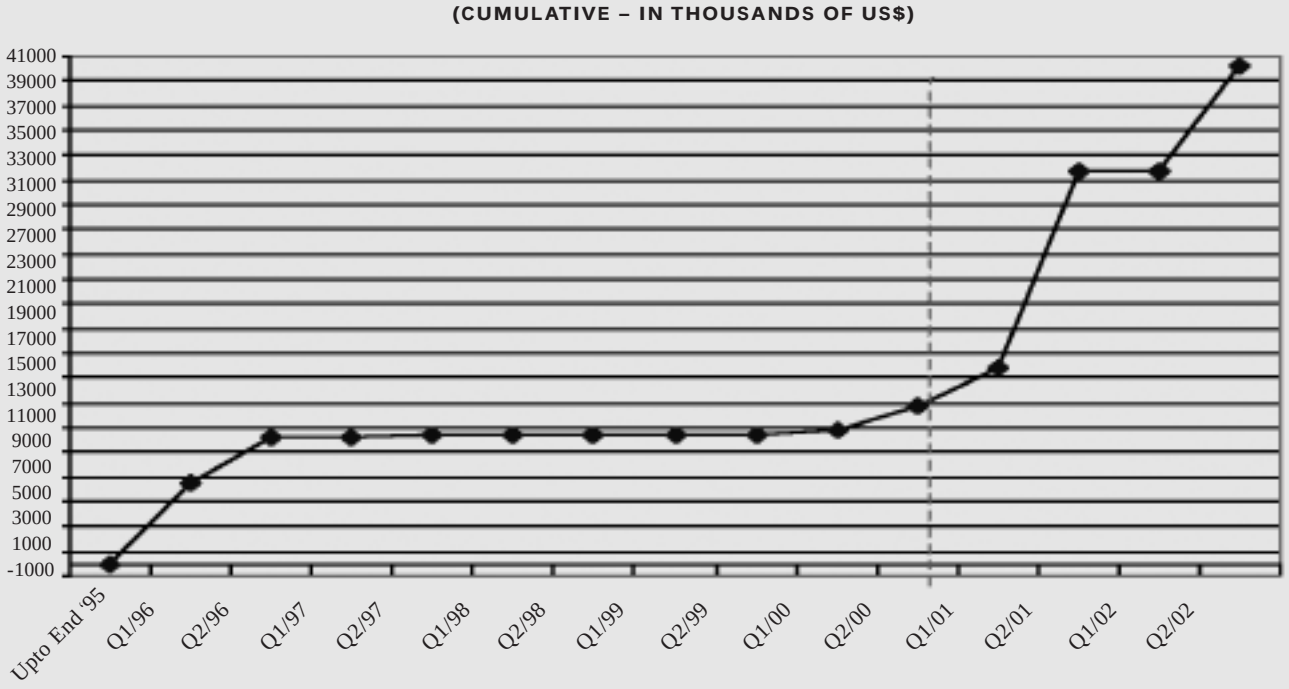


lion per year of non-core funding will need to be mobilized so that the envisaged USD 25 million delivery capacity of UNDP Bangladesh can be fully leveraged for the development of the country.

Recent fund mobilization achievements seem to indicate that this objective may be achievable. For example, a sign of confidence in UNDP's programme performance and UNDP's trustworthiness as a co-financier in Bangladesh is the recent approval of a USD 8.5 million cost-sharing by DFID for climate change and natural disaster risk management. Initial discussions have also taken place for cost-sharing possibilities with Japan, the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom for the peace building process in CHT, urban poverty reduction and police reform. Figure 6 presents UNDP's achievement in non-core resource mobilization.

Clearly, UNDP has been relatively successful in resource mobilization in recent years, but this comes with its own challenges. While the efforts of the leadership and the proficiency of the office staff should be commended on this score, this achievement could also stem from factors beyond UNDP's control. Most notably, the deteriorating governance situation in the country and the acute challenges in delivering assistance are perhaps motivating other partners to rely increasingly on more effective and "safe" partners. UNDP should also recognize that increases in resources entail demanding strategies to manage the delivery of assistance in difficult circumstances.

FIGURE 6. UNDP/BANGLADESH: NON-CORE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION RESULTS



5 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The Bangladesh ADR aims to provide both an evaluation of UNDP's ongoing and planned activities during the period 1996 to 2005 and a vision for future UNDP cooperation. In the short term, it is hoped that these findings and recommendations will be of assistance for positioning UNDP during the next Country Programme period and more specifically for the preparation of the next Country Programme document.

LESSONS LEARNED

A close study of UNDP initiatives provides many lessons that may be drawn on to improve the effectiveness of UNDP's support to Bangladesh in achieving its development goals.

Contributing to development results

Broad-based ownership matters

UNDP initiatives in the environmental sector that responded to the development needs articulated by the Civil Society have proved to be successful (such as NEMAP and the ban on polythene bags). UNDP efforts at coordinating and advocacy as a neutral UN agency have provided a useful platform for active NGOs to engage in dialogue with the government on a number of environmental issues. Despite moments of tensions (for example, with SEMP), UNDP efforts have benefited from strong government commitment and broad-based ownership of environmental reform policies.

Innovative initiatives are critical in a dynamic development context

Successful sub-national level initiatives have demonstrated the viability and effectiveness of promoting the links between NGOs and private sector organizations, like the Solid Waste Management project, a component of SEMP. They have also shown the need to integrate local communities in design, implementation and assessment of their own development initiatives for good governance (for example, SLGDP). UNDP experience also shows the difficulties in undertaking large, multisectoral initiatives (like SEMP), particularly, in terms of managing relationships with the government and coordinating a number of NGO partners.

Complex contexts require nuanced approaches to development support

UNDP support to Bangladesh in addressing the deteriorating governance situation points to the effectiveness of the dual strategy followed. In a politically polarized context, UNDP has chosen, on the one hand, to undertake "neutral" initiatives to institute changes that would help the poor (such as SLGDP). On the other hand, it has taken sensitive issues head on (like the Human Security Report and CHT), maintaining strict neutrality between contending factions. In order to maintain credibility among donors and civil society as a neutral partner, and to be faithful to its human development mandate, UNDP should continue to strike a strategic balance between these two types of approaches.

Enhancing effectiveness of UNDP's support to Bangladesh

Managing partnerships

Government

Cultivating relationships with pro-development elements in the government that share UNDP's goals has proved to be an asset in winning the support of relevant actors within the administration for sensitive initiatives (for example, the Police Reform Project). These relationships with the government have positioned UNDP to take bold leadership steps, such as in CHT, and make inroads into the sensitive governance area through the Human Security Report. The ADR team finds that the UNDP relationship with the government balances the recognition that the government is led by the elected representatives of the people and the fact that serious concerns over the state's accountability to its constituents persist.

Civil society

Discussions with civil society indicate that UNDP has benefited from the service delivery capabilities of the NGOs. Experience shows that UNDP could benefit from close collaboration with proactive and credible NGOs (such as NEMAP). Given their experience, established NGOs could serve as valuable partners for feedback when identifying and conceptualizing appropriate initiatives and helping UNDP avoid mistakes such as CEP or reduce the gender imbalance in UP level meetings of SLGDP. The practice of the CDMP group of the CO in setting up an expert panel to advise on designing initiatives would be a useful model to mainstream within the CO.

Experience shows (for example, under the governance programme) that when UNDP has gained a high level of respect in a given area, it can go beyond advocacy to consensus building and coordination of multipartner inputs (for example, the Human Security Report is being followed by the Police Reform Project).

Effective programming

Enabling conditions within UNDP for improved effectiveness

UNDP CO management is often faced by a conflict between the Headquarters' requirement to spend TRAC resources to the available ceiling and the need to move upstream and engage in more advocacy and policy formation initiatives. Upstream activities consume much more of the CO's staff time but are unlikely to generate high TRAC expenditures. Downstream projects are more likely to relieve delivery concerns.

The issues of delivery of core resources and resource mobilization are qualitatively different in countries with (relatively) large TRAC allocations from the medium sized and smaller programmes. Whatever the size of country and programme (except perhaps for the very small), the costs of upstream advocacy and policy formulation will not vary as much among countries as the potential for expenditures on downstream interventions. It is, therefore, proportionately much easier to reach delivery targets with a mainly upstream programme in a country with a medium-sized TRAC than in one with a very large one.

NEX is an important instrument for creating a sense of national ownership of UNDP supported programmes and projects. However, the quality of the management of NEX projects will inevitably be influenced by the local environment and particularly by prevailing levels of capacity of the public administration in the host country. Thus, it becomes critical to develop NEX modalities that are appropriate for the country context. Failure to recognize this need contributed to the delivery crisis in the CCF-I period. Negotiations are currently underway on a modified NEX agreement based on a NEX operations manual that addresses the challenges faced by UNDP in executing its initiatives. A rigorous approach to NEX management is crucial for UNDP's reputation within the country.

