

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an evaluation in Somalia during 2014 and 2015. This Assessment of Development Results (ADR) primarily covers UNDP initiatives undertaken under the current country programme since 2011 through June 2015. The ADR aims to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of the contributions of UNDP to development results in Somalia. The ADR findings are expected to inform the next UNDP country programme. The primary users of the ADR are the UNDP country office and Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS).

The evaluation has two main components: (a) the analysis of the UNDP contribution to development results, specifically against the outcomes contained in the country programme document (CPD); and (b) the analysis of the strategy UNDP has adopted to enhance its contribution to development results in Somalia. The unit of analysis for the evaluation is the country programme outcome as detailed in the CPD.

The evaluation used data from primary and secondary sources, including a desk review of documentation and information and interviews with key informants, including government representatives, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and beneficiaries of the programme. The evaluation used a process of triangulation of information collected from different sources and methods to ensure that the data are valid.

The ADR was conducted in consultation with the UNDP Somalia country office, RBAS and the Federal Government of Somalia. Programme country Governments normally review ADR reports and participate in a stakeholder workshop along with other development partners to dis-

cuss the ADR findings and recommendations. A video teleconference was organized in June 2016 with the Federal Government, UNDP Somalia and IEO stakeholders to validate the evaluation conclusions and recommendations. For security and logistical reasons, the IEO decided not to hold a physical stakeholder workshop in Somalia at the end of the evaluation process.

KEY FINDINGS

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION

Due to the absence of a strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, the effectiveness of the results of UNDP work can only be assessed based on limited information. Under the poverty reduction and environment programme, the overall picture is one of interesting and useful work, but undertaken at too small a scale to respond to actual needs. Given the size of the country, the national ambition of the programme, the top-heaviness of the programme cost structure, the high operational costs in Somalia and modest success so far in attracting funding, interventions under this outcome amount to a collection of small, ‘on-off’ injections of assistance in various locales, which are neither cumulative nor transformative. Under the governance outcome, the level of UNDP effectiveness varies across the programme components. The joint programme on local governance has made a very important contribution to local governance in the area within which it works and potentially beyond. The interventions appear to be very effective and exhibit great promise for further contribution to Somalia’s development goals in the future. In contrast, a recent evaluation, on which this ADR builds, assessed the UNDP interventions under the Somalia Institutional Development Project (SIDP) as leading to capacity substitution rather than capacity development. The drafting of the

Provisional Constitution also occurred under the auspices of UNDP with mixed results: the resulting document, while containing many ambiguities and lacking broad stakeholder consultation, is a major achievement. UNDP interventions addressing peacebuilding and security have made a contribution, although it is impossible to assess its full extent without adequate data. On gender mainstreaming, UNDP has been effective in promoting more equal representation and participation of men with women as decision makers and enhancing the quality of women's participation, e.g., building the capacity of women themselves and women's organizations and networks. Efforts aimed at preventing sexual and gender-based violence and helping women to access legal protection have also been effective in contribution to the result area. However, as in other outcome areas, the small size and scope of these initiatives often limited their perceived relevance as being severely inadequate given the enormity of the issue. Finally, UNDP generally has been effective in its work and has made an important contribution to national efforts to fight HIV and AIDS. At the level of policy and coordination, where UNDP has focused on the National AIDS Commissions, there is lack of understanding of the roles played by the Commissions (strengthening and coordinating a multisectoral response) and by the three Ministries of Health (addressing all medical components of the HIV response) which has led to tensions between the commissions and the ministries.

