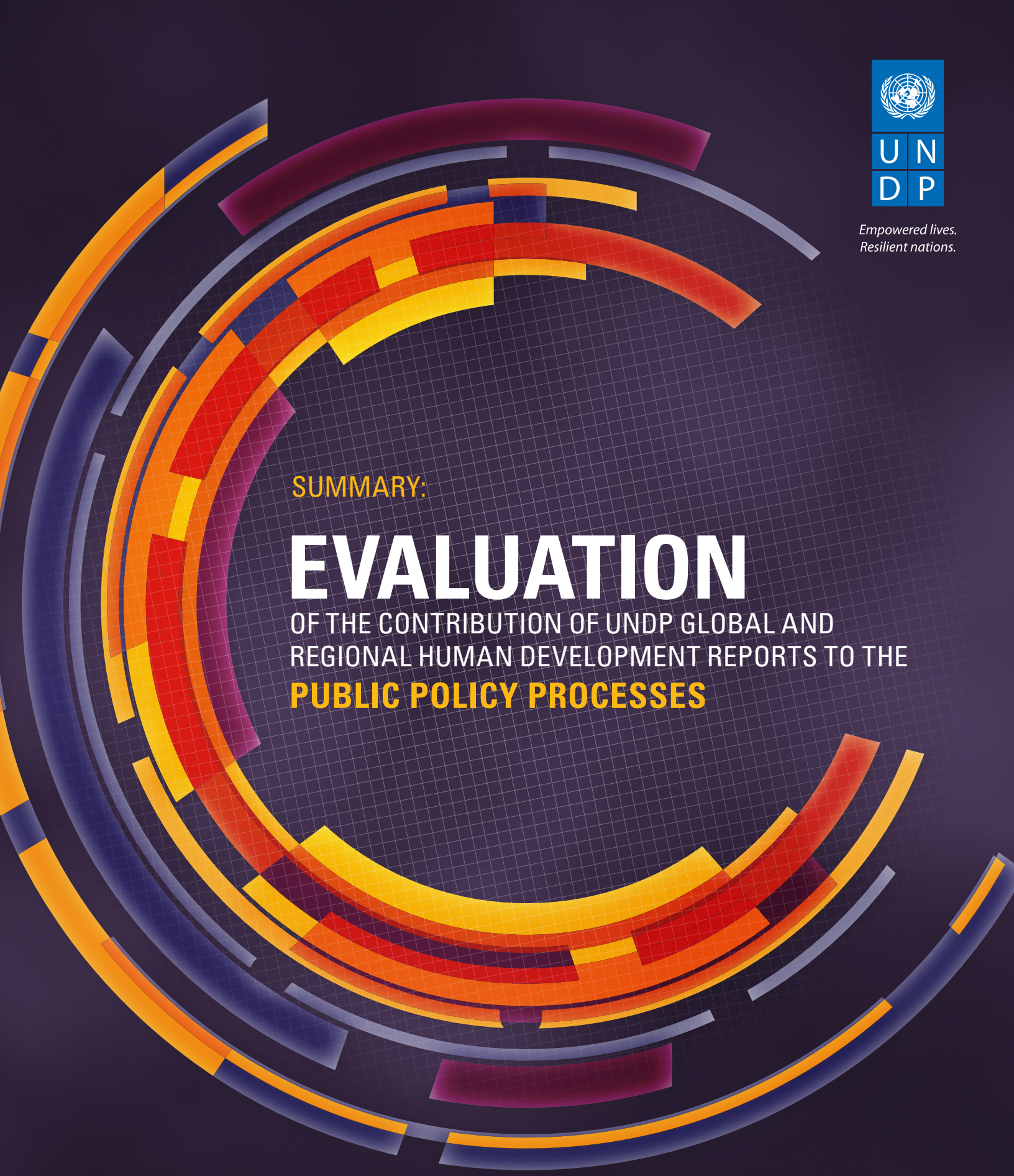

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Resilient nations.

SUMMARY:

EVALUATION

OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF UNDP GLOBAL AND REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS TO THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESSES

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme

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Full Report can be accessed at:
http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/hdr.shtml

Summary: Evaluation of the Contribution of the Global and Regional Human Development Reports to Public Policy Processes

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FOREWORD

For a quarter century, the global Human Development Reports (HDRs) and the Human Development Index have been a trademark of human development discourse and have captured the interest of policymakers, the media and academics. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published the first global HDR in 1990. Since then, 23 global HDRs and 33 regional HDRs have been produced. Some of these outstanding reports have contributed not only to public debate but also to instigating national- and regional-level policy processes.

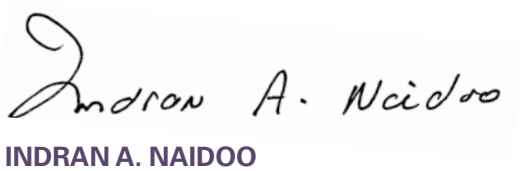
One of the strengths of the global HDRs is their continuity in producing key messages on human development using different, annual themes. Global HDRs have contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. The uniqueness of the approach and the policy boundaries that the reports could push determined the global HDRs' level of contribution. Articulating a human development approach in a simple manner increased the use of HDRs and their level of influence on policy processes.

The reputation of UNDP as a neutral agency makes the regional HDRs particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions. Regional HDRs responded to issues that were relevant to multiple countries, too sensitive to address within a single country, those with inherent cross-border dimensions or where solutions to a country's problems depend on the cooperation of others. The regional HDRs' geographical and trans-boundary approach, which covered critical development challenges of relevance to a group of countries, increased their overall policy relevance. The evaluation found that the thought leadership and human development analysis of themes are key to the success of regional HDRs. It is imperative that the reports maintain a strong human development perspective.

A challenge for annual publications is sustaining the interest of the intended audience. There is often greater demand for analysis that has direct public policy relevance and distinctive development concepts. Development actors typically have high expectations regarding the distinctness of the global and regional HDRs vis-à-vis other publications. Successful HDRs were characterized by succinct messages, tools for analysing development issues, perspectives that differed from mainstream thinking and boldness in communicating difficult, often controversial messages.

The global development environment has changed significantly since the global HDRs were first published 25 years ago. While the polarization of ideological positions has decreased, the number of publications and databases that provide global analysis have considerably increased. Global HDRs therefore need to be distinctive and remain relevant by addressing and engaging with development issues as they emerge. Given an unquestionable reputation, the global HDRs have the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. To further contribute to transformative debates, the global HDRs should not shy away from difficult messages.

I sincerely hope this evaluation will inform UNDP's efforts to refine its intellectual contribution to development, and more broadly provide lessons for strengthening the impact of development publications.



INDRAN A. NAIDOO
Director, Independent Evaluation Office

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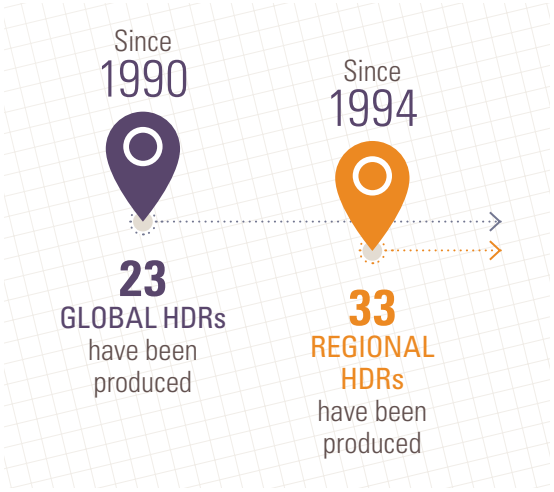
BACKGROUND

In 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the first global Human Development Report (HDR). Since then, 23 global HDRs have been produced. These reports have sought to raise awareness and generate debate on a range of public policy issues and concerns. A 1994 General Assembly resolution[1] observed that the HDR is the result of an independent intellectual exercise that is separate and distinct from other UNDP activities. Following this, in 2003, a second General Assembly resolution further recognized the HDRs as "an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world."[2] UNDP started to produce regional HDRs in 1994 and has since produced 33 regional and subregional reports. Over US$130 million has been spent on global, regional and subregional HDRs produced since 2004.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY resolution further recognized the HDRS as "an important TOOL for raising AWARENESS about human development around the world"

Recognizing the importance of the global and regional HDRs, the UNDP Executive Board approved the evaluation of HDR contributions to public debate and public policy processes at its first regular session of 2014. The evaluation, part of the medium-term plan of the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP,[3] is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs. The evaluation took place within the overall provisions of the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

The evaluation presupposed that the global and regional HDRs' contributions to generating development debate are of wide relevance across countries; that the HDRs' cross-country analysis contributes to processes that promote policies oriented towards human development; and that the global and regional HDRs have the potential to inform public policy processes. The evaluation therefore included analysis of HDR contributions to the following national policy process areas: (a) policy discourse and public policy debates; (b) policy advice; (c) advocacy; and (d) agenda setting. The following sections present the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the global and regional HDRs. The findings and conclusions distinguish between three interrelated aspects of the global HDRs: their perceived utility, their use and their actual contributions to public policy processes.