Strengthening micro-macro linkages

Strengthening the two-way link between local-level initiatives and upstream efforts is vital for the effectiveness of UNDP support. UNDP programming provides useful

lessons for micro to macro linkages as well as macro to micro linkages. In this regard, utilization of the National Programme Director through the NEX modality (despite its other challenges), provides a direct channel to the government through the practice of appointing a secretary to the line ministry as National Programme Director.[78] This practice increases the chances of successful projects attracting the attention of decision makers at the national level. Similarly, UNDP's upstream efforts can help formulate effective downstream interventions (for example, work on the Human Security Report helped identify the Police Reform Project and SPPD helped identify SLGDP). Using existing government structures to channel delivery enhances micro-macro linkages. Learning from the past mistakes of CEPs, where dual structures (government and UNDP) led to management conflicts, the SLGDP delivery architecture includes existing UP structures.

Experience at the field level lends credibility for UNDP to become a player at the national level. For instance, in the environmental sector, the Ministry of Environment identified UNDP as a partner in many national efforts, such as formulating the national forestry master plan and, later with the NEMAP, thanks to its experience at the ground level in the early 1990s in areas such as disaster management, conservation of natural resources and bio diversity.

Strengthening the development effectiveness focus of programming

In selecting pilot initiatives, the CO should keep in mind the following.

- UNDP's comparative advantage in the selected field
- The potential for influence on national policy making
- The cost effectiveness of the intervention for replicability
- The potential for strengthening local capacity in a sustained way (rather than as displacement or substitution)
- The potential for strengthening broad-based participation

Strengthening a culture of assessment

Strengthening UNDP's contribution to development effectiveness is only possible if there is rigorous use of available evidence about what works and what fails. With the Management for Results framework, it is no longer adequate to verify whether the appropriate processes are in place, but it is also necessary to assess whether UNDP's efforts are actually changing people's lives.

Even successful programmes need evidence to identify the extent of benefits and potential areas for improvements in future implementation. (For example: How significant is the reduction in air pollution in Dhaka City as a result of the CNG conversion programme? How much has it reduced the burden of disease?) To this end, the ADR team believes that existing monitoring systems must be systematically expanded to cover outputs (and where possible, indicators of success associated with delivery). As observed in the SLGDP case, in many instances such expansion could be readily accommodated.

Evidence need not only be collected from within UNDP's own evaluation and assessment mechanisms. There are NGOs active in practically every village that could be sources of information where information gaps exist. Evidence gathered must be integrated into the decision-making processes at all key stages of implementation. The SLGDP and SEMP initiatives benefited from their mid-term evaluations and were able to correct their course, while the failed replication of microcredit-based CEPs during the CCF-I period neglected to do so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned earlier, even though CCF-II predates the I-PRSP, it provides a good reflection of emerging national priorities. The broad focus of CCF-II is on track, particularly in keeping poverty alleviation on the agenda while increasing the emphasis on governance issues. The aim of this report and this section in particular, is to point to the possibilities, if any, for a sharper focus on areas within these identified priorities.

These recommendations are intended as a set of key strategies from which UNDP Bangladesh could choose based on a full assessment of its own resource constraints and available opportunities. Indeed, the ADR team is well aware that the resources and personnel at the disposal of UNDP Bangladesh may not be adequate for implementing all of these recommendations

These recommendations are derived from the analyses of the sectors studied by the ADR team—namely, environment, poverty alleviation and governance—and do not speak of the other areas of interventions of UNDP Bangladesh, such as risk reduction and disaster management.

Sustaining human development

- In order to address the rising inequalities in income (and some social-sector indicators), UNDP Bangladesh should continue to target the poorest of the poor. To

[78] This practice has come under increasing criticism as the National Programme Director is shared by many such projects and project service delivery suffers due to work overload. The SEMP circumvented this issue by introducing a system of project funded support staff, including a National Programmed Coordinator, specifically linked to the initiative to assist the National Programme Director.

this end, it should continue its course on CHT efforts and hopefully, after completing the initial investment in establishing the organizational infrastructure, more of the resources would directly flow towards development of the "safer" areas within CHT. While the team clearly recognizes the risks involved and the need to move with caution, it should be possible to set a clearer picture by conducting a needs assessment in partnership with other actors and developing a coherent development strategy.

- Given the political sensibilities, an NHDR may not be feasible and may not be even a priority in Bangladesh. However, given the rise in inequalities, particularly geographic inequalities, UNDP may make a significant contribution using its comparative advantage and undertake/initiate developing an HD atlas—a GIS based statistical compendium that could provide detailed disaggregated indicators at UP level. Such information should help make procedures transparent in targeting, and provide valuable base information for advocacy efforts and debates on policy alternatives for the vibrant civil society in the country. This HD atlas could be developed as a partnership effort with the GoB, its statistical bodies, and local think-tanks and NGOs.
- UNDP has made significant headway in the environmental sector at the upstream and downstream level. Clearly, its contributions have been greatly strengthened by its partnership with the proactive NGOs and the media. UNDP could institutionalize this link by inviting key NGOs as part of its advisory panels in designing new strategies.

Sustaining macro-economic momentum

In the post-MFA Bangladesh, UNDP Bangladesh needs to support the ongoing country efforts to diversify exports and to strengthen the non-tradable sector (a CCF-I priority that was omitted in CCF-II) that has contributed greatly to the past growth momentum. Already, UNDP Bangladesh has lost its high profile in policy dialogue. To regain its profile, UNDP Bangladesh needs to shift gears in planning its poverty alleviation strategies and advocacy efforts. Clearly as the first step, additional capacity in the form of trained economists is needed. Avoiding the past pitfalls of its CEPs, it should seek to establish its own comparative advantage in specializing in capacity development of the non-tradable sector. For instance, as the analyses in Chapter 2 pointed out, links between remittances of migrant labour and capacities of non-tradable sector could be explored. In this regard, UNDP headquarters should provide active support for the CO in its effort to champion human development alternatives in relation to the post-MFA development strategies.

Support in the context of deteriorating governance

In the increasingly volatile immediate future, UNDP should focus its limited resources more on "safe" initiatives in its area of comparative advantage. Thus at the upstream level, UNDP should continue its support to election monitoring efforts but emphasize strengthening local capacities to undertake monitoring. At the downstream level, it should focus more on local governance issues. Following its successful SLGDP, UNDP Bangladesh should continue its innovative experiments in strengthening transparency and accountability of local institutions. This focus will be consistent with the I-PRSP priorities of the country as well as the CCF-II agenda. To this end, UNDP Bangladesh should focus its effort in this area on a key pilot exercise and identify arenas in local governance that could be derived from its macro initiatives (such as the Human Security Report) and linked to its efforts on the HD atlas (if undertaken).

ANNEX I: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results—Bangladesh

1. BACKGROUND

The Evaluation Office (EO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a series of country evaluations, called Assessments of Development Results (ADRs), in order to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level. Undertaken in selected countries, the ADRs focus on outcomes and critically examine achievements and constraints in the UNDP thematic areas of focus, draw lessons learned and provide recommendations for the future. The ADRs will also recommend a strategy for enhancing performance and strategically positioning UNDP support within national development priorities and UNDP corporate policy directions. The overall objectives of the ADRs are:

- Support the Administrator's substantive accountability function to the Executive Board and serve as a vehicle for quality assurance of UNDP interventions at the country level.
- Generate lessons from experience to inform current and future programming at the country and corporate levels.
- Provide to the stakeholders in the programme country an objective assessment of results (specifically outcomes) that have been achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key actors for a given multi-year period.

An ADR was initiated in Bangladesh in January 2003. It will cover the period 1996 to 2005, i.e. the 1996-2000 First Country Cooperation Framework (CCF-I) and the 2001-2005 Second Country Cooperation Framework (CCF-II). The assessment will, however, attempt to point out where support prior to this period may have served as foundation for current achievements.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Bangladesh, with a population of 137.4 million, is situated in South Asia and covers 144 thousand square kilometres in area. The country extends from the Bay of Bengal in the south and merges into the highlands of India under the foothills of the Himalayas in the north.

Bangladesh has experienced relatively good economic growth during the last 10 years. During the 1990s, GDP per capita grew at approximately 3 percent per year, and during the last five years, per capita growth reached a peak of 3.8 percent. Exports have been an important engine for growth, particularly the ready-made garments sector. But manufacturing remains secondary to the agricultural sector as the main provider

THE STRATEGIC AREAS OF SUPPORT WHERE INTENDED OUTCOMES ARE PLANNED IN BANGLADESH ARE:

Governance	Poverty	Environment	Gender	Special Development Situations	UNDP support to UN
• Dialogue that widens development choices • Local governance	Human and income poverty in national frameworks	Environment management and energy for livelihoods	Gender equality for decision-making processes	Effective disaster relief and management	Effective operational activities

Source: RBMS, SRF 2000-2003.

of employment. Governance problems remain major constraints to growth. Bangladesh attracts very low levels of foreign direct investment confined to a small number of sectors. Bangladesh remains one of the poorest countries in the world. Gross National Income is around USD 50 billion (2001). This is equivalent to an average of USD 380 per person. As of 2001, about half of the country's population are poor (65 million). The absolute number is rising as population expands. It is estimated that one fifth to one third of the potential poverty reduction from growth in the past two decades may have been lost because of increasing inequality (World Bank, 1999). Women and children are disproportionately affected. Almost all (95 percent) of female headed households are estimated to be below the poverty line. Vulnerability to natural disasters, sickness and other shocks is acute. In any given year, many fall into as well as climb out of poverty and extreme poverty because of vulnerability.

Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world, which creates social and ecological pressures. These are intensified by the distribution of resources.

Democracy was restored in Bangladesh in 1991. The country has had two changes of government after free and fair multi-party elections. In 1997, local elections were held at Union level, the lowest tier of local government. Voter turnout in all these elections was high, including by women. However there are negative aspects of the present political system. Parliament is dysfunctional and government and opposition rarely debate. Parliamentary procedures are poorly understood and oversight functions are not performed effectively. Politics is structured by patronage. Inefficiency and corruption are major obstacles to Bangladeshi development. Democratization has created more public debate on the issues and is enabling a more plural civil society, but is barely making an impact on governance.

At the same time with the sustained growth, quantitative progress has been made in educational enrolment and access, although qualitative problems are still evident. Infant and child mortality is much improved. While Bangladesh has made important progress and development is happening, the challenges are still significant.

3. UNDP COOPERATION IN BANGLADESH

The first Bangladesh Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) for the period 1996-2000 considered poverty alleviation as its paramount objective. Four other supportive and interrelated objectives that reflected the government's national priorities and UNDP mandate were also highlighted:

1. Improved environmental management;
2. Non-formal employment-generation;
3. Advancement of women; and
4. Improved public management for good governance.

UNDP has continued to support national capacities and institutions to develop a comprehensive national poverty alleviation strategy. But the main thrust of the first CCF had been the development and implementation of a strategy that is anchored on social mobilization and empowerment of local communities, with a focus on the poor and the women. UNDP launched its Community Empowerment Programmes (CEPs) based on the experience of the SAPAP (South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme) approach in the mid 1990s.

At the early stages, the CEPs were declared as successful programmes to combat poverty and improve the livelihoods of community members in a sustainable manner. However, CEPs soon started to experience considerable problems at different levels. A central underlying cause was that microfinance, originally designed as an auxiliary component of the CEP model, emerged into becoming the prime focus. As a result, UNDP designed 15 projects with microfinance components for an amount of USD 33 million.[79] While conferring some benefits to the participants of these projects, they proved to be not self-sustainable and exacted large financial resources. UNDP Bangladesh has realized that microfinance is not an area of comparative advantage for them and could be better promoted by organizations like the Grameen Bank and NGOs such as BRAC and Proshika.

The CEPs suffered from lack of demonstrated replicability and weak macro-impact. Linkages to local governance were weak and project benefits accrued to the community as a whole rather than to poor people in particular.[80] The situation was further exacerbated by the lack of a coherent overall strategy, upstream policy relevance and strong management. Finally, the programme was unsuccessful in garnering government interest and support. Given the experience and the lessons learned, UNDP Bangladesh has decided to close down its rural CEPs and to phase-out its support to microcredit programmes.

On the more positive front, during the first CCF period, UNDP provided essential support for strengthening parliamentary and electoral processes, and in reforming public administration. UNDP's involvement has been widely recognized as having been a critical factor in the successful execution of the national and local elections in Bangladesh. UNDP was able to effectively capitalize on its

[79] Kooi Peter and Karim Nilufer, "UNDP Microfinance Strategy for Bangladesh," February 2002.

reputation as a trusted and neutral third-party to play a leading role in the organization and monitoring of the parliamentary elections in 1996 and local elections in 1997 and 1999. In fact, many donors have commented that without UNDP's initiative and commitment to the election process, donors would have refrained from providing support towards the elections.

Several UNDP strategic initiatives have grown from modest beginnings to become national processes of major importance. These include: (a) preparatory work towards a human-rights commission, now part of a national programme for human rights; (b) programming for biodiversity; (c) comprehensive disaster management; (d) establishment of a national policy on integrated pest management; and (e) management of the HIV/AIDS programme and elaboration of a national HIV/AIDS policy.

Aid coordination has been a significant role that the UNDP has played in Bangladesh. Building on its neutrality and proven areas of comparative advantage, UNDP has—besides attracting and managing donor participation through cost-sharing or parallel funding in supporting national, sub-national and local elections—coordinated aid in containing and mitigating the negative impact of arsenic contamination in Bangladesh's drinking water. Similarly, the United Nations Disaster Management Team helped to mobilize USD 204 million of assistance for the worst floods of the century in 1998. UNDP was equally instrumental in coordinating development partners after the 1997 landmark treaty that brought peace to the CHT.

UNDP has been playing an instrumental role in bringing the environment to the forefront of policy issues in Bangladesh. The National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), which was approved by the government in 1996, was largely made possible through UNDP financial support and initiative. NEMAP was Bangladesh's first major policy document on sustaining and promoting the country's natural environment. It was produced through a participatory process with representation from grassroots, sub-national, national and international levels.

In 1997, as follow-up action to NEMAP, UNDP committed USD 26 million to the implementation of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) to address the major environmental priorities identified by NEMAP. At that time, SEMP was UNDP's largest ever grant programme in the area of environment globally. SEMP consisted of 26 projects, executed by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and implemented by 21 government/non-government agencies throughout Bangladesh. The projects focused on policy and institutions, participatory ecosystem management, community-based environmental sanitation, advocacy and awareness, and training and education for sustainable resource use and management. Overall, while achieving some of the intended results, SEMP progress has been hampered by the lack of national capacities, weak coordination among the various projects and substantial delays in project implementation.[81]

There is an emerging consensus that to reduce poverty through social mobilization and empowerment of local communities, it needs to be reinforced by capacity building for local government, both in terms of institutional and policy support. As such, it is now realized that weaknesses in governance are at the heart of constraints on accelerated development and the elimination of poverty. Furthermore, the intended impact of community-empowerment interventions demands long-term commitment, sustained focus and deeper connectivity at operational levels.

With the global shift in perspectives on development and UNDP Bangladesh's own lessons learned from its programmes, UNDP in Bangladesh is substantially shifting its focus to the area of governance.

The 2001-2005 CCF continues with the overall goals of the first CCF but with increased emphasis on improving governance for sustainable human development (SHD) at the sub-national and national levels. In fact, at the request of the government, more than half the resources channelled through UNDP initiatives are already being dedicated to strengthening democratic governance, improving human rights, transparency and accountability in Bangladesh. Specifically, UNDP support has focused on areas of parliamentary democracy, electoral process, local governance, human rights, financial transparency, gender and equity, and environmental management.

For the 2001-2005 CCF period, UNDP has identified the following areas for programme priority:

1. Decentralized governance for poverty reduction;
2. Enabling environment for SHD;
3. Environment and food security;
4. Gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women; and
5. Complementary pro-poor interventions.

UNDP has experienced substantial delays in both the programming and implementation of the CCFs. The introduction of new concepts, procedures, methodologies and partners, along with delays in project approval for

[80] Akash M. M., "Country Assessment of Macro and Micro Linkages: Bangladesh," Department of Economics, Dhaka University, Bangladesh, August 2002.

[81] UNDP, "Independent External Evaluation of Sustainable Environment Management Programme," June 2001.

national execution and the political turmoil in Bangladesh, has hindered the scheduled execution of the CCFs.[82] UNDP expects the results intended for the first CCF to become tangible during the new CCF period (2001- 2005).

UNDP has made significant progress in rationalizing country programmes into a few priority focus areas. The number of ongoing UNDP projects in Bangladesh has been reduced from a scattered portfolio of 123 in 1992 to 32 at present,[83] with an emphasis in the area of macro and micro policy reforms and institution building. For such reforms to be truly successful, it is not enough to formulate good policy plans and pass legislative bills. What is key is that the micro beneficiaries become organized and put pressure on the macro authority for desired changes, and that the appropriate leaders have sufficient commitment to implement them. This has proven a big challenge for UNDP in Bangladesh.

Experiences with NEX in Bangladesh have been unsatisfactory, and have resulted in lower financial delivery and negative audit observations. However, UNDP considers national ownership to be essential to the sustainability of development initiatives. NEX will, thus, remain as the main execution modality but with major reforms in strategy to improve NEX operational guidelines, providing training on NEX and improving monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

During 1997-2000, UNDP contributed approximately USD 72 million to Bangladesh. This represents 24 percent of the UN assistance and only 1 percent of total ODA flow during that time period.[84] Given limited financial contribution, especially when compared to other donor partners, UNDP should ascertain and focus on its area of comparative advantage and maximize fund efficiency. Furthermore, given the decision to depart from its priority on community empowerment and the slow pace of policy reforms, there is a need for UNDP Bangladesh to reconsider its overall engagement in Bangladesh and revisit its strategy based on the lessons learned so far. Efforts also need to be made to improve UNDP credibility in the eyes of other development partners so that UNDP can further capitalize on its position as a neutral agency committed to the cause of human development.