RELEVANCE OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION

UNDP interventions implemented in Somalia under the poverty reduction and environment programme, including work on private sector development, youth training, income generation and job creation, were generally found to be relevant but quite small in size compared to the overall needs. The relevance of the components under inclusive and accountable governance has also been generally strong. The SIDP is an exception. The recent evaluation of SIDP noted that the biggest challenge for the project was that it

was totally supply-driven and that there were limited consultations with the user line ministries before design. The evaluation found the work under peacebuilding and security to be relevant as it is directly aligned with national priorities set out in the Federal Government's Six Pillar Policy as well as with the Somali Compact. In terms of gender, the evaluation found the dual-track approach of the UNDP gender equality and women's empowerment programme was relevant and responded directly to the acute and important needs of Somali women and men, tackling some of the most recurrent aspects of discrimination against women and girls, in particular sexual and gender-based violence, access to legal rights, inequalities in representation and participation in decision-making. Finally, UNDP work on HIV and AIDS, including on developing the basic infrastructure and policy frameworks and on awareness-raising, was found to be relevant in terms of the context and the UNDP mandate within the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) division of labour among United Nations agencies.

THE EFFICIENCY OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION

The successful mainstreaming by UNDP of cross-cutting programme components such as gender and HIV and AIDS into other interventions, including the joint programme on local governance and the access to justice project, enhances programme synergies and improves the potential for both effectiveness and efficiency. However, the complex structure of the Somalia country office, with offices across the five operational environments within which it works, creates extra challenges for effective and efficient management of the UNDP programme. The sub-offices/area offices are the engines of delivery, particularly in the north where security conditions allow for smoother programme implementation, but they are located at the periphery of the UNDP structure in Somalia and have difficulty solving key administrative issues such as premise contract management. Project implementation and supervision clearly face challenges

in a conflict environment or even in the transitional context of Somaliland. Shortfalls were seen in annual programme expenditure targets. Except in 2012 (83 per cent), the overall annual programme implementation rates were lower than the corporate threshold of 80 per cent. The New Deal Compact is very process-oriented, and has generated much talk and expectations, but no new funding was received until mid-2015. This contributed to low efficiency for the first year of the Compact because the level of activity was not as high as envisaged. Implementing partners also reported delays in signing letters of agreement and funds release, although UNDP management has taken steps to address these issues.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION

Sustainability is a serious challenge for most of the projects implemented by UNDP. Security is of course a significant issue in most of the country, in addition to a general lack of capacities, including government financial capacities, implying low prospects for sustainability in many of the reviewed projects under the livelihoods outcome. Capacity development and vocational/youth training interventions were fragmented and almost systematically composed of short training sessions and workshops, which are not necessarily sustainable. There is a need to invest in institutions, e.g., to use existing universities and other training centres rather than provide short-term training directly to beneficiaries. Similarly, the engagement on microfinance seems to be inconsistent. The only cases where the ADR team perceived a sense of strong local ownership and therefore a good prospect for sustainability was when the livelihoods interventions were implemented through local governments, e.g., within a partnership within the joint programme on local governance. In the area of access to justice, while there is a limit as to how long UNDP and its donor partners will be able to fund this work, the results are likely to be sustainable. Better use of national institutions such the University of Hargeisa to anchor the legal aid initiative enhances the likelihood of sustainability. Sim-

ilarly, strong national ownership in the joint programme on local governance means that the results are likely to be sustainable and the use of programme approaches by the Government to expand the scheme is further evidence that the scheme has been institutionalized in that region. In contrast, the internships funded through SIDP are less likely to be sustainable. The majority of SIDP deliverables were focused on capacity substitution, which severely reduces the likelihood of sustainability of results. In the peacebuilding and security outcome, sustainability also remains a challenge. There is some concern over the sustainability of UNDP support to civilian police, especially with respect to stipends. Financial sustainability also appears to be major concern for the community security projects. In the area of gender, elements of sustainability exist but the issue of an exit strategy must be discussed within the context of fragility and the need for a long-term perspective in a context where institutions are still being built and institutional capacity is widely lacking. But the assessment of the gender-specific interventions is more positive for sustainability. Finally, in the HIV and AIDS programme, inadequate institutional and individual capacity development, going beyond training and funding, were noted as constraints to sustainability.

