**UNDP Management Responses**

**Evaluation of Regional Programme of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**DRAFT Update – September 2016**

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# I. Background and overview

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| The RP 2007-2013 was evaluated by the Evaluation Office in 2012. The evaluation assessed UNDP programme performance and analysed the contributions of the regional programme to development results during the programme period and the strategic positioning of UNDP in the region. The results of the evaluation, including a set of forward-looking recommendations, were intended to feed directly into the development of the new regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean which was recently approved in January of 2014 by the Executive Board.The evaluation found that the regional programme has proved relevant and effective in terms of contributions made in the region, generation of knowledge, positioning for South-South cooperation and mobilization of resources for country offices. In particular, the evaluation pointed out the following: (a) The regional programme has made an appropriate contribution to national development in the region;(b) The results were more effective and sustainable when the regional programme was able to engage governments and other partners to share ownership of interventions;(c) The regional programme has a recognized ability to leverage and mobilize resources for country offices and other partners and stakeholders.(d) The regional programme is well positioned to facilitate South-South cooperation and the development of South-South solutions, disseminate best practices, and link countries; and(e) Significant knowledge has been created and there have been considerable improvements in the accessibility, usability, coverage and reach of that knowledge.The evaluation also identified challenges and made specific recommendations that are addressed in the present management response.  |

# II. Implementation progress

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| RBLAC has started the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation of the RP. Progress is reflected in the content of the recently approved RP which considered in its formulation:* Sharpen focus on fewer and more realistic priorities where UNDP brings a regional added value. The new programme contributes now to 4 outcomes as opposed to 12 in the previous period. It includes 15 regional interventions that were prioritized on the basis of their addressing underlying causes and their potential to leverage other resources and partners to ensure achievement.
* Inter-thematic responses to address development challenges in the region. Implementation of actions will draw on multidisciplinary teams at the regional level to ensure integral interventions.
* Focus on upstream work to facilitate regional and thematic networking, to enhance cross-regional knowledge management (KM), to facilitate the transfer of South-South solutions, and to engage stakeholders on sensitive topics.
* Interventions in the Caribbean to address its specific challenges along the UNDG thematic priority areas for the Caribbean identified in Oct 2012 - in the areas of climate change and environment, institutional strengthening and human security -, as well as in other critical development challenges.
* Integration of gender and other transversal issues in all proposed outcomes and outputs. Accountability mechanisms will be established during the implementation phase of the new programme to monitor the effectiveness of the support provided and the contributions made by the cross-cutting areas, as well as to make their mainstreaming work visible.
* Strategic and realistic support to triangular and South-South cooperation, and the achievement of synergies between knowledge management and the areas of work. As a consequence, the RP will track outputs contributions to development results, and in particular, the impact of knowledge products and research, advocacy and advisory services on public policy decision makers.

The RP, following the recommendation of the evaluation, held consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including governments (CELAC and Directors of International Cooperation Agencies in LAC), development partners (through the Thematic Boards) and RC/RRs in the region. Additional progress is reflected in the table below.  |

# III. Implementation challenges

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| The implementation by RBLAC of the recommendations of the evaluation is progressing according to the plan. However, progress of some actions during 2014 will depend on decisions and actions linked to the implementation of the Structural Review, as well as on issuance of corporate and global guidance on matters included in the recommendations as mentioned in the comments below.  |

