

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Sierra Leone in 2013. The ADR is an independent country-level evaluation aimed at capturing and demonstrating evaluative evidence of UNDP's contribution to development results and its strategic positioning in the country. It provides stakeholders with an objective assessment of UNDP's work and evaluates the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP support to national priorities and programmes. More specifically, the purpose of an ADR is to:

- provide substantive support to the UNDP Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;
- support greater UNDP accountability to national stakeholders and partners in the programme country; and
- contribute to learning at country, regional and corporate levels.

Sierra Leone gained independence in 1961. It has gone through significant transition in the past 14 years, recovering from the brutal and devastating civil war that ravaged the country from 1991 to 2002. UN peacekeeping support began in 1999 with the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to assist in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In 2005, the Security Council established the United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) to help further peace and accelerate sustainable economic growth. In 2008 the mandate was revised once more to establish the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office (UNIPSIL), led by the Secretary-General's Executive Representative.

In March 2014, UNIPSIL completed its Security Council mandate and transferred responsibility to the UN Country Team of 19 agencies, funds and programmes, based on the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). This transition is also indicative of the fact that Sierra Leone has moved beyond the threshold for Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (CPIA Score of 3.3, World Bank 2012). As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted in the ceremonies that marked this transition, Sierra Leone had hosted many 'firsts': the first multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation with political, security, humanitarian and national recovery mandates, and the first-ever UN Peacebuilding Commission visit. In addition, the first UN Deputy Special Representative who also served as head of UNDP, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, was appointed to Sierra Leone, thereby underscoring the links among peace, human rights and development. The appointment of the Secretary-General's first Executive Representative (ERSG) heading the political and development presence further ensured an integrated approach to supporting the Government's peacebuilding efforts.

UNDP PROGRAMME IN SIERRA LEONE

This ADR, the first conducted in Sierra Leone, coincided with preparations of the new country programme in 2013 during a critical time of transition from UNIPSIL. In terms of design and content, the UNDP programme in Sierra Leone was distinctive in helping the transition from peacekeeping, through peacebuilding to development and reflected UNDP's particular niche in governance-reflected activities in a post-conflict setting.

The ADR was carried out with support of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), national

stakeholders, and the UNDP Sierra Leone Country Office and Regional Bureau of Africa (RBA). The focus was on the previous 2008-2010 Country Programme Document (CPD), which was extended by the UNDP Executive Board until 2012. The evaluation assesses UNDP's programme performance against six outcomes derived from the CPDs and Country Programme Action Plans and Results and Resources Frameworks covering the period 2008-2012. These outcome areas as adapted for the ADR assessment are:

- support to democratic institutions
- public sector reform, local governance and service delivery
- access to justice and human rights
- youth development and employment
- finance for development
- environmental cooperation for peacebuilding.

UNDP expenditure for the period under review totalled approximately \$162,356,894 of which 35.9 percent was for support to democratic institutions, 29.2 percent for public sector reform, local governance and service delivery, 14.5 percent for youth development and employment, 9.5 percent for access to justice and human rights, 7.4 percent for finance for development, and 3.5 percent for environment.

Preliminary findings and conclusions from the ADR were available for consideration by the Country Office as it reflected on lessons learned during the design of the new country programme, which is to be presented to the UNDP Executive Board in September 2014. The ADR report will be available for consideration by the Members of the Board at that time as well.

FINDINGS

SUPPORT TO DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

UNDP support in this outcome area has been directed to two distinct but interlinked components of strengthening (a) elections and (b)

parliament. In addition, UNDP has supported interventions to improve the role of the media (with particular focus on its role in the electoral cycle). UNDP has also facilitated Sierra Leone's participation in the regional initiative known as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

Overall, UNDP interventions have been of crucial relevance to promoting democratic governance in Sierra Leone and have correspondingly commanded the largest share (35.9 percent) of resources during the period under review. Support to elections has been central and sustained, with the 2012 election setting a standard for peaceful, fair, transparent and credible elections that needs to be maintained. UNDP support to Parliament buttressed these gains and filled basic capacity gaps. In terms of media support, the relevance of UNDP intervention was clear but progress was mixed. The APRM process has provided a comprehensive benchmark for further development in terms of governance in Sierra Leone.