THE STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP SOMALIA

UNDP has made efforts to remain relevant to national development priorities through the alignment with larger frameworks, most recently the New Deal. This approach, while pragmatic, has required UNDP to make several adjustments to its country programme since it was designed in late 2009 and early 2010, including most recently with the New Deal. The main comparative strength of UNDP lies in its long presence in the country, which is supposed to be reinforced by setting up offices in Mogadishu. UNDP is operating in the context of limited resources and a changing resource mobilization environment. Its local presence in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa, as costly as it is, allows UNDP to play an intermediary role between donors and national

authorities. This strategic position is common in conflict-affected countries, but in Somalia it is resented by both donors and the Government. Donors perceived UNDP neither as a strong intellectual leader nor as a strong, dependable operational channel for programme delivery. This perception is slowly changing and some donors have acknowledged efforts by new senior management to be more transparent and open. All partners appear unhappy about one main issue, the inability to show results. UNDP is undertaking a lot of activities but the results (changes to people's lives or to institutions) are often unclear. This issue goes beyond third-party monitoring of implementation and outputs (fiscal accountability) and concerns the actual outcomes of the work, i.e., to answer the questions of what works, why has it worked, for whom did it work and in what contexts would it work again? Of course, the nature of UNDP interventions means that they often address issues that are inherently long-term in nature and it is often difficult to see results in a few years (e.g., you can easily train and equip police but it can take years for attitudes to change). The context in which UNDP is working has been in continuous flux with repeated turnover of staff.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. In Somalia, both the United Nations as a whole and UNDP come under a lot of criticism based largely on the failures of the peacekeeping missions of the 1990s but also on more recent performance, including the work of UNDP in the governance sector (deemed by many internal and external observers to be political, externally driven and too ambitious).¹ This backdrop, combined with Somalia's peculiarly challenging programming environment, makes it even more important to qualify the performance

of UNDP in the given context. The ADR finds that UNDP made important contributions to Somalia's development efforts.

Conclusion 2. While the programme and its components generally have been relevant to Somalia's development needs, there has been much greater emphasis on contributing to development, peace and security through addressing governance issues, as opposed to making a contribution through strengthening livelihoods. If UNDP Somalia is to make a meaningful contribution to the organization's corporate vision² of eradicating extreme poverty and significantly reducing inequality and exclusion in Somalia, then greater investment is required to strengthen livelihoods.

Conclusion 3. UNDP faces the challenge of remaining relevant across different operating environments (Federal Government, existing and emerging member states and Somaliland) while working through a single country programme. There is a trade-off between the practical reality of adapting to different environments and the need for programme coherence, yet while it is unnecessary to implement every programme component across all regions, there are areas where by doing so, UNDP has helped to bring about coherence across the country.

Conclusion 4. Both the ADR and previous evaluations have found that the UNDP contribution to strengthening national capacities has been less than expected. While sufficient analysis is required to account for the low base from which interventions started, new joint initiatives aimed at broad capacity development in the public sector should also recognize past failures and undertake analysis of context-specific constraints and opportunities.

1 See for example: Menkhaus, K, 'A Country in Peril, a Policy Nightmare', ENOUGH Strategy Paper, September 2008; Hashi, A, 'Somalia's Vision 2016: Reality Check and the Road Ahead', The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, May 2015; Mosley, J, 'Somalia's Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities', Chatham House, Royal Institute for International Affairs, September 2015.

2 UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

Conclusion 5. UNDP management and staff are committed and receptive to the UNDP gender equality and women's empowerment strategy and the country office has a gender mainstreaming architecture in place. While this is important, UNDP will deliver few gender results if it does not move away from 'soft' support (gender policy, advocacy, lobbying) and coverage of the number of trainees to women's economic empowerment in terms of technical and business skills.

Conclusion 6. Monitoring and reporting of results by UNDP tend to emphasize inputs and immediate outputs with less emphasis on intermediate outcome results. This can be linked to several factors: the broad framework of UNDP support which has to be responsive to Governments; the intangible and difficult-to-measure nature of UNDP support, e.g., strengthening governance systems, capacity development and policy advice; and insufficient institutional capacity (human resources, tools and skills). The corollary for UNDP is the inability to demonstrate its contribution to development results which in turn has consequences for forging effective partnerships and mobilizing resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Recognizing the complexity and fluidity of the Somali context, the ADR recommends that UNDP Somalia, in developing its new country programme, should continue to pursue an adaptive planning and management approach.