# IV. Status per Key Recommendation

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| **Evaluation recommendation 1. *The regional programme needs to focus on fewer and more realistic thematic priorities and more strictly prioritize initiatives in which UNDP brings a regional added value and in which costs can be shared by strategic partners able to support countries and, when and if appropriate, regional institutions, in taking ownership to ensure the continuity and sustainability of results.***  |
| **Management response.** The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean fully agrees with this recommendation. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be aligned with the new UNDP strategic plan. Global and regional programming will directly address country needs. The programme will focus on a limited number of strategic issues related to sustainable development and resilience and will be tailored to key areas according to the specific demands of country offices in the region. Some related actions have already been initiated with regard to new country office business models that will ensure focus and sustainability, as well as optimal positioning and team structure; alignment of new regional programme with country office priorities and planned annual strategic key results; and strengthened technical assistance.  |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 1.1 Increased consultation with internal and external stakeholders, including country offices, governments, regional institutions, civil society, United Nations organizations and donors, leading to a regional programme based on demand-driven priorities.  | Dec 2013 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | RBLAC held consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including governments (18 countries of CELAC and Directors of International Cooperation Agencies in LAC), development partners (through the Thematic Boards) and all RC/RRs in the region. | Completed |
| 1.2 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme by fostering synergies between global, regional and country programmes to ensure more targeted responses and a complementary approach.  | Dec 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | During the elaboration of the RPD, consultations were done with BDP and BCPR. Comments were also received during the RP PAC, thus initial alignment was initiated. Additionally, new regional projects in the areas of citizen security, DRR, climate change, and human development, have been developed with COs which complement and are in alignment with their country programmes. | Completed |
| 1.3 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme by focusing on fewer thematic priorities and more flexible demand-driven actions in the context of the post-‘Rio+20’ and post-2015 development agendas.  | Dec 2013 | UNDP/RBLAC  | The new programme contributes now to 4 outcomes as opposed to 12 in the previous period. It includes 15 regional interventions that were prioritized on the basis of their addressing underlying causes and their potential to leverage other resources and partners to ensure achievement. | Completed |
| **Evaluation recommendation 2. *The regional programme should be less involved in project implementation and should invest its limited resources in upstream initiatives such as: policy and technical advice; advocacy; dialogue; partnership building; multi-stakeholder coordination; networking; knowledge brokering; and capacity development.*** |
| **Management response:** Largely relevant and acceptable. The main emphasis will be placed on increasing policy and technical advice, capacity development, knowledge brokering, coordination and partnership building. However, regional programme activities will also include project implementation when the supported initiatives are replicable; can be scaled up and/or support policymaking and advocacy; have strong potential for transformational change; and complement the support provided at the country level. In addition to policy advice and technical support, the Regional Service Centre provides operational support to country offices. The regional programme will retain its versatility and flexibility to support the differentiated needs of countries in the region. |
| 2.1 Elaboration of an inventory of policy and technical services to be provided at the regional level. | Junio 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | The Hub finalized its inventory of policy and technical services, based on the capacities installed upon completion of the Structural Review process in December 2014. Policy and technical advice, capacity development, knowledge brokering, resources mobilization and partnership, and development effectiveness are the building blocks of the services provided to COs. To enhance the installed capacities, the Hub continues to build its rooster of experts in areas of CO demands. This information has been shared with COs digitally, during missions of staff and in various RR/DRR meetings were the Hub participates. | Completed |
| 2.2. Establishment of an assessment mechanism to define the most effective implementation modalities based on their potential to contribute to development changes, and in full alignment with national or regional demands, through consultation with key actors and institutions. | 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC | The new phase of the regional Programme,have shifted its approach in the formulation of new Projects and in the modalities applied for its implementation, leveraging from past experience and evaluations. As a result, projects systematically incorporate the participation of CO since its inception phase and throughout its formulation, approval and implementation. Also, management arrangements incorporate roles and responsibilities that are most suitable to the attainment of project results. Consequently, most of the projects approved during the cycle have COs as Responsible Parties of the implementation, decentralizing budgets under their Dept IDs, boosting effectiveness and ownership of project results. Some others, incorporate in the management structure regional institutions as technical or political partners in the achievement of the planned development results. | Completed |