The evaluation will look at the results achieved for the period of 1996 to date (2003). The evaluation will also take account of intended results as expressed in the current CCF and SRF, until the end of the current CCF in 2005. The evaluation will consider the totality of the key results and goals in this period, as described in Annex with the main intended objectives described in the various planning instruments of UNDP (UNDAF, CCF) and the UNDP programme portfolio.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the evaluation is to review the experience of UNDP in Bangladesh, draw lessons learned and recommend improvements. At the same time, the ADR will address the issue of what is the net value added of UNDP's work and its strategic positioning. The ADR in Bangladesh will:

- Provide an overall assessment of the results achieved through UNDP support and in partnership with other key development actors during 1996-2005 with particular in-depth assessment within governance and environment, within an overall emphasis on poverty reduction and sustainable human development. The in-depth study will examine UNDP's strategic role in enabling policy reforms and implementation in the areas of parliamentary, human rights, local governance, financial management and electoral reforms and processes, and sustainable environment management with a link to disaster relief and management. The evaluation should also bring out the historic presence of UNDP in Bangladesh and draw links from current achievements to early UNDP interventions before 1996, as appropriate, such as in the environment arena with NEMAP. The analyses should focus on how and why the results were achieved to draw lessons, with particular attention to:
  a. UNDP role and contribution in supporting governance reforms, both in parliamentary and electoral processes and in the decentralization process, with an assessment of issues on improving transparency and accountability;
  b. Effectiveness of UNDP assistance in the areas of sustainable environmental management, with additional focus on disaster management; and
  c. UNDP's value added through its policy advice, partnership, coordination and risk taking in shaping national development priorities and their capacity to achieve the intended development results.
- Provide an analyses of how UNDP has positioned itself strategically to add value in response to national needs and changes in the national development context, with particular attention to:

[82] UNDP Bangladesh,"Performance Audit Report," August 8, 2002.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

a. UNDP's strategic shift in focus in the CCF 1996-2000 to CCF 2001-2005 to good governance for poverty alleviation;

b. The entry points and strategy selected by UNDP in support of the government reform process and risks taken;

c. UNDP's value-added in formulating a national environment policy and its implementation as well as the national disaster management policy;

d. Policy relevance, sustainability and macro-impact of UNDP programmes; and

e. UNDP's areas of focus, role, partnership strategy/ coordination and performance vis-à-vis other development partners.

Based on the analyses of achievements and positioning above, present key findings, draw key lessons and provide clear and forward-looking recommendations in order to suggest effective and realistic strategies by UNDP and partners towards intended results.

5. SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The evaluation will undertake a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio and activities during the period of review, with more in-depth focus on the strategic programme and advocacy position of UNDP Bangladesh. Specifically, the ADR will cover the following:

a. Strategic positioning

- Ascertain the *bearing* of UNDP support on national needs, development goals and priorities, including relevance, linkages with the goal of reducing poverty and other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This may include an analyses of the perceived comparative strengths of the programme and a review of the major national challenges to development. The evaluation will take account of, inter alia, the government reform agenda, the Five-Year Plan, evaluation reports of the election and parliamentary programmes, CEP evaluations, WB study on Taming Leviathan, DFID Study on policy change, reports of Transparency International, Human Security Report, PRSP and MDG evaluations. This aims to ascertain the added value of UNDP support in effectively influencing national development results, through, for example, prioritization, selection of strategies and entry points.
- Assess how UNDP has *anticipated and responded* to significant changes in the national development context, affecting governance, poverty, gender, environment and disaster management. The evaluation may, for example, consider key events at the national and political level that influence the development environment, the risk management of UNDP, any missed opportunities for UNDP involvement and contribution, efforts of advocacy and policy advice, and UNDP's responsiveness versus concentration of efforts. The evaluation will specifically bring out the choices made by UNDP to focus on governance reforms and environment and their rationale.
- Review the *synergies and alignment* of UNDP support with other initiatives and partners, including that of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Global Cooperation Framework (GCF) and the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF). This may include looking at how UNDP has leveraged its resources and that of others towards results, the balance between upstream and downstream initiatives, and the work on MDGs. The evaluation will take account of, inter alia, the 2001 Evaluation of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP), 2002 UNCDF/UNDP SPPD mission, 2002 UNDP study on micro-macro linkages, 2002 UNDP Performance Audit Report, evaluation reports of the CEP, SAPAP and microfinance programmes, as well as work by the SHD project. This aims to ascertain how UNDP has leveraged other initiatives for results.
- The evaluation should consider the influence of *systemic issues*, i.e. policy and administrative (implementation, delivery, transparency) constraints affecting the programme, on both the donor and programme countrysides, as well as how the development results achieved and the partnerships established have contributed to ensure a relevant and strategic position of UNDP.

b. Development results

- Provide an examination of the *effectiveness and sustainability* of the UNDP programme, by: (a) highlighting main achievements (outcomes) at the national level in the last five years or so (some results have their origin in efforts prior to 1996) and UNDP's contribution to these in terms of key outputs; and (b) ascertaining current progress made in achieving outcomes in the given thematic areas of UNDP and UNDP's support to these. The evaluation should qualify the UNDP contribution to the outcomes with a fair degree of plausibility, and consider anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative outcomes. It should also gauge the contribution to capacity development at the national level to the extent it is implicit in the intended results, as well as national ownership as success factor. The assessment will cover the key results and support in all thematic

areas (governance, poverty, environment and disaster management, gender, HIV/AIDS, any other areas if appropriate). BIDS will undertake this part with the exception of the work on governance and environment/disaster management.

- Identify and analyze the main *factors* influencing results, including the range and quality of development partnerships forged and their contribution to outcomes, the provision of upstream assistance and how the positioning of UNDP influences its results and partnership strategy.
- Assess the *anticipated progress* in achieving intended outcomes, with regard to the SRF Outcomes (see Annex) the 2001-2005 CCF objectives and proposed future programmes and objectives, and the MDGs.
- Provide an *in-depth analyses* of the following, and identify the key challenges and strategies for future interventions in this area. The subject for the in-depth analyses was principally selected due to the shift in UNDP focus to the area of governance as key to poverty alleviation, its potential for far-reaching and long-term impact on national development and people's participation in the decision-making process, and the political hurdles that make the reform process complex, challenging and necessary. The environment is key to the livelihood of the poor in Bangladesh but it is highly fragile. Thus, more successful and sustainable environmental management efforts are not only important in their own right but also are key to the country's development efforts.
- Analyze the achievements, UNDP efforts and strategies for *decentralized governance*. This may include critical review of UNDP engagement in the parliamentary, administrative and electoral reform processes; UNDP's support for local governance reforms with an emphasis on capacity building and institutional support; and the effects and lessons from the UNDP support to poverty alleviation through community empowerment programmes and microcredit schemes.
- Analyze the achievements, UNDP efforts and strategies for a sustainable and effective *sustainable environmental management* country programme, especially with an emphasis on developing a comprehensive environmental policy framework, and capacity building for better monitoring and evaluation of environmental changes including the development of a rapid response disaster mitigation and relief programme.

c. Lessons learned and good practices

Identify key lessons in the thematic areas of focus and lessons on positioning that can provide a useful basis for strengthening UNDP support to the country and for improving programme performance, results and effectiveness in the future. Through in-depth thematic assessment, present good practices at country level for learning and replication. Draw lessons from unintended results where possible.

6. METHODOLOGY

The assessment will employ a variety of methodologies including desk reviews, stakeholder meetings, client surveys, and focus group interviews and select site visits. The evaluation team will review national policy documents (including the Five-Year Plans, Annual Development Plans, PRSP, and Human Development Report), and the overall programming frameworks (UNDAF 2001-2005, CCA 1999, CCF 1996-2000 and CCF 2001- 2005), which give an overall picture of the country context. The team will also consider any thematic studies/papers, select project documents, programme support documents, and any reports from monitoring and evaluation at country level (in particular the evaluations on community empowerment and local government, elections and parliamentary programme evaluations), as well as available documentation and studies from other development partners. Statistical data will be assessed where useful. The empirical evidence will be gathered through three major sources of information: perception, validation and documentation according to the concept of "triangulation."

A wide **stakeholder** consultation and involvement is envisaged. The evaluation team will meet with government ministries/institutions at central and province level, research institutions, civil society organizations, NGOs and private sector representatives, UN Agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries. The team will visit **field/project sites** as required, as will be decided by the evaluation team and the EO in consultation with the CO. In terms of methodology, the ADR will follow the guidance issued by the EO, and consist of preparation (with preliminary desk review, programme mapping, TOR proposal, exploratory mission to the CO, theme-specific desk research and local studies and research); conducting the ADR by the country evaluation mission; and use of the ADR and follow-up (dissemination, corporate discussions, CO management response, stakeholder consultations, learning events).

Preparatory work at the local level will be carried out in advance to provide a substantive background for the evaluation team. This will include the in-depth analyses of achievements and challenges in the strategic position of UNDP. Local research institutions and international consultants with expertise in resource mobilization will

conduct these studies. This work will entail the review of available reports, collecting additional documentation, conducting select interviews, field visits and analyses and brainstorming. This work will be based on specific TOR (for the in-depth studies in governance and environment) in addendum to these generic terms of reference.

7. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The main expected output is the comprehensive final report on "Bangladesh Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results," including relevant annexes with detailed data. In addition, supporting studies will be available (e.g. in-depth analyses, case studies).