Management response: UNDP Somalia agrees with this recommendation. UNDP has maintained its flexibility in the Somali context by: (a) aligning its programmes to the New Deal priorities and the Compact's Peacebuilding and State-building Goals and by designing and aligning new programmes under the Compact aid architecture; (b) expanding its portfolio specifically to support key political priorities, including electoral support, review of the Constitution and support to newly emerging federal member states, focusing on both the short-term political deliverables and on building institutional

capacity for longer-term democratic development in Somalia; (c) expanding its institutional support to governance institutions such as parliaments in the newly emerging federal member states; and (d) developing a comprehensive youth employment strategy and joint programme to support the long-term employability of Somali youth through strengthening of value chains in key growth sectors, and rolling out new programming to support climate change resilience at community level.

UNDP Somalia is currently supporting the Federal Government in preparing its first National Development Plan (NDP) in more than two decades, in order to focus future development interventions on poverty reduction and address the root causes of vulnerability that underlie the volatile humanitarian context, while continuing to maintain an integrated focus on the intersection between politics, security and development. UNDP will develop its next country programme in alignment with the NDP. The future country programme will reiterate the need for flexibility with regard to immediate priorities while maintaining a commitment to longer-term development objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 2: UNDP Somalia should recalibrate the profile of the poverty reduction and environment programme if it is to meet the immediate and long-term needs of the vulnerable population.

Management response: The country office is in broad agreement with the recommendation. The country office's programmatic portfolio on poverty reduction and resilience has been expanding rapidly. Key new projects include the Joint Programme on Youth Employment Somalia (2015–2018), with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the Joint Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Reduction and Alternative Livelihoods, with FAO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the Enhancing Climate Resilience of the Vulnerable Communities and Ecosystems in Somalia (2015–

2018) project, funded by the Global Environment Facility. The country office is also developing a new joint programme on durable solutions to displacement in Somalia, with UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as new initiatives related to renewable energy, climate-smart approaches to rural development and local economic development.

However, the country office recognizes the need for a forward-looking review of the poverty reduction and environment programme with a focus on longer-term poverty reduction, including shifting from short-term employment to longer-term employment at scale, particularly for youth and women, that will drive economic growth and support overall stability. The new NDP will provide UNDP a key opportunity to reposition its work – and engagement with the Government and donor partners – in favour of a greater focus on poverty reduction, and a strategic review as suggested would assist in this respect.

The comments on regular resources are well noted. UNDP regular resources have played a critical role in initiating new programmes and in bridging gaps when donor funding is sometimes unpredictable. A flexible approach to TRAC allocations is therefore necessary.

Recommendation 3: There is a need to review the country programme’s current approach to capacity development and to develop a conceptual framework for more effective and sustainable capacity development across the board.

Management response: The country office is in broad agreement with the recommendation. The ADR findings concerning the often limited impact of capacity development efforts led to the development of a new capacity development programme during 2014 and early 2015. The programme consisted of two main projects – strengthening institutional performance, working on the federal level and in Puntland, and the state formation project, working in the emerging states – both of which became operational during 2015. These are in addition to longstanding support to district governments through the joint programme on local governance,

which is now being expanded to new districts in the south of the country.