[1] United Nations, 1995, General Assembly resolution 49/123, 'United Nations Development Programme and the Human Development Report' (A/RES/49/123).

[2] United Nations, 2003, General Assembly resolution 57/264, 'Human Development Report' (A/RES/57/264).

[3] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS agenda item document, 'Evaluation Office of UNDP: medium-term evaluation plan (2014-2017)' (DP/2014/5), New York, January.

WHAT DID WE EVALUATE?

The evaluation assessed the contributions of global and regional HDRs published from 2004 to 2013. The period encompasses reports produced since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 57/264 of 20 December 2002, which affirmed the importance of global HDRs. As this is the first independent evaluation of the global and regional HDRs, the evaluation also took into account the contributions of HDRs between 1990 and 2003 and examined how HDRs have progressed over time.

Specifically, the evaluation aimed to:

1 **ASSESS** the contribution of global HDRs to intellectual and analytical public policy debates

2 **ASSESS** the contribution of regional HDRs to policy discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy processes at the national level

3 **ASSESS** the contributions of global and regional HDRs to UNDP engagement in global and regional public discourse and advocacy and national public policy processes

4 **IDENTIFY** factors that explain the contributions of global and regional HDRs

5 **PRESENT** key findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions

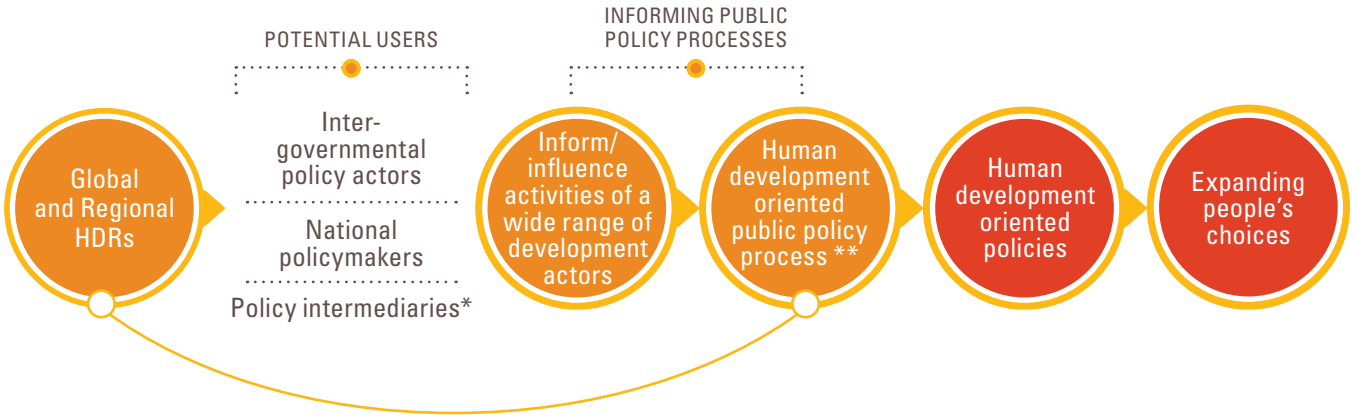
The evaluation covered: the use and contribution of thematic analysis; human development data (e.g. data on indices and on different themes); background papers for the global HDRs; thematic analysis and data of the regional HDRs; and development and policy actors in all five geographic regions where UNDP works (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and Latin America and the Caribbean).

METHODS USED

A theory of change was developed as a framework to guide the evaluation in understanding HDR contributions (Figure 1). The evaluation used separate theories of change for the global HDRs, regional HDRs and the roles of HDRs in UNDP's contribution to public policy processes. The theories of change are located within a broader understanding of global public debates and public policy processes. The evaluation assessed contribution at all three levels for the global HDRs, i.e., global, regional and national; while for regional HDRs the contribution at the regional and national levels was assessed. The evaluation looked at global public debates pertaining to MDGs, trade, water, climate change, environment and sustainable development, and migration. To provide better insights, this was complemented with assessment of contribution to public discourse and advocacy at the regional level and public policy process at the national level. The key point is that global and regional policy debates do not operate in isolation, but coexist with nation-state public policy processes.

The evaluation recognized the inherent limitations of looking at the causal linkages, linking prevalence of human development thinking or macro-level processes and changes related to human development-oriented policies always to HDRs. For example, a number of factors determine policy options. Similarly, there are several other sources that provide human development perspective. To better capture HDR contributions, the outcome-level linkages were further disaggregated into immediate outcomes (accessing the HDRs), intermediary outcomes (use and adoption of HDR messages by a range of development actors in their work to inform or influence public policy processes), and outcomes (policy change in terms of furthering human development-oriented policies). The evaluation focused on the immediate and intermediate outcomes, where HDR contributions were more likely to be evident.

Figure 1. Theory of Change of the Contribution of Global and Regional HDRs



* NGOs, CSOs, think tanks, academics, researchers, developmental agencies and international development organizations

** Policy discourse, public debate, policy advocacy, and policy advice)

Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND SOURCES USED

CASE STUDIES

22

COUNTRIES

IN-DEPTH DESK REVIEWS

10

COUNTRIES

6
Case Studies of Global HDRs

700
Public policy actors interviewed

1108
Survey respondents

103
Meta-analysis of 103 evaluations

CITATION AND CYBERMETRIC ANALYSIS

- Internet search
- Media
- Journal citations
- Content analysis
- Comparison with similar publications
- Google trends

The evaluation considered two pathways through which HDRs inform and influence policy process: direct, when used by policymakers, and indirect, when used by policy intermediaries. Policy intermediaries include UNDP, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), think tanks, academics, research and policy institutions, donor agencies and multilateral and bilateral agencies. The evaluation recognises that each report may have different audiences, thematic audience, development generalists, and policy actors.

The evaluation did not directly evaluate the overall relevance of the HDRs. It did, however, examine relevance in terms of the usefulness of the approach and themes of the HDRs to public debates and policy processes. Therefore, relevance was a factor in determining the effectiveness of global and regional HDR contributions. The usual definition of efficiency, which relates to the efficiency of moving from inputs to outputs and outcomes, was not applicable to this evaluation. Rather, the evaluation looked at the efficiency with which UNDP used its resources and how it leveraged these resources for a greater contribution of global and regional HDRs. The sustainability criterion relates to the sustainability of an HDR's key messages beyond the launch period. The evaluation used mixed method approach.

The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative information from a range of sources. Multiple sources of data were used both for triangulation and to complement each other.

GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

WHAT WE FOUND

Reach and utility of global HDRs

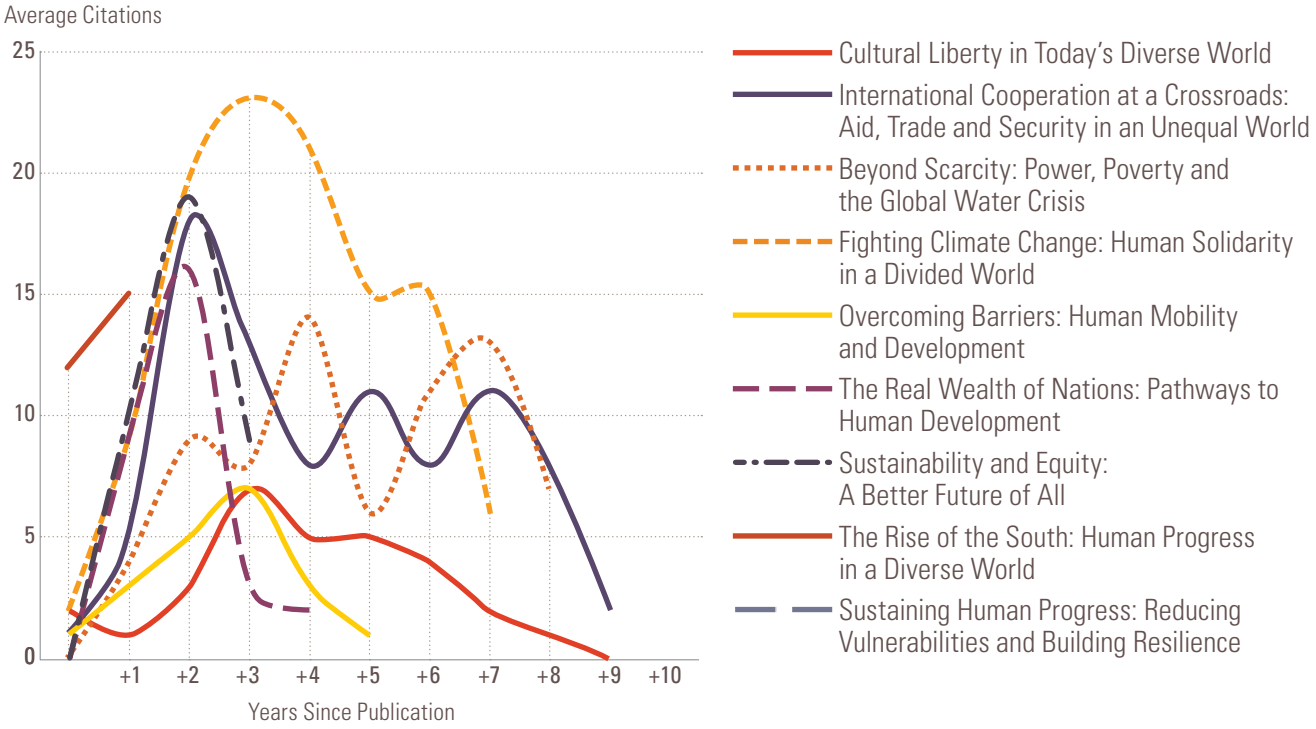
The global HDRs were used to a greater extent in national-level public policy processes than in global-and regional-level public debates. The degree to which global HDRs were used varied considerably across the reports and among different groups of development actors. The Human Development Index (HDI) was the most used content of the reports. The *International Cooperation, Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* reports were more used for their thematic analysis and policy recommendations. The global HDRs did not have a niche audience and the extent of use was low among policy intermediaries (e.g. CSOs, academics, think tanks etc.). In a majority of cases, their use by government actors was contingent upon use by policy intermediaries. Therefore, low use by policy intermediaries decreased the level of use by government actors and policymakers.

The global HDRs were not well targeted at different groups of development actors, thus reducing their potential use in public policy processes. CSOs use of global HDRs has decreased over the years. Many civil society actors find the global HDRs increasingly lacking in striking messages that can be used in their advocacy work.

There was significant variation in how long a particular report remained relevant. Highly impactful publications have rapid increases in citation rate and can maintain high citation rates over relatively long periods of time (Figure 2). *Cultural Liberty, International Cooperation at a Crossroads, Beyond Scarcity* and *Fighting Climate Change* had greater longevity of use compared to other reports. A possible contributing factor to this longevity is that some reports provided new tools (for example, *Fighting Climate Change* report). The global HDRs, however, were comparatively more cited than the World Bank's World Development Reports. The ability of the global HDRs to provide thought leadership largely rested on whether they followed the trend of contemporary development themes or they thought ahead to raise critical development issues that were not widely discussed in policy debates.

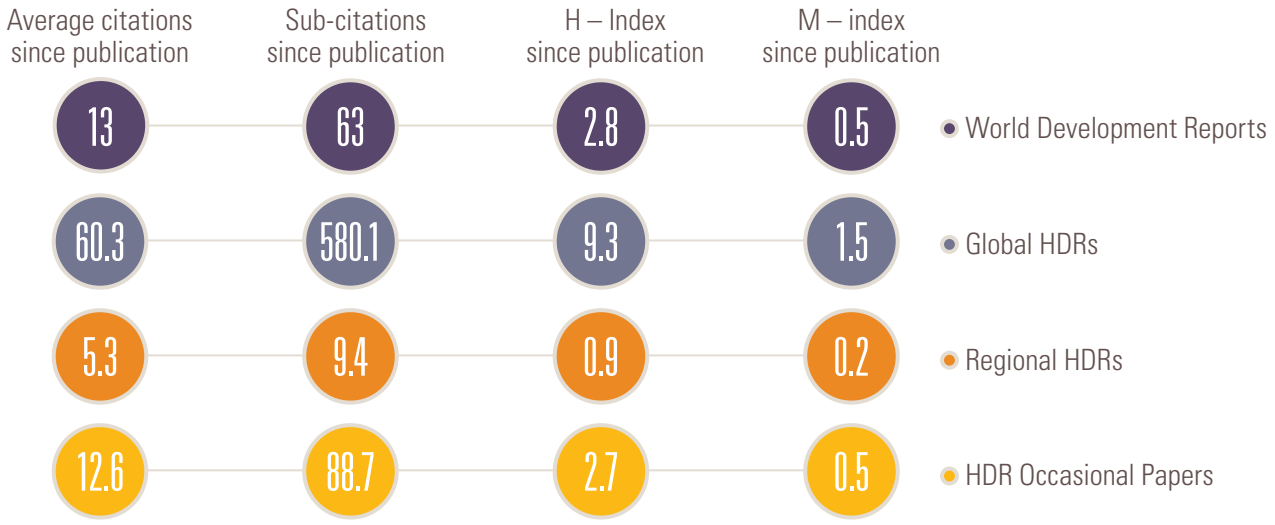
There was an overall decrease in the use of global publications, a trend seen in the use of global HDRs as well as in the World Development Reports. Google trends for the global HDRs, World Development Reports, UNICEF's State of the World's Children reports, and UN DESA's World's Women reports show decrease in searches.

Figure 2. Longevity of the Global HDRs: Citation Patterns



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

Figure 3. Comparison of citations with other publications



Source: Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP

Note: The Hirsch index, or h-index, is a common measure used to assess the publication record of academic researchers. It considers both the number of publications by the researcher and the citations accrued by those publications. The m-Index is an indicator calculated by dividing the h-index measurement by the amount of time that has passed since the article's publication. The m-index is intended to prevent an undue weight from being given to publications that have had significantly more time (and therefore opportunity) to be cited.

Influence on public policy debates and processes

The global HDRs contributed to bridging the concept and application of human development to development policy. Uniqueness of approach and what policy boundaries (if any) that the report pushed determined the level of contribution. There were some outstanding reports that contributed to national-level policy processes. The global HDRs familiarized the human development perspective in public policy.

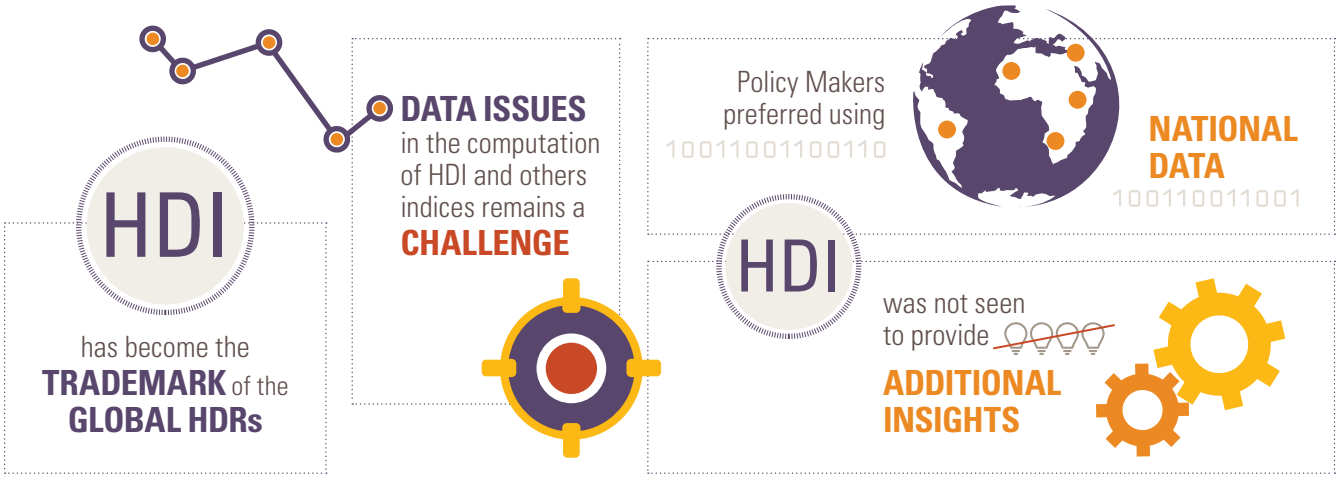
GENDER INDICES were used to BENCHMARK WOMEN'S PROGRESS in several countries

The global HDRs influenced global and national level public policy processes in five ways, although with different degrees of influence by: applying a human development perspective to the report topic (the most common influence); drawing attention to previously underemphasized issues; increasing the salience of the human development perspective in the discussions on the development theme covered; informing debates on international cooperation; and informing global policy debates on these issues.