The final report by the ADR Evaluation Team, according to the suggested outline in the ADR Framework Paper, should at the very least contain:

- Executive Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations
- Background, with analyses of country context
- Strategic Positioning and Programme Relevance
- Programme Performance
- Lessons Learned and Good Practices
- Findings and Recommendations
- Annexes (TOR, abbreviations, persons met, documentation reviewed, statistics/ national development indicators etc., details on the programme portfolio, overview of official development assistance, overview of intended results for UNDP, MDG indicators and status, country map)

Towards the end of their mission, and prior to leaving the country, the evaluation team will discuss its preliminary findings and recommendations with the Resident Representative and the CO staff and present these to the government and partners. A meeting of key stakeholders can be held at the end of the mission or once the final report is available. The team will use this feedback to finalize the report. The team leader is responsible for submitting the draft report to the EO, UNDP headquarters, no later than two weeks after completion of the country mission.

8. EVALUATION TEAM

The composition of the evaluation team should reflect the independence and the substantive results focus of the exercise. The team leader and all the members of the review team will be selected by the UNDP EO in consultation with the Regional Bureau for Asia & the Pacific (RBAP), UNDP New York and the CO. The team leader must have a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice and in the evaluation and management of complex programmes in the field. The team composition should reflect a good knowledge of the region, excellent experience in evaluation and particular expertise in resource mobilization.

The team will comprise three international consultants, one of which will be the team leader, an expert in governance and a staff member from the UNDP EO. The staff member from the EO will bring to the team the Results-Based Management perspective, knowledge of the ADR methodology, familiarity with UNDP operations and knowledge of the UNDP's thematic areas. One or more UNDP staff members from another office will also be part of the team, to bring additional competencies in the UNDP priorities, especially in partnership development and MDGs. In addition, one or more national consultant(s) who possesses broad expertise and knowledge of the national development context and in at least one thematic area of the CCF or strategic area under the SRF may also be called upon to support the team. The UNDP CO will assist the EO in the identification of suitable national consultants for recruitment.

Furthermore, the team will base its work on preparatory research and studies by local research institutes, donors, evaluation reports and surveys. The local research partners will also work in close collaboration with the international team of evaluators during the main evaluation mission.

9. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The EO will manage the evaluation and ensure coordination and liaison with concerned units at headquarters' level. The task manager of the EO will lead the ADR process, in close consultation with the RBx and the CO Management (RR/ DRR). The EO will also ensure substantive supervision of all research, and determine the evaluation team composition.

The CO will take a lead role in dialogue and interaction with stakeholders on the findings and recommendations, support the evaluation team in liaison with the key partners and discussions with the team, and make available to the team all relevant material. The CO will provide support to logistics and planning.

The UNDP EO will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ADR. These will include costs related to participation of the team leader, the international and national consultant(s) and the EO staff member, the UNDP staff member on the evaluation team, as well as the preliminary research and issuance of the final ADR report in English. The CO will contribute support in kind. The EO will also cover costs of any stakeholder workshops during the ADR mission.

TIMELINE AND KEY MILESTONES FOR THE BANGLADESH ADR EVALUATION

Milestones	Dates
HQ desk review and analyses of documentation	January–February 2003
Exploratory mission to country by EO task manager	January–February 2003
First draft TOR circulated for comments	February 2003
Comments received	February–March 2003
Draft TOR finalized and distributed	March 2003
Start of research preparatory studies and surveys at country level	March 2003
Completion of preparatory studies and surveys at country level	April–May 2003
Identification/selection of external consultants	February–April 2003
Consultations with HQ units and persons	March–April 2003
Country mission/independent review by external consultants	June 2003
Submission of draft report by evaluation team	July 2003
Circulation of draft report for feedback	August 2003
Submission of final report	September 2003
Issuance of final report	September 2003
Consultations and follow-up	September 2003

ANNEX II. UNDP BANGLADESH SRF: OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

Outcomes	Outputs
Goal 1—GOVERNANCE	
SGN2–Strengthened capacity of key government institutions	
Parliament—Increased effectiveness of parliament to perform its legislative and oversight functions	• Operational reforms undertaken to strengthen Institute of Parliamentary Studies (IPS), and Legislative Information Centre (LIC) and to improve printing, communication and training facilities • Proposal for revision of the rules/procedures of business conduct, and reform of the parliamentary committee system
Electoral Systems—Improved conformity of the legal and electoral framework to international standards	• Improved skills of the EC staff in their respective election responsibilities • Electronic voter database system created in at least 30% of constituencies • Voter education programme initiated and implemented in 50% of the constituencies
Human Rights—Effective ombudsman and other human rights oversight bodies established and/or in operation	• Draft Bill on BNHRC • Prepare training manuals to be incorporated in training programmes for key human rights players
SGN3–Increased social cohesion based on participatory local governance and stronger local communities and institutions	
Planning and budgeting processes at sub-national levels reformed to more effectively incorporate community level perspectives, participation and needs	• Methodology of devolution of planning activities to local governments developed and pilot tested • System for the training of locally elected representatives (65,000 of which 13,500 were women) designed, field tested and implemented at Union Parishad/Pourasova levels
Goal 2—POVERTY REDUCTION	
SGN1–Human and income poverty addressed in national policy frameworks	
Poverty Reduction Strategies—National anti-poverty strategy developed through a participatory process involving, in particular, the poor themselves	• Annual NHDRs prepared focusing on Bangladesh's development priorities • Proposals submitted for GoB consideration based on poverty reduction lessons learnt from the community empowerment programmes
HIV/AIDS–Institutional capacity built to plan and implement multi-sectoral strategies to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigate its social and economic impact	• Effective multi-sectoral and institutional HIV/AIDS partnership developed and made operational

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Outcomes	Outputs
Goal 3—ENVIRONMENT	
SGN 1–Sustainable environmental management and energy development to improve the livelihoods and security of the poor	
National polices/sectoral guidelines/regulatory framework developed/reformed for enhancing sustainable natural resource management and environmental governance ensuring livelihood of the poor	• National environmental policies on IPM and Land Use adopted • 7 community-based solid and liquid waste management systems built • 18 sectoral guidelines prepared • Renewable energy options available • Information network made operational
Global environment concerns and commitments integrated in national development planning and policy	• Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan prepared and implemented • 75% ODS phase-out achieved and monitoring/ regulatory system established • Community management for biodiversity conservation established in 4 Ecologically Critically Areas (ECA)
Goal 4—GENDER	
SGN2—Promote the advancement of women through global commitments	
National action plan for the advancement of women, jointly adopted, implemented and monitored by government, legislature and civil society	• Proposals prepared for improving gender training capacity in key academic institutions; making research information and gender disaggregated data more readily available • Proposals prepared for integrating gender concerns into sectoral plans of key ministries
Goal 5—SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT SITUATIONS	
SGN1–Reduced risk of disasters in programme countries	
Develop and implement a national disaster reduction and response system	• Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) Framework developed
Goal 6—UNDP SUPPORT TO THE UN	
SGN1–Accelerated progress on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration	
Systematic monitoring for progress to reach national targets for the achievement of global goals	• A CCA database with comprehensive coverage of global targets set by global conferences and agreed upon by GoB • Report on follow-up to Global Conferences covering the period 1999-2001, completed in 2002

Source: Bangladesh SRF list of Outcomes and Outputs.

ANNEX III. UNDP BANGLADESH: INTENDED DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

UNDP Themes	CCF 1996–2000	CCF 2001–2005	UNDAF Focus Areas	SRF Outcomes
Governance	**Promotion of good governance** • Promote democratic institutions and processes, including those relating to justice and the legal system, elections and human security • Strengthen transparency and accountability • Increase civic participation	**Governance for SHD** • Decentralized governance for poverty reduction • Empower local authorities and communities • Policy and institutional support for local governance **Enabling environment for SHD** • Make key public institutions transparent, effective and accountable **Local governance** • Planning and budgeting processes at sub-national levels reformed to more effectively incorporate community level perspectives, participation and needs	**Promoting the right of protection and participation** • Strengthened democratic process and improved political governance • Strengthened urban and rural decentralized governance • Improved public administration • Strengthened civil society, including association of organized and unorganized labor established and/or in operation	**Capacity of key government institutions** • Increased effectiveness of parliament to perform its legislative and oversight functions • Improved conformity of the legal and electoral framework to international standards • Effective ombudsman and other human rights oversight bodies
Poverty Reduction	**Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods** • Promotion of and advocacy for the national poverty alleviation programme • Focus on the poorest and the most deprived, especially women, through a participatory approach • Emphasize non-formal sector employment generation	**Empower the poor and promote their rights** • Integration of disaster management and the improvement of agricultural productivity and diversification into local planning • Raise awareness on nutrition and improve household food security • Minimize social-impact of HIV/AIDS	**Promoting the right of survival and livelihoods** • Empowerment of poor/ marginalized communities/groups through increased access to assets, resources • Food security; improved nutritional intake • Improved access to quality, basic social services • Improved access to formal and non-formal education	**Human and income poverty/ national poverty frameworks** • National anti-poverty strategy developed through a participatory process involving, in particular, the poor themselves • Institutional capacity built to plan and implement multi-sectoral strategies to limit the spread of HIV/AIDS and mitigate its social and economic impact
Environment	**Protection of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources** • Support the development of a more comprehensive environmental policy framework • Promote sustainable and participatory environmental management models	**Environment and food security** • Integration of sound environmental management with national development policies and programmes • Protect and regenerate the environment • Promote access to natural resources on which the poor can depend • Foster equity and burden sharing in international cooperation	**Promoting a healthy physical environment** • Arsenic mitigation, especially for the poor • Strengthened regional and international cooperation	**Environment and energy of livelihoods** • National polices/sectoral guidelines/ regulatory framework developed/reformed for enhancing sustainable natural resource management and environmental governance ensuring livelihood of the poor • Global environment concerns and commitments integrated in national development planning and policy