Improvements in the country office’s overall capacity development approach are taking place on three levels:

- **Focusing capacity development towards core government functions**, including: planning, monitoring, evaluation and statistics; organizational structures and functional arrangements on vertical and horizontal levels; internal and external coordination mechanisms; civil service management, with a strong focus on human resources management; administrative management (financial, personnel, office systems, etc.); policy and strategy development (systemic improvements); and gender mainstreaming in selected key areas;
- **Focusing capacity development support on the internal capacities of supporting institutions**, in line with the overall UNDP approach towards capacity development, with its focus on organizational development, and directly linked to the harmonized approach to cash transfers capacity assessments, as well as functional reviews undertaken. The support provided to government institutions focuses on strengthening internal systems of governance and the individual capacities of staff members to discharge their functions; organizational reforms; regulatory development; designing terms of reference; and classic training of institutional staff;
- **Stimulating consistency in the approach to capacity development throughout the country programme**. While specific capacity development projects are being delivered at federal, state and district levels, as noted above, capacity development is an important and cross-cutting element of all UNDP-supported projects. Steps have been taken to further harmonize the capacity development approach and stimulate a higher level of coherence in the country programme. This element, however, does require more attention, which also will be taken forward through the formulation of the new country programme, which is likely to occur towards the end of 2016, bringing the overall programme structure in

line with the expectations to be expressed in the forthcoming NDP.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should prioritize substantive gender mainstreaming in the next country programme

Management response: UNDP Somalia agrees with this recommendation. The 2011–2016 country programme had a dedicated gender-specific outcome and provided a framework to implement the corporate mandate of gender mainstreaming across all the country programme outcomes. The country office has made efforts and progress in consolidating past gains, building on lessons learned and drawing inspiration from organizational commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment, as reflected in the Gender Equity Seal ‘High Silver’ award which the country office received in 2015. Recommendations from the Gender Equality Seal process are being implemented in order to progress towards a target of ‘Gold’. Together with other members of the United Nations Country Team, the country office has also supported the representation of gender in the Compact processes, including two side events on women and gender equity issues at the High-Level Partnership Forums in 2015 and 2016. To attain even further results in terms of gender mainstreaming, the country office will focus on the following:

- a) *Mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment into the next country programme;*
- b) *Continued delivery of specific initiatives to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, including on women’s political participation, the gender dimension of the NDP and Sustainable Development Goal 5;*
- c) *Building and strengthening strategic partnerships to increase the impact of effort towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, as recommended by the ADR;*
- d) *Improving gender-responsive planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.*

Recommendation 5: UNDP should increase investments to enhance internal monitoring

and reporting capacities. It is encouraging that UNDP has already initiated alternative institutional arrangements to strengthen results-based monitoring and reporting, such as third-party monitoring in 2015. Capacities of implementing partners to monitor their work during implementation and ex-post should also be assessed and strengthened as part of broader capacity development efforts.

Management response: UNDP Somalia agrees with this recommendation. The country office has strengthened internal monitoring and reporting through a number of means, including increasing the number of national M&E staff in projects and in the Programme and Planning Unit. The third-party monitoring arrangements in place not only verify numbers or activities, but also seek more output- and outcome-related results, including beneficiary satisfaction and project effectiveness. All project documents, annual workplans and partnership agreements are reviewed by the M&E team prior to approval. Similarly, all implementation arrangements (letters of agreement, grants, etc.) are scrutinized through the Local Project Appraisal Committee, to ensure that proper capacity assessment and appropriate risk mitigation measures have been put in place. The letters of agreement and grant agreements also contain requirements for improved partner reporting, third-party monitoring as commissioned by UNDP and provision of beneficiary contacts in order to conduct follow-up verification. The office has revised its reporting templates with a focus on evidence-based reporting and inclusion of monitoring and oversight activities.

In 2016, the country office will continue to develop these arrangements. Work is ongoing to deepen capacity development for national counterparts, specifically in the areas of results-based management and reporting. This includes specific support, for instance to the new M&E team at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation on results-based management and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, and on the preparation of the monitoring framework for the new NDP. The country office will continue these efforts through devising a feedback mechanism for senior manage-

ment on monitoring findings and follow-up actions; expanded capacity development for national partners on results-based management and reporting; establishment of a country office M&E working group

for national staff; tracking the frequency of monitoring visits undertaken by project and programme staff; and using social media to inform stakeholders of third-party monitoring findings.