In terms of effectiveness, the elections programme performed well in delivering a logistically complex election at the presidential, parliamentary, local council and mayoral levels, which was a notable contribution to the success of 2012 elections. However, Sierra Leone has yet to fully develop the capacity of national institutions to manage elections independently.

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM, LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The UNDP programme of support to public sector reform and local governance focused on achieving the two broad outcomes of (1) supporting national, regional and local levels of governance to expand their capacities to reduce conflict and manage the equitable delivery of public services, and (2) enhancing the capacity of local councils to improve service delivery and development management. The public sector reform initiative has supported the review, rationalizing and updating of civil service positions, which were reduced from 17,560 to 13,631 over a two-year period. UNDP has also played a cen-

tral role in introducing a performance appraisal system and a modernized payroll system and supporting the capacity development of the Sierra Leone Civil Service Training College. At the local government level, UNDP (with the support of United Nations Capital Development Fund, or UNCDF) has supported fiscal decentralization, local level service delivery and the implementation of a cadastral programme to enable the more systematic application of property taxes.

UNDP was the first donor partner to engage in the complex area of public administration reform and local development and devoted 29 percent of resources to programming in support of this outcome. This early support by UNDP has encouraged others to enter but the ADR found that a clear, more strategic and cohesive approach would have enhanced programme effectiveness.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

UNDP focused on supporting a broad spectrum of activities to develop the justice sector. This support involved the passage of key laws, strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary, and assistance to specialized units of the Sierra Leone Police, as well as civil society actors, to address and prosecute cases of sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV). The support to the Human Rights Commission, work on women's property rights and the passage of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act are among the indicators of key contributions and relevance of UNDP's support to the development of fair justice system and respect for human rights.

UNDP established a track record of undertaking the first generation of projects which were then adopted, adapted and funded by other donors. One example is the establishment of Sierra Leone's first Legal Aid Scheme, which informed the development of a National Legal Aid Scheme and Legal Aid Act 2012. In 2011, the DFID-funded Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) took over responsibility for supporting the Pilot National Legal Aid Scheme. It should be noted that the legal aid programme provides legal

advice but no actual representation for defendants in court. Another example of UNDP's catalytic efforts is the mobile court system. Magistrates are supported by the UNDP to travel to neighbouring districts for a limited number of days per month and their salaries are topped up through UNDP funding throughout the country.

Since 2010, UNDP's access to justice programme has prioritized legal support to the victims of SGBV. It promoted innovative approaches to dealing with gender-based violence by involving civil society organizations (CSOs) as implementing partners in programmes targeting SGBV prevention and protection. Special 'Saturday Courts' were introduced in 2011 specifically mandated to consider SGBV cases. UNDP has also provided support to the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police with guidelines and training on SGBV case management. The passage of the 2012 Sexual Offences Act is also seen as a positive landmark for victims of SGBV and UNDP provided capacity-building support for parliamentarians, seconded drafting experts to the Ministry of Justice and conducted significant advocacy efforts to ensure the Act was passed. The number of reported cases of SGBV has risen by 23 percent in the past three years. This could be seen as an increase of confidence in the justice system on the part of victims as well as improved access. Overall, the evidence suggests that UNDP has been effective in the careful design of its programming using an innovative and multifaceted approach to addressing the issue of support for victims of SGBV. It should be noted, however, that UNDP's support has almost exclusively targeted the prosecution side of SGBV cases. There appears to be an underlying assumption among aid agencies that cases of rape and sexual and gender-based assault tend to be legitimate and that the accused are generally guilty. UNDP assistance, therefore, has been geared to supporting the victim rather than ensuring the free and fair application of due process. This issue appears to merit attention in any future programming.

The sustainability of UNDP's programmes also constitutes a significant problem. UNDP has

been paying for supplies and recurrent costs in the law offices and in the courts, and has also been topping up salaries in the law offices. Until recently, it has been paying actual salaries as well. Incentives continue to be paid in order to staunch the flow of trained lawyers into private practice. UNDP programmes have tended to minimize the recruitment of foreign consultants and experts in favour of national consultants. In general, this has reduced average unit costs, making UNDP's assistance relatively cost-effective and contributing to increased national ownership of the programmes.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The youth of Sierra Leone were centrally important as soldiers during the civil war and youth employment is seen as a critical ingredient to the continuation of peace in the country. One of the measures to address the devastating effects of the war has been to define 'youth' as those who fall between the ages of 15 and 35 as a means of including ex-combatants who lost educational and employment opportunities. More than 75 percent of the nearly six million Sierra Leonean are below the age of 35 (2011 figures), and an estimated 60-70 percent of this population is under-employed or unemployed and 80 percent live below the poverty line of \$2 per day.