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Gender

Gender and women in development
- Support national strategy for advancement of women

Gender mainstreaming
- Enhance women's equal access to and control over assets and resources
- Ensure human rights
- Integrate gender concerns into sectoral plans

Empower women
- Empowerment and increased participation of women
- Promotion of opportunities to obtain decent and productive work

Advancement of women
- National action plan for the advancement of women, jointly adopted, implemented and monitored by government, legislature and civil society

Special Development Situations

Disaster relief and management
- Address a broad spectrum of disaster prevention and preparedness activities

Mainstream disaster management

Reduced risk of disasters
- Develop and implement a national disaster reduction and response system

UNDP Support to the UN

Progress on MDGs
- Systematic monitoring for progress to reach national targets for the achievement of global goals

ANNEX IV: UNDP BANGLADESH 2001-2005 CCF PROGRAMME OUTLINE

CCF Area 1: Decentralized governance for poverty reduction

Outcome 1 Accelerated poverty reduction through local resource mobilization

Projects Completed in 2002

BGD/96/002 – Community Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation (BRDB) [Budget: $873,752]

BGD/96/009 – Non-Formal Employment [Budget: $593,950]

BGD/96/003 – Community Empowerment for Poverty Alleviation (RDA) [Budget: $1,286,240]

BGD/96/019 – Rural Youth [Budget: $2,007,972]

Ongoing Projects

BGD/96/001 – Community Empowerment for Rural Poverty Alleviation through BARD [Budget: $758,185]

BGD/97/006 – Poverty Alleviation, Kishorgunj Transition [Budget: $3,918,497]

BGD/97/028 – Street Children Community Empowerment Programme [Budget: $2,396,006]

BGD/98/006 – Urban Poverty Alleviation [Budget: $12,728,659]

BGD/98/015 – Urban Community Empowerment Programme [Budget: $87,300]

BGD/99/005 – Gopalgunj, Community Empowerment Programme [Budget: $200,000]

BGD/00/009 – Community Empowerment, BRDB II [Budget: $1,608,096]

Outcome 2 Sound local-level planning and policy assessment of institutional arrangements

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/001 – Building Capacity for Local Governance [Budget: $2,022,836]

BGD/02/002 – Policy on Local Governance & Decentralization [Budget: $235,550]

Outcome 3 Government-led nationwide training

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/022 – Pro-Poor Vocational Training [Budget: $1,791,265]

BGD/98/016 – Skill Training & Employment Promotion [Budget: $145,000]

CCF Area 2: Enabling environment for sustainable human development

Outcome 1 Improved financial and administrative capacity and accountability of the government

Projects Completed in 2002

BGD/90/028 – Management Development Support (Ministry of Finance) [Budget: $673,563]

BGD/97/002 – Strengthening of Auditor-General's Office [Budget: $1,929,700]

BGD/99/003 – Strengthening the Labor Migration [Budget: $20,364]

Ongoing Projects

BGD/93/008 – Support to SHD [Budget: $4,002,929]

BGD/98/004 – Support to NEX [Budget: $98,214]

BGD/00/001 – Core National Action Plan for Employment Generation [Budget: $70,000]

BGD/01/001 – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [Budget: $35,000]

Outcome 2 Strengthen electoral commission capacity and civic awareness for efficient and transparent elections

Projects Completed in 2002

BGD/01/002 – Support to Election Commission [Budget: $271,682]

BGD/01/003 – EU Observers – 2001 Election [Budget: $796,211]

Ongoing Projects

BGD/96/018 – Strengthening the Election System [Budget: $10,232,600]

BGD/95/006 – Utilization of AEZ Data [Budget: $2,069,934]

Outcome 3 Create a more responsive, effective and transparent parliament

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/003 – Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy [Budget: $7,441,475]

Outcome 4 Effective legal and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

Ongoing Projects

BGD/95/005 – Human Rights [Budget: $2,069,934]

BGD/03/001 – Human Rights [Budget: $170,000 (TO BE APPROVED SOON)]

CCF Area 3: Environment and food security

Outcome 1 Establish participatory national environment policy

Ongoing Projects

BGD/96/007 – Sustainable Environment Management Programme [SEMP] [Budget: $18,555,421]

BGD/99/G62 – Implementation of the Refrigeration Management Plan [Budget: $15,455]

BGD/99/G63 – National Recovery & Recycling [Budget: $298,270]

BGD/00/G31 – Biodiversity Strategy Plan [Budget: $278,900]

BGD/00/008 – TA for RPGCL [Budget: $1,524,995]

Outcome 2 Increase number of environmental-friendly livelihood options

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/017 – Coastal Fishing Communities [Budget: $6,269,549]

BGD/97/033 – Cooperative Development Plan [Budget: $15,593]

BGD/99/G31 – Coastal Wetland [Budget: $5,520,000]

BGD/95/G61 – ODS Phase-Out, ACI [Budget: $322,920]

BGD/99/G61 – Institutional Strengthening ODS Phase-Out [Budget: $74,982]

BGD/02/G61 – Institutional Strengthening ODS Phase-Out [Budget: $100,000]

Outcome 3 Establish national policy and capacity for a comprehensive disaster management programme

Projects Completed in 2002

BGD/92/002 – Disaster Management [Budget: $3,569,426]

BGD/99/009 – Arsenic Contamination and Crop Protection [Budget: $184,000]

Outcome 4 Enhance food security through good practices in agriculture and environment management

Ongoing Projects

BGD/89/045 – Thana Cereal Technology [Budget:$4,536,749]

BGD/95/003 – Integrated Pest Management [Budget: $3,743,815]

BGD/97/041 – Horticulture & Nutrition [Budget: $5,655,855]

BGD/98/001 – Smallholder Livestock and Dairy Development [Budget: $157,950]

BGD/98/009 – Community Livestock and Dairy Development [Budget: $3,091,725]

BGD/00/006 – Plan of Action in Agriculture [Budget: $146,000]

BGD/02/005 – Bio-Technological Advancement for Agriculture Development [Budget: $228,000]

CCF Area 4: Gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women

Outcome 1 Develop replicable model for women's entrepreneurship

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/043 – Entrepreneurship Development of Women through JMS [Budget: $3,611,129]

Outcome 2 Integrate gender concerns into national policies and plans

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/029 – Socially Disadvantaged Women [Budget: $2,180,318]

BGD/97/037 – Capacity Building for Gender Mainstreaming [Budget: $1,972,795]

BGD/97/039 – Gender Facility for Implementation of National Action Plan [Budget: $739,391]

BGD/99/008 – MATLAB Reproductive Health [Budget: $281,252]

BGD/01/005 – TA Gender Facility, P-II [Budget: $783,831]

CCF Area 5: Complementary pro-poor interventions

Outcome 1 Identify policies that maximize the social benefits of globalization

Ongoing Projects

BGD/99/004 – Social Impact of Globalization & Role of Policy [Budget: $104,583]

Outcome 2 Minimize the social impact of HIV/AIDS

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/031 – Multi-Sectoral AIDS Prevention [Budget: $3,445,314]

BGD/97/005 – Safe Blood Transfusion [Budget: $3,065,228]

Outcome 3 Improve household food security and nutrition awareness

Ongoing Projects

BGD/97/C01 – CDF-LDF [Budget: $7,203,300]

BGD/98/010 – TA for CDF-LDF [Budget: $1,720,650]

ANNEX V: PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

UNDP Bangladesh

Mr. Jorgen Lissner, Resident Representative

Mr. Larry Maramis, Deputy Resident Representative

Ms. Shireen K. Sayeed, Assistant Resident Representative, Environment Team

Dr. Najmus S. Sadiq, Assistant Resident Representative, Human Development Team

Ms. Durfashan H. Chowdhury, Senior Programme Officer, UNCDF

Ms. Naoko Anzai, Assistant Resident Representative, Poverty Team

Governance Team

Mr. M.A. Gaffar, NPD, Urban CEP

Mr. Monjurul Kabir, UNDP

Dr. Ali Ashraf, UNDP

Ms. Charlotte Duncan, UNDP

Ms. Nahleen Ahmed, UNDP

Mr. Michael Heyn, Director, CHTDF

UN Agencies

Mr. Douglas Casson Coutts, Country Representative, WFP

Mr. William Barclay, Representative a.i., WFP

Mr. Nawshad Ahmed, UNICEF

Ms. Janet Jackson, UNFPA

Mr. David Hughart, Operations Advisory, World Bank Bangladesh

Dr. Mahinder Mudahar, Economic Adviser to the World Bank

Government Officials

H.E. Mr. M. Morshed Khan, Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Ministry for Textiles