Development actors typically had high expectations regarding the distinctness of the global HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications. Factors that distinguished those global HDRs that were more used and that contributed to public policy processes include distinctive human development concepts, tools for analysing development issues, perspectives that differ from mainstream thinking and boldness in communicating difficult, often controversial messages. Articulating the human development approach in a simple manner increased their use and level of influence on policy processes. In the more recent reports, over cautiousness diluted the messages of recent reports, at times resulting in compromises in prioritizing key messages. Trying to present too many broad ideas in a report was seen to dilute key messages, thus limiting its contributions to public policy debates. The focus of the reports moved from striking messages about enhancing human development to an array of information. It was evident that global HDR contributions were limited when they failed to build on the comparative advantage of their human development framework.

Global HDRs had limited influence on UNDP strategies and programmes. As there was no expectation that global HDRs should inform UNDP programmes, a systematic approach to using the global HDRs was lacking. When Country Offices invested time and resources to assimilate the information presented in the reports, they found them to be useful in clarifying concepts and providing examples of best practices from countries across regions.

The global HDR policy recommendations informed policy processes when the report took a clear position on the subject discussed. The reports of the past five years are often seen as compromising on core messages and hence making limited contributions to transformative debates. Moreover, in a majority of cases the global HDRs did not provide practical solutions to human development challenges. While this was a deliberate strategy, most development actors perceived it as a weakness of the global HDRs.



The HDI has become the trademark of the global HDRs and has sustained the interest of policy-makers, media and academics, particularly at the national level. Across case study countries, the HDI received overwhelming attention compared to other indices and the thematic analysis of the global HDR. Countries used the HDI for political purposes whether their HDI was high or low. When it was high, governments used it to demonstrate the success of policies; when it was low or trending downward, opposition parties used it as a signal of government policy failure. There was, however, limited evidence regarding the extent to which HDI ranking or measure lead to debate on specific policy changes or improvements.

When it was introduced in 1990, the HDI provided an alternate development measurement that would generate discussion on the human development dimensions of public policies and global benchmarking. Over the years, beyond its use in comparing performances of countries, the importance of HDI as an advocacy tool has declined. Interest shown in the HDI did not always result in generating policy debate beyond that which education and health data already did. The HDI was seen to inadvertently divert attention away from development disparities and inequalities instead of highlighting them. Policymakers preferred using national data for development trends and performance monitoring; the HDI was not seen to provide additional insights.

HDI was seen to INADVERTENTLY DIVERT ATTENTION away from development disparities and inequalities instead of highlighting them

Several factors reduced the standing of the HDI. Frequent revisions to HDI methodology in the past five years and the lack of adequate communication of the changes undermined its credibility and contributed to the perception of a lack of transparency in its calculation. The HDI methodology has been dynamic and has changed very frequently. This led to difficulties in comparing and interpreting the indices over time. Another issue was that outdated data used in HDI calculations undermined its credibility. UNDP did not engage in addressing country-level data constraints or management of development data. In most countries, national data was not used to calculate HDI, leading to significant data integrity issues. Policymakers

raised serious concerns over discrepancies between the international data used to calculate HDI and national data.

The global Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) and Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) did not receive much attention from development actors, although national-level computation of these indices has generated interest in some countries. There was low interest in global IHDI and indices such as MPI, which were largely perceived as less useful for public policy than income, health and education data.

MPI and IHDI are better when computed at the NATIONAL LEVEL rather than at the GLOBAL LEVEL

Gender and human development

The global HDRs made sustained efforts to develop gender-related composite indices. With the exception of development actors working on gender-related issues, the awareness of the gender indices was low across countries. Notwithstanding their methodological limitations, the 1995 Gender-related Development Index (1995-GDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) were used to benchmark women's progress in several countries and were used for development planning, advocacy and lobbying. In contrast, the thematic analyses of the global HDRs were not effective in communicating messages to address gender inequality. The global HDRs varied in the attention paid to gender inequality from a capability perspective. The reports addressed gender differences in terms of opportunities to achieve key functionings, such as being well sheltered and attaining good health and education. However, the reports often lacked analysis of social and individual factors that are critical for ensuring these functions for women.

Other agencies have developed global gender indices over the past decade. The Gender Equality Index and the Gender Gap Index have gained more popularity as global indices. Internet search analysis shows that the Gender Gap Index is ahead of 1995-GDI, GEM and GII.

Communicating global HDR messages

The ineffective dissemination of key messages constrained the potential of global HDRs to influence thematic areas. UNDP did not adequately promote the reports beyond global and country report launches. Poor dissemination of global HDR messages was one of the factors in the level of use of the reports' thematic content.

Management of the global HDRs

The credibility of the global HDRs depended on the analytical and intellectual leadership provided by the Human Development Report Office (HDRO); the choices of the HDRO Director were seen as crucial for this. The editorial discretion of the global HDRs has been central to General Assembly resolution 57/264 (2003), and has been critical for the HDRs to avoid political pressures pertaining to report content. The extent to which this independence firewall was ensured varied across reports; recent reports inadequately maintained the editorial discretion that the HDRO could exercise.

OUR CONCLUSIONS

1

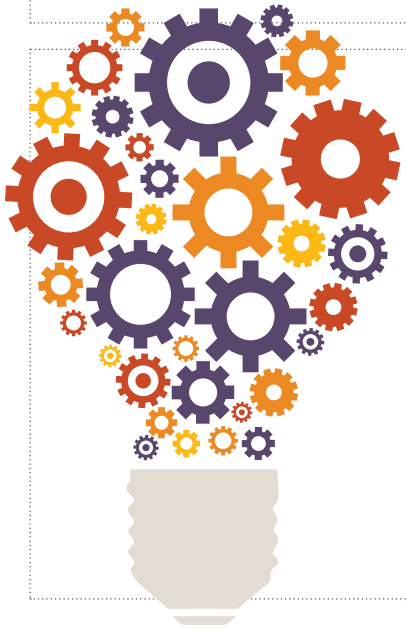
For a **QUARTER CENTURY**, the global HDRs have made major contributions to **SHAPING** the global development **DEBATE**.

2

The global development environment and **KNOWLEDGE SPACE** have **CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY** in the past 25 years. Global HDRs have not kept pace with this change.

3

The discussions on **GLOBAL HDRs** have been increasingly **DIVERTED BY INDICES**, rather than generating debate on the human development. The HDI is losing its relevance and needs to be revisited.



4

UNDP did not have mechanisms to **CONVERT IDEAS** mentioned in reports **INTO ACTION**.

5

MANAGEMENT of the global HDRs should be **STRENGTHENED** to make them thought provoking reports with a clear and strong message.

For a QUARTER CENTURY, the global HDRs have made major contributions to SHAPING the global DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

Conclusion 1:

For a quarter century, the global HDRs have made major contributions to shaping the global development debate. More specifically, the contribution of global HDRs in taking the concept of human development to mainstream development policy has been important. A strength of the reports is their power of repetition—continuously producing annual messages on human development using different themes.

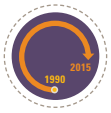
When first produced, the global HDRs promoted a human development framework that was distinctive at a time when the old development paradigm—structural adjustment and the free-market economy—was becoming discredited. Global HDRs provided the language to articulate limitations of the neoliberal economic model and provided a different paradigm about development and well-being. The use of a composite index of economic and social indicators has been particularly useful to this paradigm shift. Although the imperfections of the HDI are criticized by development actors at the country level, the report itself was widely perceived as an important innovation in development measurement. The concepts while seem self-evident today, the global HDRs initiated the discussion of measurement of human development and comparison between countries.