Overall, while the ADR found UNDP activities relevant, the first-generation projects were scattered in approach and poorly implemented. By 2010, this had changed and the focus has increasingly sharpened from being employability-focused (i.e., skills training) to better linking training with business development and self-employment through five Business Development Service Centres. The outreach to non-governmental implementing partners, such as microfinance institutions, has also been innovative. However, the ADR found a need to monitor how different partners are implementing their programmes through different modalities (e.g. different microfinance interest rates) or how groups are stratified (e.g. by income or nature of microfinance support). Increased attention to documenting and assessing the effectiveness of these different modalities, and

learning from other development agencies active in the same sector, are essential to measure progress and results and consider whether there is scope for replication and upscaling of these innovations.

UNDP support has helped the Government of Sierra Leone streamline its youth-oriented architecture and contributed to the policy discourse. First, it has provided capacity development to the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA) and the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) and, second, it has provided technical advice for policy development for the National Employment Policy, the Youth Employment Strategy and the 2012 Youth Report—the first of its kind. While the policy outcome remains at its early stages since NAYCOM's 2011 operationalization, UNDP positioned itself as a relevant and reliable strategic partner in youth policymaking. However, in terms of effectiveness, UNDP's performance has had a very limited impact on job creation given the scale of the needs in Sierra Leone.

FINANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

UNDP's involvement under this general outcome has commanded limited resources (7.4 percent), and is quite fragmented and varied. This is reflected in the framing and presentation of UNDP's programme for the period of the ADR assessment. The lack of coherence is apparent in the analysis of the key UNDP documents starting from CPD 2008-2012, the CPAP document and matrix for 2011-2012. Furthermore, while the outcome includes a number of UNDP projects and programmes identified later in this report, activities in the area of finance for development involves the work of the Resident Representative functioning in the capacity of Resident Coordinator of the UN and as ERSG and head of UNIP-SIL. The fragmented nature of this outcome area has posed concomitant problems in terms of framing of the assessment by the ADR team.

In general, UNDP appears to have contributed to some degree to the development of coordination capacity. UNDP has taken on the role of administrator of funds when sectors are fragile and

capacities are weak and other donors are reluctant to take on the exposure, and has demonstrated its contribution providing fiduciary services to other donors. This has been seen in terms of the Multi-Donor Trust Fund to support the Agenda for Change, the Electoral Support Basket Fund and the Constitutional Review Basket Fund. It has performed less effectively in other areas—most notably in the development of a pro-poor private sector through better regulation, business advice and microfinance that targets the poor. Even less has been achieved in terms of support to the mineral sector and improvements in trade regimes with particular benefits to micro, small and medium enterprises. Assistance in these areas has been sporadic, with the facilitation of workshops or meetings with the payment of operational costs, but with relatively little systematic strategy or policy development involved.

ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION FOR PEACEBUILDING

UNDP's response to the UN Joint Vision priority of 'Environmental Cooperation for Peacebuilding' has been very modest, particularly relative to other outcome areas of the CPDs covering the 2008-2012 period, and amounted to 3.5 percent of delivery. The strategy adopted by UNDP was to implement a number of projects with finance from the GEF, Montreal Protocol, TRAC (Target for Resource Assignment from the Core), the Peacebuilding Fund and other donors. They were designed to achieve the global outcome of strengthened national capacities to mainstream environmental concerns into national development plans and cope with natural disasters, with full participation of women. Sustainable environment considerations were a cross-cutting priority under the Sierra Leone UNDAF (2008-2010) and the CPD (2008-2010, extended to 2012) to be addressed by building national capacities for disaster response and risk reduction (DRR), waste management, deforestation, flood and erosion control and climate change. UNDP collaborated specifically with the GEF, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat to support action plans; address issues of

biodiversity, land management, renewable energy and conservation; and tackle the nexus between housing and poverty. While the portfolio of projects is relevant in that it addresses one of the pillars of Sierra Leone's national development strategy, this is clearly an area that will require more concentrated and cohesive programming in the future, should there be a decision to continue support to this sector in the new CPD.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. Over the past decade, UNDP has been a dependable and responsive partner supporting Sierra Leone in crucial sectors as it recovered from the aftermath of a prolonged and brutal civil war.