H.E. Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Minister, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

H.E. Mr. Shahjahan Siraj, Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests

H.E. Mr. Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, State Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Mr. Khandker Delwar Hussain, Chief Whip of the House

Abdus Shahid, Vice-Principal, Chief Whip of the Opposition

Dr. Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, Principal Secretary, Prime minister's Office

Mr. B.M.M, Mozharul Huq, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

Mr. Sabihuddin Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Mr. A.Y.B.I. Siddiqui, Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives

Mr. Muhammad A.Quashem, Secretary, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Ministry of Planning

Mr. C.Q.K. Mustaq Ahmed, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance

Mr. Kamrul Hasan, Joint Secretary

Sheikh Moinuddin, Additional Secretary, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division

Dr. Kamrul Hasan, Additional Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Nojibur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Motahar Hussain, Director General, Foreign Aided Projects Audit Directorate

Mr. M.A. Syed, Chief Election Commissioner

Mr. Asif Ali, Comptroller and Auditor General

Dr. Quazi M. Ahmed, Member, General Economics Division, Ministry of Planning

Mr. Ranjit Kumar Charaborty, Deputy Economics Advisor, Ministry of Finance

Mr. Bazlul Haque Khandekar, Economic Review, Ministry of Finance

Donor Agencies

Mr. Paul Ackroyd, Head, DFID Bangladesh

Mr. David Wood, Head, DFID Bangladesh (Current)

Mr. Chris Mergatroyd, DFID

Ms. Sarah White, Deputy Programme Manager, Governance, DFID

Mr. John Moore, Head, CIDA, Canadian High Commission

H.E. Ms. Gerd Wahlstrom, Ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy

Ms. Meriaty Subroto, ADB

Ms. Michele Forster, Australian High Commission

Vital Kellens, Belgian Cooperation

Ms. Mahal Aminuzzaman, Danish Embassy

Mr. Anthony Goodwin, EC Delegation

Ms. Fabienne Drout-Lozinski, French Embassy

Ms. Ute Heinbach, German Embassy

Ms. Renate Pors, Netherlands Embassy

H.E. Mr. Matsushiro Horiguchi, Japanese Ambassador

NGOs/CSOs

Mr. Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, Executive Director, BRAC

Dr. Quazi Faruque Ahmed, President, Proshika

Professor Rehman Sobhan, Centre for Policy Dialogue

Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, CPD

Prof. Mustafizur Rahman, CPD

Dr. Quazi Shahabuddin, Director General, Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies (BIDS)

Mr. Binayek Sen, Research Director, BIDS

Dr. Q.K. Ahmed, Chairman

Mr. S.R. Osmani, BRAC University

Dr. Abrar Chowdhury, University of Dhaka

Mr. KAS Murshid, ERGO Legal Counsels

Barrister Mansoor Hasan, Transparency International

Ms. Merlin Udho, PIA

Kim Mc Quay, Asia Foundation

Kieran Brenner, Asia Foundation

Mr. Mozammel Hoque, HR Specialist

Mr. Toru Shibuichi, Representative, AsDB

Mr. Iftekhar Ahmed, CDC (private sector investment in the energy sector)

Director Petrobangla, CDC

Dr. Harun-ur-Rashid, Transvent International Ltd.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, Power and Participatory Research Centre

Mr. Mahfuz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star

UP Coordinators of Shirajganj Local Government Project

Mr. Mohamed Favidul Islam, Head Teacher, Purnighat High School, Ullapara, Sirajganj

Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Advocate, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer's Association (BELA)

Dr. Ainun Nishat, Country Representative, IUCN, The World Conservation Union

People Interviewed at Sirajganj

Mr. Fazlur Rahman, Assistant Director Local Government & DPD-SLGDP

Mr. Mahbub Shahin, NDC, Sirajganj

Mr. Abu Md. Mohsin, Acting DPC, SLGDFP

Mr. Azizur Rahman Siddique, PMA, SLGDFP

Mr. Liakat Ali Siddiqui, Chairman, Hatikumrul Union Parishad

Chairman of the Purnighat Union Parishad

Members of the Hatikumrul Union Parishad

Members of the Dhubyl Union Parishad

Ms. Bina Khandakar, UP Member & Chairperson of WDC

Mr. Mike Slingsby, CTA

The Project Team of Urban CEP

Chairperson, Secretary & Treasurer from 6 CDCs of Urban CEP

Consultants

Dr. Nazim Kamran Chowdhury, Consultant

Mr. Shafiquer Rahman, Consultant

Dr. Ansarul Karim, Researcher, Environment Study

Dr. Shahdeen Malik, Researcher, Governance Study

Dr. Atiur Rahman, Researcher, Poverty Study

Mr. Mohammad Hossain, Researcher, Public Finance Management Study

Dr. Babar Kabir

Dr. Mazid Khan

Prof. Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, Chairman, Dept. of Development Studies, Univ. of Dhaka

ANNEX VI: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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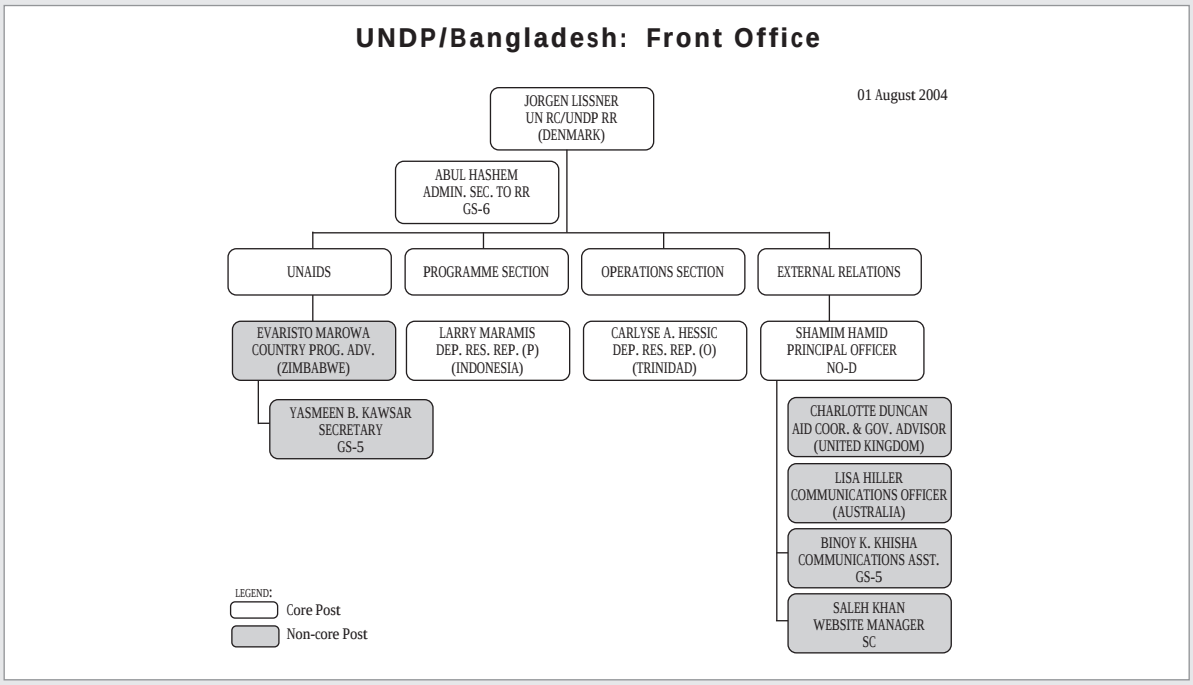
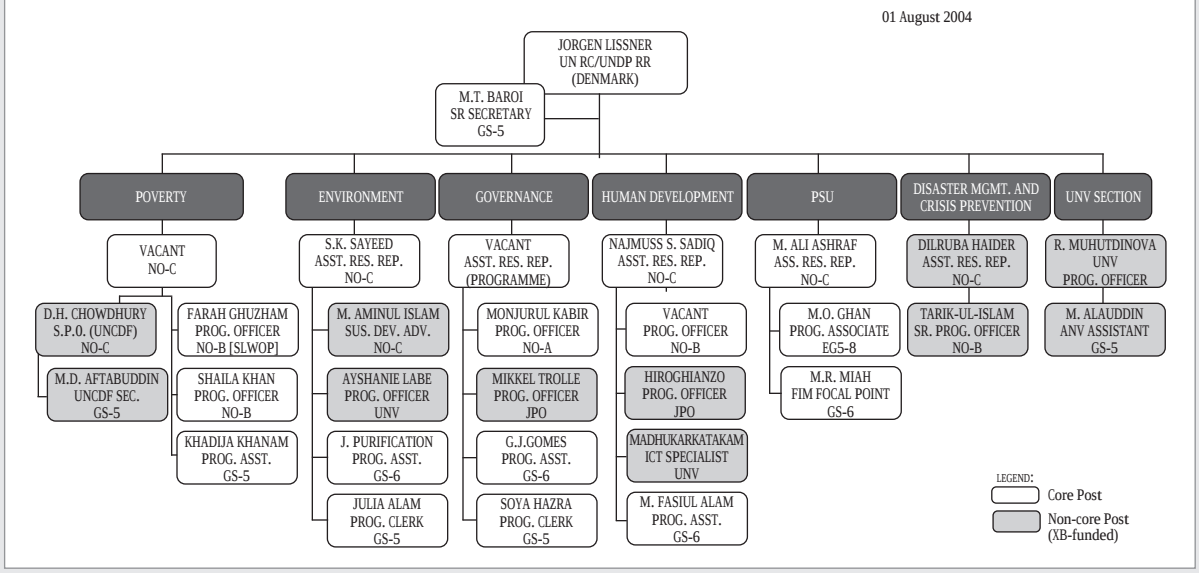
ANNEX VII: ORGANIGRAM