The global HDRs presented a simple, understandable and relatable development narrative that is based on the capabilities approach. In general, global HDRs successfully adhered to the human development framework in the themes analyzed by individual reports, although this was stronger in some reports than others. Its consistent use of the human development framework is a particular strength of the HDRs. The profile and authority of the founding authors of the report has been a key factor in generating wide-spread acceptance of the concept and its more popular measurement indices. UNDP should be credited for the institutional backing it provided to this intellectual exercise.

The global HDRs were political when first published and continue to be so. In gaining the acceptability of a range of countries (including greater acceptability by the countries of the global South), the reports have made immense contributions in promoting human development as a legitimate issue in the overall progress of a country. Despite its role as guardian of a more inclusive, Southern-owned model of development, prior to the HDRs the United Nations typically had not measured and ranked countries. In this regard, the global HDRs made accomplishments in fostering the human development movement. The contribution of global HDRs in reinforcing an alternative perspective to development in public policy discourse at the country level has been significant. There is a greater acceptance of the human development approach in development planning than there was two decades ago. Although this cannot be fully attributed to the global HDRs alone, their contribution has been important.

The global HDRs issued from 1990 to 1999 had a significant influence. The human security approach introduced in the 1994 HDR informed discussions in the United Nations. The approach was included in the 2005 World Summit Outcome as a concept to be discussed and formally defined. Similarly, the 1995 HDR focusing on gender was among the earliest global documents that prefaced the Fourth World Conference on Women. At the conference, which resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action, gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for promoting gender equality. The global HDRs during this period provided the intellectual groundwork for the Millennium Summit and the International Development Goals, which later were manifested in the Millennium Development Goals. Different groupings of Member States acknowledged the potential of the global HDRs to create a global consensus on development narratives.

The reports from 2000 to 2005 responded to the major global political situation at the time and managed to maintain the momentum of the global HDRs. From 2006 to 2009, there was a shift in the approach of global HDRs and the reports covered a combination of themes, some related to the Millennium Development Goals. The themes had greater sectoral relevance. In the period that followed, since 2010, the global HDRs addressed a range of issues not always significant in terms of ongoing global debates or providing a new perspective, although this period was critical for the post-2015 agenda and the debates on sustainable development goals. This period also marked the erosion of the distinctiveness of the global HDRs and their contribution. While a vast body of knowledge was generated by the past five reports, the ability of the global HDRs to influence global debates and national public policy processes has been diluted significantly. The reports increasingly are losing their reputation as a distinctive human development publication.



Conclusion 2:

The global development environment has changed significantly since the global HDRs were first published 25 years ago. For example, today there is less polarization of ideological positions. There has been a considerable increase in the number of publications and databases that provide global analysis, and global HDRs consistently have to be distinctive to remain relevant. The global HDRs have not kept up with emerging development issues and the changing demands of the knowledge space that resulted from a significant increase in the number of research-based publications and numerous data and information channels.

From 2006 to 2009, there was a SHIFT in the APPROACH of global HDRs

With the exception of three reports, the global HDRs in the past decade were unsuccessful in generating or contributing significantly to global public debates and national policy processes. Instead of providing thought leadership, the reports merely followed current trends and were unable to provide a different perspective on key emerging development issues. The global HDRs to a great extent are trading on the reputation of past reports and have been ineffective in using the intellectual space generated by earlier HDRs. To regain

the transformative capacity of the report, the factors responsible for their declining reputation need to be addressed.

The concept of human development has increasing appeal and extraordinary resilience. Unlike many other ideas that disappear quickly from the development discourse, human development is a well-accepted paradigm of development. The human development agenda has just begun and there is considerable work to be done in transforming debates and making public policies more people-oriented. Challenges remain in applying the human development approach to development policies; the global HDRs were not successful in sustaining the debate to meet these challenges.

The concept of human development has increasing **APPEAL** and extraordinary **RESILIENCE**

The global HDRs did not prioritize core messages and hence contributed in a limited way to transformative debates. The reports became a mere consciousness-raising exercise rather than a framework for informing public debates and development policymaking. By being selective in interpreting the human development approach and available evidence, over the years the reports' arguments have become unpersuasive. There has been less innovation of late in advancing the human development approach and its application, even taking into account the MPI and the work on inequality. The contents of some of the reports in the past decade do not justify the 'human development' title.

The standing of the global HDRs has been considerably reduced. The global HDRs are increasingly compromised when dealing with conflicting perspectives, weakening the reports' relevance for public debate and policy. An increasing tendency for political correctness in the presentation of analysis and policy recommendations has reduced the reports' usefulness in informing policy changes, at times defeating the very purpose of the global HDRs.

The global HDRs have moved away from their original emphasis on the human development narrative to indices. Over the years, the indices have become an end in themselves. The excessive attention to indices, although not intended, has undermined the original purpose of the report, to draw attention to the human development approach in public policies.

Conclusion 3:

Too many indices produced by the global HDRs have weakened their usefulness for human development discourse as well as their significance for public policy processes. The discussions on global HDRs increasingly have been diverted by indices rather than generating debate on the human development approach pertaining to the theme of the report. The HDI is losing its relevance and needs to be revisited.

The HDI has been powerful in bringing attention to human development issues through a simple index and has remarkable political and advocacy appeal. While the decision to create an HDI broke new ground in the 1990s, its continued relevance lies in addressing the various limitations to suit the changed context. The HDI has ceased to serve the purpose for which it was developed. With the changed context and

significant increase in GDP across countries, there is closer correlation of the HDI with GDP, without comparable improvement in actual human development. The disproportionate influence of the three elements has reduced the ability of index to capture a country's human development measure. The index in the present form has limitations in generating public policy debate or informing public policy processes and can be potentially misleading in setting policy agendas. At a time when there is greater recognition of the human development approach internationally, the HDI in its present form in some ways has become counterproductive. There is a need for a better composite index for human development.

Less significant revisions to HDI further diminished its credibility and the leadership the HDRs could have provided in measuring human development. What is needed are not minor modifications of the index, but rather an index that reduces GDP-driven variations in the human development measurement. The revisions made to address the shortcomings of the index were not well thought out and did not address its fundamental issues.

In the past decade, global HDRs used six other indices besides HDI (six indices are currently used). The IHDI and MPI, while contributing to human development thinking, have limited relevance for national public policy debates. Given the long data time lag, they have limited utility as a global index. The IHDI and MPI are more suited for use at the national level, with appropriate adjustments to suite the particular situation of the country. Notwithstanding their conceptual and methodological limitations, the various gender indices (1995-GDI, GII, Gender Empowerment Measurement and the 2014 GDI)[4] provided a benchmark and global comparison on the progress of women. However, they did not provide any additional understanding of either well-being or empowerment.

DATA time lag is a major issue in the relevance of most **INDICES**

Although not typical to global HDR indices, data time lag is a major issue in the relevance of most indices. Despite having published HDIs for a quarter century, UNDP did not proactively engage in addressing issues related to country-level data constraints or management. This is understandable given that UNDP does not have a role in generating or disseminating data. However, as a user of data for compiling HDIs, UNDP for a long period eluded its responsibility of ensuring that the data used are adequately current. UNDP did not work with other United Nations agencies in supporting national statistical institutions to strengthen their capacities and practices.

Conclusion 4:

There was limited interest shown by UNDP to promote the messages of the global HDRs; the disconnect between the HDRO and the UNDP programme units was a contributing factor.

There has been a marked shift from the time when UNDP consciously signalled to the world the value it attached to human development. There is no

[4] The global HDR introduced two gender indices, the first in 1995 and the second in 2014 . While both use the same acronym, the computation of the indices is different.

formal institutional arrangement within UNDP to promote the practice of human development, although the organization underscores human development as its programming principle. With regard to the global HDRs, there is no mechanism to convert the ideas put forward in the reports into action, which significantly undermines their influence on UNDP programmes and strategies. The unexciting reports of recent years further contributed to the lack of interest among UNDP staff in the global HDRs; the ownership of the flagship report within UNDP has decreased considerably.