Conclusion 2. UNDP has had a high profile and played a central role in the transition from post-conflict to development phase. It has been a key player in supporting the Government and UNIPSIL in nurturing a strong, coordinated UN system response to national needs in the first integrated UN mission of its kind.

Conclusion 3. Along with crucial support to the conduct of the 2012 elections, the success of which was uniformly recognized as a key milestone, UNDP has made a seminal contribution through the creation of a number of new institutions, support for human rights law and strengthening the institutional architecture for improved decentralization.

Conclusion 4. UNDP implementation of CPD priorities has been driven by availability of donor funds. This has led UNDP to implement programmes ranging from disaster mitigation, environmental protection and sustainable development to HIV prevention and awareness-raising. This range of engagement subject to fund availability has inevitably led to the programme spreading its capacity and resources into areas that were not central to the transition. The 2013-2014 CPAP prioritized and narrowed UNDP's programmatic focus and this effort augurs well for the next CPD.

Conclusion 5. UNDP is recognized for having provided operational support (salaries and incentives, supplies, printing, as well as basic physical rehabilitation of facilities for institutions) crucial during early post-conflict recovery. However, there has not been a marked evolution towards higher level technical assistance. UNDP must be alert to the risks that could make it difficult to move beyond operational assistance since continuation of such support could diminish UNDP's substantive role. Dominance of operational support in UNDP's programmes has led to some stakeholders' opinion that UNDP has lacked in substantive guidance, discussion and policy content. Therefore, in the context of the next country programme, UNDP will need to acquire additional capacity to engage in sustained policy dialogue with the Government in priority areas.

Conclusion 6. The lack of good design and regular monitoring was an area of weakness affecting programme quality during the period under review. There appeared to be erratic attention paid to careful programme and project design involving needs analysis, and capacity assessment which would have ensured more relevant, targeted inputs in terms of capacity-building (e.g. elections support and the diaspora project). Monitoring also appeared to be spotty (except for high-profile programmes such as elections).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. In the context of the transition taking place within Sierra Leone with the departure of UNIPSIL, and given its track record and demonstrated results, UNDP should take on a lead role in the governance and security sector reform areas as an integral part of the One UN team.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should also prioritize carefully and not spread itself too thinly. It should pay particular attention to transitioning from a programme that has provided operational support appropriate to addressing post-conflict needs, to one which focuses on the transfer and exchange of expertise and technology. This shift will strengthen the substance of UNDP's contri-

but ion in support of Sierra Leone's development challenges.

Recommendation 3. The Resident Representative and the Country Director should take on higher profile advisory roles that were previously filled by the ERSG. The Country Office should have access to a team of senior advisers for this purpose.

Recommendation 4. UNDP needs to urgently undertake an internal strategic analysis and review of the current situation in Sierra Leone with a view to determining the key areas that are most likely to present threats to stability in the medium term and help devise preventive development interventions that can be funded and approved during the course of 2014-2015.

Recommendation 5. In the access to justice sector, it is strongly recommended that UNDP supplement its current heavy emphasis on the prosecution of SGBV to improve access to justice more generally, thereby ensuring due process with sufficient and trained representation for both plaintiffs and defendants and increasing the pool of trained members of the judiciary.

Recommendation 6. In the critical area of youth employment, UNDP should collaborate closely with ILO and other partners, and work on bringing together potential employers (particularly large multinationals with investments in Sierra Leone), the World Bank and African Development Bank as well as key ministries and commissions, to develop a more systematic and coherent strategy for the creation of jobs in the country while ensuring safety and standards.

Recommendation 7. In order to consolidate peace and stability, UNDP should encourage the Government to further strengthen local governance and consider extending the pilot activities throughout the country.

Recommendation 8. For future programming, UNDP should articulate and implement a clear internal Country Office policy that spells out measures to improve programme design, monitoring and evaluation.