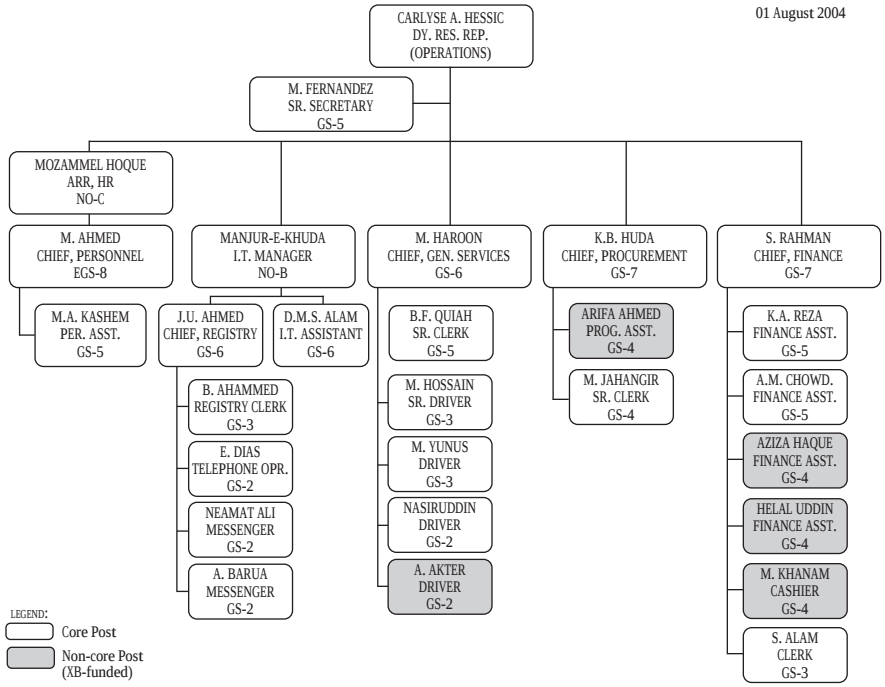
UNDP/Bangladesh: Front Office



UNDP/Bangladesh: Programme Section



UNDP/Bangladesh: Operations Section



ANNEX VIII: OUTREACH ACTIVITIES SINCE 2002

LIST OF MAJOR REPORTS PRODUCED FROM 2001-2004

- Human Security in Bangladesh: In Search of Justice and Dignity (English) – 2002
- Human Security in Bangladesh: In Search of Justice and Dignity (Bangla) – 2002
- The Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh – 2003
- Bangladesh MDG Report – to be published soon
- Common Country Assessment (CCA) II – to be published soon
- Hartal Report – to be published soon

LIST OF MAJOR CONFERENCES ORGANIZED THROUGH THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT

Note: Each programme unit organizes workshops and conferences on a regular basis. Therefore, the list below does NOT reflect all of the conferences organized by UNDP/ Dhaka during the period of study. However, programme units work closely with the external relations team to ensure that publicity for workshops and conferences is generated.

2004

1. UNDAF Prioritisation Workshop, 22-24 August 2004
2. UNDAF/CCA Workshop, 13-16 August 2004

2003

1. National Workshop on The Macroeconomics of Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Bangladesh, 29 September 2003
2. Forum on the MDGs in Asia and the Pacific, 23-25 February 2003
3. Roundtable discussion on Human Security

2002

1. South and West Asia UNDP Resident Representatives Cluster Meeting, 10-11 March 2002
2. HDR 2002: Regional Consultation for South Asia, 13-14 March 2002
3. SURF Board Meeting, 12 March 2002

2001

1. Roundtable Conference on HDR 2001 and Bangladesh, 18 August 2001
2. Workshop on CHT Regional Plan, 4 April 2001

MEDIA OUTREACH AND COVERAGE

2002: Issue raised or event	Media outreach undertaken	Result
Chittagong Hill Tracts development	Media releases, press briefing	National media coverage
Human rights and HIV/AIDS (training for Imams)	Media releases, interviews	BBC radio and Website coverage
Conservation of Sundarbans	Media releases, interviews, press briefing	BBC radio, Website, international wire services, national media coverage
Governance (HDR launch)	Article produced, interviews, launch event	In-depth (9 page) article in weekend magazine of national media coverage, editorials, BBC radio interview with RR
Montreal Protocol adherence	Article produced	Published in national newspapers, news front
Human security	Event, media release, interviews, press briefing	National media coverage, BBC radio/ Website, UN wire, news front, magazine coverage, international wires
IDEP winners	Article produced, media releases, press briefing, interview, short documentary produced	National media, BBC radio/ TV/ Website, UN wire, news front, CHOICES, international press coverage
Climate change	Media release, background information	National media coverage, news front
Women in politics	Article produced	Published in national media, news front
Disaster management	Event, interviews, media release	National media, BBC radio, international press

2003: Issue raised or event	Media outreach undertaken	Result
Human security	Campaign	Extensive coverage in national media, editorials, international radio and print coverage several times during the year
Police reform	Media release, interviews	National print and broadcast coverage
Environment protection/ vulnerable group empowerment (ship recycling)	Media release	National print coverage
Urban community empowerment	Article written, press trip organized	CHOICES article, national print media coverage, BBC radio and Website coverage
Development needs in CHT	Media release, press trip, interviews, press conferences	National media coverage, some international print coverage
Poverty reduction (macroeconomics)	Media release, press briefings	National media coverage (print, broadcast, editorials)

MEDIA OUTREACH AND COVERAGE

2003: Issue raised or event	Media outreach undertaken	Result
ICT for development	Media release	National print coverage
Poverty alleviation in Char areas	Feature piece with photo issued to selected media	Used by most selected media
Rural women entrepreneurs (poverty alleviation)	Feature article and photos issued to selected national publications and news front	Used by most selected media, covered by news front
MFA phase out	Media release	National media coverage, international print coverage
Disaster management	Media release	National print coverage
POPs phase out	Media release, news front write-up	National print coverage, news front story
MDGs	Several media releases, interviews, press briefings during regional workshop	National media coverage (print, broadcast, editorials), BBC international radio/ Web coverage, international print
Hafiz Pasha visit (MFA, MDGs)	Press conference, interviews, media releases	National media coverage (print, broadcast, editorials), BBC international radio/ TV coverage, international print

2004 (as of October): Issue raised or event	Media outreach undertaken	Result
Mahalchari Rehabilitation effort	Visibility strategy (documentary, media releases, events, press briefings, publicity material)	National media coverage, European satellite TV, news front
Tiger census	Media releases, interviews, HQ media release	National media, international radio/ TV/ Web, UN wire/ radio
Disaster management	Event, media releases, interviews, TV spot developed	National media, TV feature programme produced, TV spot aired, international wire interviews
Human security	Article produced, interview	"Frankly Speaking" appearance by RR, 2 page review of human security report in major daily, editorial
Human Rights Commission	Media releases, fact sheet, press briefings, interviews	National media, international wire/ radio coverage, news front
Ship breaking	Media release, interviews	International radio/Web, national media
Visit of administrator (floods, governance, CHT)	Media release, press briefings, interviews	Live interviews on CNN and BBC, national media coverage over three days, International wire interviews, appearance on "Frankly Speaking"
UN/UNDP flood response	Interviews, fact sheets, media releases, press briefings	International media coverage radio/ TV/Websites, national media coverage, UN media, UNDP's "In Brief"

ANNEX IX: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Annual Development Plan
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCF	Country Cooperation Framework
CDMP	Comprehensive Disaster Management and Prevention
CEP	Community Empowerment Project
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
CO	Country Office
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DRR	Deputy Resident Representative
ERD	Economic Relations Division (of the Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh)
ESP	Essential Service Package
EO	Evaluation Office
FFE	Food for Education Programme
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HD	Human development
HDI	Human development index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
KST	Kishoreganj Sadar Thana Poverty Alleviation Project
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFA	Multi Fibre Agreement
MFI	Microfinance institution
NEMAP	National Environmental Action Plan

NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHDR	National Human Development Report
ODA	Official development aid
PRIF	Pre-Investment Feasibility
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RBM	Results Based Management
RMG	Ready made garment
RR	Resident Representative
SAPAP	South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme
SEMP	Sustainable Environmental Management Plan
SLGDP	Sirajganj Local Governance Development Fund Project
SPM	Suspended particulate matter
TOR	Terms of Reference
UP	Union Parishad