RECOMMENDATIONS of the global HDRs remain in the realm of ideas and minimal efforts were made to contextualize them and make them actionable

Managing various trade-offs by HDRO was critical to maximizing both the UNDP development presence globally and its extensive country presence. For the HDRO, there are trade-offs in being an independent office and at the same time depending on UNDP programme units for dissemination of messages and for drawing on the Country Offices' knowledge base. There are also trade-offs in producing thought provoking reports that may not have relevance for UNDP programming or may generate controversies for UNDP programmes. HDRO has not been effective in managing the trade-offs with UNDP and increasingly has been alienated within the organization. One of the consequences is the decreasing interest in the global HDRs within UNDP.

The recommendations of the global HDRs remain in the realm of ideas and minimal efforts were made to contextualize them and make them actionable. Inadequate mechanisms to discuss the messages of the HDR and engage key policy actors have reduced the possibility of converting ideas into action and resulted in the reports often fading away after the launch.

Conclusion 5:

In its resolution 57/264, the General Assembly recalled that the HDR is "the result of an independent intellectual exercise" and should be "undertaken in a neutral and transparent manner." The resolution is significant and allows the reports to generate human development-oriented public debate. In recent years, the HDRO did not use the mandate to make the global HDRs thought provoking reports with a clear and strong message.

The legitimacy of the global HDRs lies in the forthrightness of its messages and transparent analysis to contribute to transformative debates. In recent years, the leadership of HDRO was not successful in fulfilling this role.

Intellectual inputs to the reports have weakened considerably over the years. A weak research base and the inability of the HDRO to bring fresh ideas to the global HDRs have reduced the reports' intellectual rigour of analysis and policy positioning. The HDRO is not adequately equipped in terms of research capacities to be able to present human development analysis in new ways that will have a long-lasting influence on how people think about development. A

related issue was the inability of the HDRO to draw on the scholarship of countries of the global South.

The influence of the global HDRs is inherently related to their use by policy intermediaries, and CSOs have always been the strongest allies of the reports. However, interest in the report and its messages among the civil society actors has declined considerably. Both the HDRO and UNDP have not cultivated this group adequately, resulting in the diminishing advocacy value of the reports.

The HDRO process for preparing the report does not reflect the General Assembly mandate to undertake full and effective consultations with Member States. The HDRO has been excessively guarded about the content of the report until the day of launch. Opportunities to share various drafts to generate debate, even if it was contentious, were lost. The reports compromised on messages and tried to please everyone, a situation that can be avoided by sharing analysis and draft reports for discussion.

Legitimacy of the GLOBAL HDRs lies in the forthrightness of its MESSAGES and transparent analysis

The cost implications of global HDR production are substantial and the quality of the report does not reflect the resources invested in it. Also, the imbalance between the production cost and the resources allocated for dissemination has done a great disservice to the report, seriously undermining its contribution.

WAY

Recommendation 1

Given its positive reputation, the global HDR has the potential to keep human development on the agenda of public debate and policy process. The time is ideal to relaunch the idea of human development much more strategically and to help UNDP regain the intellectual space in the global development discourse that it once commanded. It is also recommended that factors causing damage to the reputation of the report and its contribution be addressed.

There is a gap in ideas and perspectives about human development and the policymaking process. Transformative ideas are needed to address the development challenges posed by the down-side of globalization, e.g. increasing inequality and insecurity, as well as growing environmental and other threats. The global HDRs have a critical role to play in generating these ideas. UNDP should make concerted efforts to ensure that the global HDRs provide powerful messages to further human development, and should continue publishing the annual global HDR.

The legitimacy of the global HDR lies in the forthrightness of its messages and its transparent analysis. To contribute to transformative debates, the global HDR should not shy away from difficult messages. The indices cannot be a substitute for the new perspective and strong thematic analysis the report is expected to provide. Each report should aim to push the boundaries of development thinking, focusing on issues and perspectives that previously were neglected in public policy debates. The reports should take a strong policy position, even if it does not align with current development thinking.

The strength of the global HDR is the human development framework. Specific efforts should be made to ensure that the reports have a strong human development perspective and widen the conceptualization and policy application of human development.

Management Response

UNDP welcomes this recommendation and agrees that the time has come to revisit the human development paradigm in terms of concepts and measurements to ensure the thought leadership of UNDP. UNDP will initiate discussions with leading scholars in this field and commission analytical papers on rethinking human development.

FORWARD

2 Recommendation

UNDP should revisit the purpose of human development indices and examine their added value to the messages of the reports. Given the issues related to computation and data, HDRO should not clutter the report with composite indices that have limited value.

Composite indices such as the MPI, IHDI and GII, however sophisticated, have serious limitations when calculated at the global level because of data limitations, subjectivity in the choice of the variables and the weights attached. UNDP should reconsider using these measures at a global level.

The global MPI has limited value for national public policymaking or for global comparisons. As MPI works best when adapted to suit national contexts and specificities, UNDP should promote its use at the national level.

Management Response

UNDP management acknowledges that the robustness, relevance and value added of different composite indices need to be reexamined. UNDP will address this through discussions with renowned experts in this field.

3 Recommendation

There have been efforts by the HDRO in recent years to address various criticisms related to methodology of the HDI, and there have been revisions to the index. While important, these efforts are not sufficient to address the fundamental limitations of the HDI. To be able to achieve greater policy and analytical influence, consider reconstructing the HDI following a thorough review.

The value of HDI lies in its ability to provide a simple and reliable measure of a country's human development and its potential to inform public debate. It is recommended that HDRO carry out a comprehensive review of HDI, carefully thinking through its various components and implications in terms of data and other issues, and then address fundamental methodological issues.

It is recommended that HDRO have a policy to ensure that the methodology of the indices is not changed frequently and that it set a fixed period of time for undertaking any revisions. Changes to the methodology should

be well thought out to avoid frequent revisions. It is also recommended that HDRO should ensure transparency in the methodologies used to develop the indices.

Management Response

UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and recognizes the need for a review and revision of the HDI to reflect the changed realities of the development scenarios of the world. A review paper will be commissioned on the HDI and will be discussed at the Global Forum on Rethinking Human Development.

Recommendation 4

UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of the global HDR on the public policy process. The role of UNDP programme units is extremely important in this regard.

UNDP should take measures to promote key messages of the global HDR. Each global HDR should be followed by a corporate policy brief on the messages the various programme units should pursue. Sufficient measures should be taken to systematically improve the contextualization and dissemination of its messages.

UNDP should operationalize the corporate Knowledge Management Strategy, 2014–2017 to enhance the contribution of UNDP publications, including the global HDR. Because the resources allocated for the global HDR are not adequate for dissemination of the report's messages, UNDP should address the imbalance between the report's production costs and the funds for disseminating its messages. A related but equally important issue that needs to be addressed is setting aside additional funds for advancing the practice of human development.

Management Response

UNDP management takes note of the recommendation and will undertake specific efforts to promote and disseminate key messages of the global HDRs.

Recommendation 5

The management of the global HDRs needs to be adequately strengthened to provide a stable environment for preparation of the report and to enhance the reputation of the reports.

To be influential, the global HDR must stimulate new ideas and provide thought-provoking analysis that can generate policy debates and inform public policy processes. By its very nature, the global HDR is bound to address important issues that will give rise to diverse views and interests. UNDP should guarantee strong leadership for the HDRO to guide the hugely intellectual and political exercise of preparing the global HDR.

Several management issues need to be addressed that are critical for producing global HDRs that are credible and thought provoking. The evaluation considered as key issues the tenure of the HDRO Director and the mechanisms in place to handle transition, scheduling of the report's preparation and research and data management. To address these issues, the evaluation suggests the following:

a) UNDP should revisit the current model of HDRO Director, who is the lead author of the report. Given the intensity of the task of leading the global HDR, this model has proven to be less than effective. UNDP should consider a model in which the HDRO Director manages the office and there are lead authors for each report. The lead author will be a senior researcher with international standing on the subject of the report, who will work closely with the HDRO in preparing the report. This will allow HDRO to plan the reports ahead of time as another lead author can work on the subsequent report. Having reputable researchers and experts as lead authors will enhance the credibility and standing of the global HDR. The Director of the HDRO can have a longer term (of five years) and the primary responsibility of managing the process and liaising with UNDP. This approach will also address leadership transition issues that face HDRO every time there is a change of Director;

b) The report schedule needs to be addressed. There should be a clearly determined time-frame for producing the reports, allowing sufficient time for discussion of various drafts. HDRO should put in place mechanisms that will allow the preparation of a new report well ahead in time while the previous report is being concluded. This would require revamping the research team. The model suggested above will address some of these issues;

c) There should be specific measures in place to ensure a credible research process, particularly in using illustrations. There should be adequate checks and balances to ensure robustness of research; and

d) The HDRO should review its data sources and explore options to reduce the time lag and variances in national and international data. HDRO should engage with UNDP Country Offices to better collaborate with national statistical offices.