| 2.3 Establishment of a comprehensive partnership strategy, with key partners consulted. | Sept 2016 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC, in coordination with BDP, BCPR and BERA | Two positions for resource mobilization have been created, one in RBLAC/NY and one in RBLAC Regional Hub with matrix reporting to BERA. Both positions are interrelated although the NY position has more relations to corporate and political level and the Regional Hub position is related to supporting the COs and the regional program. A RM mapping exercise for the RBLAC area, which replaces the comprehensive partnership strategy, is being finalized latest in September 2016. The mapping will provide guidance on RM opportunities with various partners in LAC region and includes trends, donor priorities and information on private sector, IFIs, foundations etc. The mapping will be shared with COs to assist them with their RM endeavours, and the RM officers will provide technical support according to demand. | Completed |
| **Evaluation recommendation 3. *UNDP should rethink its approach to the Caribbean and should develop a new development cooperation strategy, with an adequate resource mobilization plan, to allow UNDP to tackle the specific challenges, needs, priorities and opportunities of the Caribbean countries and the different development status and vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States, net contributor countries and middle-income countries.*** |
| **Management response.** Largely relevant and acceptable, response initiated. UNDP has been rethinking its approach to the Caribbean. and support to the sub region is a top priority for RBLAC. UNDP is engaged in ongoing dialogue with the CARICOM and OECS Secretariats. UNDP and the United Nations development system as a whole have established the following areas of collaboration: climate change and the environment, institutional strengthening, and human security. UNDP and the United Nations system in Latin America and the Caribbean will support the consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and the sub-regional consultations in preparation for the upcoming SIDS conference in 2014.  |
| 3.1 Analytical review of the Caribbean portfolio to determine optimal programmatic presence, financial sustainability and team structure | 2016 | UNDP/RBLAC | RBLAC has commissioned an analysis of the programmatic opportunities and have identified key strategic priorities for the Caribbean over the coming 3 years. This has since been further elaborated with inputs from RRs in Caribbean Offices, members of UNDG LAC and regional actors such the CARICOM secretariat under the aegis of the UNDG-CARICOM collaboration. In addition, a financial sustainability exercise was commissioned among the Caribbean Offices to assess the likelihood of achieving optimal programmatic and operational efficiency. Several staff adjustments were pursued to increase the probability of financial sustainability of Caribbean CO, including: move from a P5 CD in Suriname to a P4 DRR, abolishing a P5 DRR in TT and replacing with a ARR at NOD level, a P4 DRR resident in Belize was added to the CO Management structure in 2016 and a restructuring of Jamaica CO with resulted in an overall reduction in staff.  | Completed |
| 3.2 Capacities of the RSC to be strengthened in order to provide technical advice and operational support to country offices in the Caribbean so as to ensure optimal presence of UNDP in the light of the specific needs of the subregion | 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | In the context of structural review, RBLAC strengthened its programmatic and technical capacities in the Regional Hub to support the Caribbean. It hired a P4 Programme Manager to be based in Panama to coordinate support for Caribbean COs; a P3 policy specialist in citizen security; a P3 GEF specialist in climate change; and a P3 in DRR with oversight in the Caribbean.  | Completed |
| 3.3 Dedicated unit in RBLAC strengthened to provide services and support to country offices in the Caribbean. | Nov 2013 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | A P4 Programme Manager was recruited for the Caribbean unit based in New York in October 2013.  | Completed |
| 3.4 Support and collaboration to CARICOM and OECS in preparation for the upcoming SIDS conference and post-2015 consultations | Dec 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | RBLAC provided USD150,000 in 2014 for Caribbean SIDS and USD100,000 to OECS used as leverage funds aimed at enabling broad based, multi-stakeholder planning for and participation in the SIDS 2014 conference and continuation of the support to the OECS. | Completed |
| 3.5 Development of a resource mobilization strategy for the Caribbean | June 2016 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | 3 priorities (Climate Change and Environment, Human Security and Institutional Strengthening) have driven the RM efforts for the Caribbean. In this regard, two initiatives have been approved: a Caribbean-Japan Climate Change Programme (approved in 2014) to support adaptation and mitigation efforts of Caribbean countries, and a citizens-security-youth crimen and violence initiative which has been approved by USAID (June 2016).  | Completed |
| **Evaluation recommendation 4. *Mainstreaming strategies for cross-cutting areas should be reviewed.*** |
| **Management response.** Largely relevant and acceptable (this recommendation focuses mainly on gender and HIV/AIDS). To fully address gender mainstreaming in a systematic manner, RBLAC will promote its integration starting from the planning phases of all programmes, and will establish effective accountability mechanisms for that purpose. |
| 4.1 A specific outcome in the regional programme that captures the dimensions of the global inter-organization agreements on UNDP and HIV/AIDS to be included in the regional programme results framework.  | Dec 2013 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | The guidance for the formulation of the new RP mandated alignment with the SP with a limited number of outcomes,. This led to the inclusion of HIV/AIDS related matters as an output and not an outcome as originally proposed. This output was included in the RP results framework under a Governance outcome as per the results framework of the SP. | Completed |