While retaining its editorial discretion, the HDRO should move away from the guarded approach to report production to more open consultations. Specific measures should be taken by HDRO to strengthen the consultation process. Robust mechanisms should be in place to share content as it evolves so as to generate debate. There should be extensive consultations in developing countries during the report preparation process, involving Governments, CSOs and scholars.

The HDRO should make specific efforts to broaden the academic research and intellectual base of global HDRs. The HDRO should develop more structured research partnerships to enable new ideas as well as to draw on a wider research. It is critical that HDRO use scholars from a wide range of countries, particularly from the South.

The permanent HDRO research team should include new additions for each report not only to bring fresh research perspectives, but also to build on networks of academics and researchers to strengthen the reports. Efforts should be made to develop a programme that would allow scholars to work for HDRO for a short period. This is essential to revitalize the team for every report and to strengthen the capacities of the HDRO.

Management Response

UNDP management takes note of the need for strengthened management of the HDR processes, and confirms that the organizational structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework, and the HDRO management team has been newly established with clear roles and responsibilities:

- A new Director with expertise in human development, historical substantive engagements with nine HDRs and institutional memory has been appointed (appointment was made in September 2014);
- A team leader with substantive analytical capabilities and extensive management experience has been recruited (recruitment took place in December 2014);
- The HDRO management team has been strengthened with clear responsibilities, mutually synergetic tasks and complementary roles for the Director and Deputy Director (these actions were completed in October 2014);
- The organization structure of HDRO has been streamlined and simplified with clear scope of work and accountability framework (the structure was streamlined in December 2014).

REGIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

WHAT WE FOUND

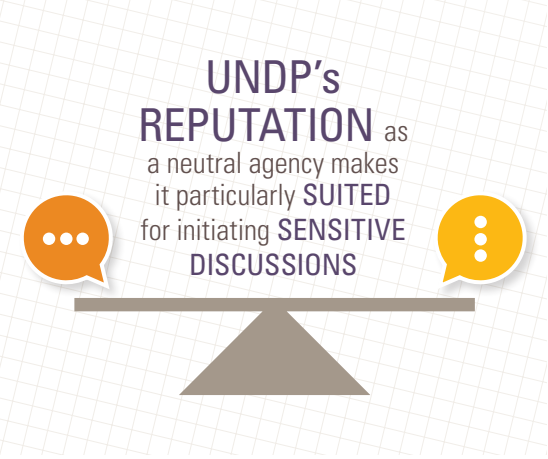
Reach and utility of regional HDRs

National-level actors used the regional HDRs comparatively more than the regional-level actors. Overall, about a quarter of the regional HDRs were used. Across all regions there were some reports that were used more than others. Regional HDR use was contingent upon the report theme's policy relevance to the country. Poor awareness of regional HDRs significantly affected the level of their use. Inter-government commissions of regional institutions used some reports, although there were few such examples. Poor awareness of regional HDRs significantly affected the level of their use. According to the analysis of internet searches, the largest groups of users were CSOs and NGOs, followed by government officials and academics and researchers.

Regional HDRs informed UNDP regional programmes where possible. Some regional HDRs enhanced UNDP's intellectual standing in the region. The regional HDRs enabled UNDP to engage with a wide range of regional development actors on issues of critical policy relevance. Country Offices used regional HDRs to identify further avenues of engagement with the government. Across regions, the regional HDRs were perceived as used more by Country Offices than by other development actors.

Informing public policy processes

In each region there were instances of contribution of regional HDRs to public policy processes. Overall, given the HDRs' limited use, it was extremely challenging for regional HDRs to contribute to regional- and national-level public policy processes. UNDP's reputation as a neutral agency makes it particularly suited for initiating sensitive discussions. Regional HDR themes generally responded to issues that



were relevant to multiple countries, (e.g. gender, corruption, citizen security), too sensitive to address within a country (e.g. freedom, human security, gender, corruption, inclusion, HIV/AIDS), those with inherent cross-border dimensions (as in *Trade on Human Terms*, climate change, citizen security, and regional cooperation) or where solutions to one country's problems depend on the cooperation of others (e.g. climate change).

Report quality, while important, was not always a factor in determining whether a regional HDR contributed to public policy debates or processes. Development actors considered the regional HDRs to be good sources for reference, but analysis and policy recommendations were not always adequate to generate policy debate. What distinguishes a regional HDR from other reports is its human development framework; there were mixed views on whether the regional HDRs actually provided a human development perspective.

Mixed views on whether REGIONAL HDRs provided a HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

The regional HDRs responded to the needs of countries that had limited resources assigned to research and analysis. The regional HDRs were also more useful to countries that had recently emerged from civil war where there was a need for 'neutral spaces' to lessen the legacies of polarization to mediate among contending forces and to use data and analysis to learn from successful development models.

Gender and human development

The two regional HDRs on women's empowerment were important in emphasizing gender equality in public policy. In a complex and sensitive public policy environment, the *Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World* provided a discursive space to debate issues that are fundamental to women's empowerment in the region. The report, *Power, Voices and Rights: A Turning Point for Equality in Asia and the Pacific* provided a comparative analysis of gender disparities and development in countries in the region.

Across regions there was a preference to use publications that analysed development themes from a gender perspective. The regional HDRs were seen to fall short in gender analysis, particularly from a human development perspective. The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the subjects covered, and there has been limited evidence that they contributed to gender-related policy processes.

Factors that affected regional HDR contributions

The regional HDRs had the challenging task of remaining relevant in a policy context where other, regularly published publications with regional analysis on key development issues have increasingly

POLICYMAKERS and ADVOCACY ACTORS expressed a marked PREFERENCE for regional HDRs with a SUBREGIONAL FOCUS.

become available. In many cases, development actors preferred reports from agencies with subject specialization.

When possible, partnership with regional institutions was used to promote regional HDR messages. However, regional institutions were not adequately engaged in regional HDR preparation processes, leading to poor ownership of the reports. The reports' timing and topic covered are important to successfully informing regional intergovernmental policy processes.

Policymakers and advocacy actors expressed a marked preference for regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Reports that had a subregional focus or included only a few countries were found to be more useful in informing public policy processes. Subregional reports that adopted a geographical and transboundary approach, covering critical development challenges that are relevant to a group of countries, were found to have greater policy relevance.

Communicating regional HDR messages

UNDP's main communication strategy appears to be overwhelmingly focused on the mainstream media, whose attention span is limited. UNDP did not effectively use social media to disseminate key report messages. As many organizations publish regional-level reports, it was often difficult for the regional HDRs to attract the mainstream media's attention, even when the report was launched in the country.

Not enough emphasis was given to COMMUNICATING regional HDR messages

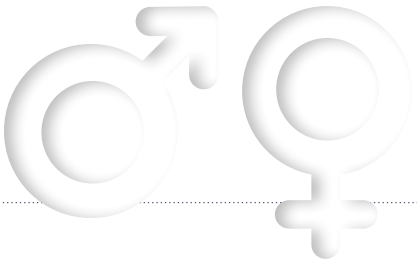
Regional Bureaux have made specific efforts to engage Country Offices in preparing reports and in facilitating their use for UNDP programme support. While Country Offices acknowledged this, the consultations were seen as insufficient to maximize the reports' use and influence. Similar to the global HDRs, there is lack of clarity on Country Offices' roles in report dissemination. In some regions, there was a lack of support to the Country Offices to build on the momentum the regional HDRs generated.

OUR CONCLUSIONS

1 The regional HDRs have yet to **DISTINGUISH** themselves from **OTHER UNDP REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS**.

2 **CLARITY** on who are the **PRIMARY USERS** of the report is critical to ensure that the reports focus on their intended audience.

3 Lack of **GENDER ANALYSIS** from a human development perspective and related policy propositions diluted the contribution of the report.



Conclusion 1:

The regional HDRs have yet to distinguish themselves from other UNDP regional publications. The standard for what constitutes an HDR has yet to be fully internalized, although this is necessary to find a distinctive space among the array of regional-level publications.

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* other publications is the human development dimension which the reports bring to the analysis of development themes. The regional HDRs could not position themselves as distinctive publications at the regional or national levels.

A key weakness of the regional HDRs was the lack of a strong human development framework. Besides bringing new perspectives and evidence-based policy options, it is critical that the regional HDRs are guided by the human development framework. The regional HDRs were not effective in achieving this and were thus less successful in bringing a new dimension to development policy.

Thought leadership and human development analysis of themes are key to the success of regional HDRs. Those reports that contributed to transformative debates (as in the case of HDRs covering the Arab States) had powerful messages challenging existing development practices. With notable exceptions, the regional HDRs have

made limited contributions to regional and national public policy process and to UNDP programmes. A lack of bold policy propositions, weak human development analysis and poor dissemination of the reports' messages undermined the use and contribution of the regional HDRs.

There is no corporate policy on the purposes of HDRs published at different levels, on the intended audience and how the HDRs are distinct from other UNDP publications. There is also no organization-wide perspective on how regional actors should be engaged or if regional HDRs are an appropriate tool for doing so. As a result, the purposes of regional HDRs are interpreted differently, and the objective of informing public policy process could not be achieved.

The comparative advantage of the regional HDRs *vis-à-vis* global and national HDRs is not adequately taken into account in the development of regional HDRs. While it is important to respond to region-specific issues, the reports were poorly aligned either with the themes of the global HDR or national HDR, and as standalone analysis were not able to create a niche in the development discourse. The regional HDRs, while located in the regional programmes, were not able to establish their value and have largely become merely another UNDP regional publication.

Conclusion 2:

Clarity on who are the primary users of the report is critical to ensure that the reports focus on their intended audience. It was not clear who is the audience of the reports. In the attempt to reach different groups of development actors at the regional and national levels, the regional HDRs have diluted their messages.

The lack of a clear target audience undermined the influence of the regional HDRs. There is an ambiguity about how to relate to regional policy actors, particularly regional intergovernmental bodies or civil society actors. The regional HDRs did not establish a niche audience, and were not successful in informing regional institutions' policy processes or policy advocacy at the regional and national levels.

Conclusion 3:

Lack of gender analysis from a human development perspective and related policy propositions diluted the contribution of the report. The regional HDRs missed the opportunity to expand the conceptual boundaries of gender-related constraints in pursuing individual goals and interests. The reports did not provide new policy perspectives that would challenge output-oriented development practices.

The regional HDRs were not always an important source of gender analysis on the subject covered, and there has been limited evidence of their contribution to gender-related policy processes. The regional HDRs included gender-disaggregated analysis, but systematic analysis of gender from a human development framework was either limited or lacking altogether. With sparse policy recommendations and weak gender analysis, the advocacy value of the reports remained limited.

WAY

Recommendation 1

UNDP should revisit the purpose of the regional HDRs and explore options to strengthen the contribution made by the reports. UNDP should not publish thematic regional HDRs unless there is something significant to talk about. It is imperative that the reports have a strong human development perspective. UNDP should take adequate measures to enhance the influence of regional HDRs on regional and national policy processes.

To strengthen the contribution of the regional HDRs to public policy processes at the regional and national levels, UNDP should revisit the purposes of the regional HDRs in relation to the global and national HDRs. UNDP should ensure that regional HDRs capitalize on the global and national reports and pay specific attention to strengthening the policy and advocacy dimension of the regional reports in terms of sustained follow-up activities. Specific efforts should be made to strengthen human development analysis and gender analysis in the regional HDRs.

Every region has issues that merit a regional publication. The regional HDRs should add value beyond what is offered by publications of other organizations. UNDP should not publish regional HDRs on themes that are widely researched and published, unless it brings an additional dimension to the debate. UNDP should explore the option of regional HDRs providing human development analysis and only periodically produce thematic reports that can contribute to development discourse and public policy and provide a new perspective.

Management Response

UNDP management concurs with the recommendation to revisit the overall purpose of the regional HDRs and consider the options for strengthening their contributions. UNDP management agrees that the thematic focus of regional HDRs should be driven by demand and supported by the process of consultations on the themes for greater use and impact.

Regional priorities often differ from global priorities. Experience to date confirms that thematic regional HDRs served to stimulate discourse and inform policy and programming at national, regional and continental levels. These reports consistently had been framed around thematic areas pertinent to regional dialogues and firmly anchored in a human development perspective. The themes for the regional HDRs were chosen based on country-level consultations. The regional HDRs were used as an analytical and advocacy tool to promote the human development agenda as part of the Regional

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Programme, consistent with the priorities expressed in the strategic plan. Moreover, the human development lens and impartiality of the reports have been effectively used by UNDP to raise highly sensitive matters that few other credible policy actors were able to raise. These reports effectively focused on significant and distinctive cross-boundary and regional issues, highlighting the need for the regional public goods to address these issues, and serving as a convening power around issues of common concern. Regional HDRs aimed to enhance the development debate and actions to prioritize eradication of poverty, inequality, and exclusion. The proposed themes will be carefully selected based on regional needs to enhance the contribution of these reports while ensuring a strong human development perspective in the analysis. Building on the lessons learned from previous evaluations, experience from the previous report and feedback from stakeholders, the process for developing the regional HDRs will be further enhanced.

2 Recommendation

The subregional scope of the regional HDRs proved to be a useful approach to cover and provide in-depth analysis of issues that are specific to a few countries or a subregion. This approach should be thought through and adequately strategized for a greater impact of regional HDRs.

Important lessons can be drawn from the regional HDRs with a subregional focus in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean. Given the specificities of different groups of countries in the region, UNDP should consider publishing regional HDRs with a subregional focus. Regional HDRs should be used specifically to provide human development-oriented data and analysis for regions that are not adequately covered by global research and analysis.

Management Response

UNDP management concurs with the recommendation and underscores that a measure of subregional analysis is an important way to enhance relevance. UNDP has consistently framed a good deal of analysis around subregional groupings, which has helped to solidify relevance and uncover key points of regional development diversity. Several ongoing subregional initiatives covering the Sahel, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes will capitalize on these opportunities to produce specific analysis without subsuming the regional nature of the HDR and its intended audience.

Recommendation 3

Specific attention should be paid to developing systems and processes to communicate and disseminate the messages of regional HDRs. Effective communication and dissemination of the messages is closely related to the knowledge management systems and capacities of UNDP; this needs to be strengthened.

UNDP should effectively implement its Knowledge Management Strategy, 2014-2017 to address the larger issues related to dissemination of messages of its knowledge products. To improve the contribution of the regional HDRs it will be necessary to:

- Address issues related to poor dissemination of the messages of the regional HDRs. UNDP should develop a dissemination strategy for its flagship publications, addressing how the HDRs will be promoted through UNDP programmes and activities and clearly spelling out the roles and responsibilities of different programme units; and
- Provide resources to Country Offices for dissemination of the messages of reports. In the Asia and the Pacific and the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, additional funds were provided to Country Offices for communicating the messages of the regional HDRs. Such approaches should be strengthened and institutionalized.

Management Response

UNDP management agrees with the recommendation that confirms the central objective of regional HDRs to enhance their influence on regional and national policy.

UNDP has consistently complemented regional launches with national launches and/or policy workshops intended to bring together key national stakeholders to unpack the regional analysis and develop policy insights tailored to the national level. UNDP will continue to do so and scale up relevant best practices as needed. For example, to enhance the impact of regional HDRs at the national level, operational programme guidance notes were prepared for Country Offices for operationalizing HDR recommendations (e.g. by Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific immediately after the launch of two most recent regional HDRs in that region). Concrete measures and initiatives include establishment of regional gender and climate change fund (immediately after the launch of regional HDRs on these themes in the Asia-Pacific region) to operationalize HDRs recommendations. Before and after preparation of HDRs, the regional bureaux organized multi-stakeholder consultations and policy symposiums, and provided financial support to Country Offices for translating HDRs into local languages and for launching HDRs at the national level. In response to the evaluation's findings and recommendations, the regional bureaux will further review and improve the current process of conceptualizing, preparing and following up the regional HDRs, building on its strong representation in the region including the regional service centres and network of advisers, in the context of further enhancing the influence on regional and national policy processes and UNDP programming.

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Summary: Evaluation of the Contribution of UNDP Global and Regional Human Development Reports to the Public Policy Process


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