| 4.2 A comprehensive strategy and an operational plan for gender mainstreaming will be developed to align the regional programme with the UNDP gender equality strategy. | 2015 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | The May 2013 UNDP Gender Community of Practice Meeting in Panama, resulted in a number of recommendations and strategies which were mainstreamed in the Gender Equality Regional Strategy 2014-2017.  This document, as well as the Regional Programme and Global Gender Equality Strategy served as the road map of the Gender Community of Practice in the region during this programming cycle. As a result of the Structural Review, in November and December 2015 the gender cluster undertook a comprehensive mapping exercise with all COs and sub-COs in the region. A total of 33 units were contacted to identify key strategic priorities in terms of gender mainstreaming and support to be provided in 2016. As a result of this consultations a new strategy for support was developed in line with proposals for COs. These included: A) scale up and refocus areas of work on signature products that can be replicable, adapted and scaled up at national level at a lower cost. This resulted in an effort to expand ATENEA to 5 countries, the GES to 4 new countries in 2016. B) a review of all tools on environment and gender and a streamlined service line on climate change and disaster management, C) a revised service line on  citizen security and VAW and technical support to the implementation of national strategies on  VAW . D)  2 areas of work were strengthened and redesigned as a result of CO priorities: a) Local economic development and gender where a new package of tools is being completed and a a new area of work on gender mainstreaming and state capacities. A roster of experts to provide additional services has also been nearly completed. All areas of support were refocused to ensure a more strategic approach to technical advisory services focused on policy advice, capacity development of state institutions and advocacy.     | Completed |
| **Evaluation recommendation 5. *UNDP should rethink how the regional programme can more strategically and realistically support triangular and South-South cooperation and measure the concrete effects and sustainability of those initiatives in a more systematic manner.*** |
| **Management response:** Largely relevant and acceptable. Strengthening triangular and South-South cooperation in the region is one of the pillars of UNDP programming in Latin America and the Caribbean and this will continue in the new regional programme. RBLAC considers South-South cooperation as a way to innovate through exchanges of experiences that permit learning and knowledge-sharing among countries in the region. South-South cooperation is a strategic element that will involve all regional programme areas, including the intra- and interregional dimensions.  |
| 5.1 Develop further the operational aspects and scope of existing and new South-South cooperation frameworks in Latin America and the Caribbean. | 2014 | UNDP/RBLAC in coordination with BDP and other bureaux | A reinforced outline of a Regional SSC Work Plan works as a main guideline, as the SSC Global Strategy is still pending. A detailed contribution to national CPDs and IWPs acted as a way to coordinate actions and processes in order to develop further the operational aspects and scope of existing and new SSC cooperation frameworks in the region. | Completed |
| 5.2 Develop Regional Service Centre capacity to act as service broker between demand for and supply of expertise in the region in the context of South South cooperation frameworks. | June 2016 | UNDP/RBLAC | As a result of the Structural Review process, capacities in SSC was strengthen in the Regional Hub with a P4 policy specialist. The team developed an assessment of needs, challenges and opportunities to identify the support and/or capacity strengthening needs for mainstreaming SSC in thematic areas and in programming instruments. A successful regional initiative, the first SSC Award, worked as a channel to measure national capacities and approaches on SSC. A renovated coordination with other CORE areas, such as knowledge management and innovation, strengthened our capacity to serve now as a consolidated broker and facilitator between demands and supply. We have also developed a strong guideline on how to organize and implement a complete SSC process, with modalities and methodologies. | Completed |
| **Evaluation recommendation 6. *UNDP should rethink how the cross-cutting areas can best support the core practice areas, increasing synergies and more thoroughly integrating planning, monitoring and learning from evaluations into knowledge management, capacity development, South-South solutions and communication, in a more structured and focused environment, to bring about a combined perspective for action, accountability and learning.*** |
| **Management response.** Largely relevant and acceptable. Response has been initiated through the improvement of standard knowledge management products and activities, and enhanced support to country offices. The knowledge management strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean seeks to contribute to policy making and institutional reforms.  |
| 6.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2014-2017, and subsequent programming | 2013 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | The new RP incorporates gender and other transversal issues in all proposed outcomes and outputs. Accountability mechanisms will be established during the implementation phase of the new programme to monitor the effectiveness of the support provided and the contributions made by the cross-cutting areas, as well as to make their mainstreaming work visible. | Completed |
| 6.2 Design and implement standards for knowledge management strategies, activities and products to support learning for behavioural and institutional change. | 2014 | UNDP/RBLAC and RSC-LAC | UNDP developed a corporate knowledge management strategy for 2014-2017, which is aligned to UNDP’s strategic plan, and therefore was designed for knowledge management to directly contribute to achieving the SP. In this regard, RBLAC provided inputs and actively contributed through its experience in the region in the drafting process. The strategy therefore acts as a framework guiding knowledge management actions in the region. RBLAC elaborated tools summarizing the corporate strategy to disseminate in the region. RBLAC also supported knowledge capture and exchange, and the elaboration of knowledge products in COs. Likewise RBLAC contributed to corporate learning by supporting online dialogues and consultations (World We Want, Rio+), and by building on knowledge generated in the region and sharing it for increased learning through virtual mechanisms. | Completed |