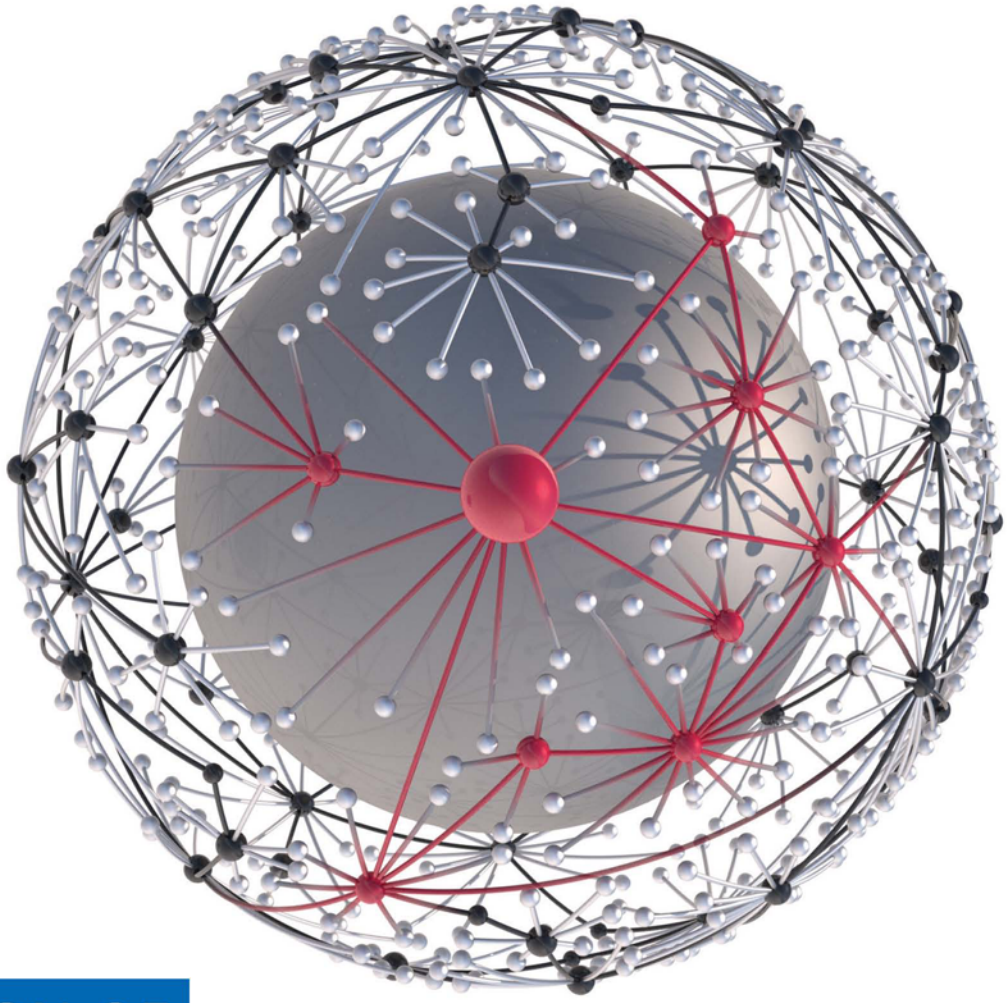

EVALUATION OF

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

PARTICIPATION

United Nations Development Programme

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Evaluation Office, December 2010
United Nations Development Programme

EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

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FOREWORD

Strengthening local governance can play a critical role in human development. Decentralizing power from the centre to the provinces, districts and villages enables women and men to participate in decision-making directly, and to hold local officials and politicians more accountable to the communities and individuals they are meant to serve. Local governments can be more responsive to local needs, make better use of resources and direct them towards providing basic social services.

The demands on UNDP to assist countries with local governance reforms are rapidly growing. This is because of the increasing realization that such reforms are critical in bringing about transformations in the lives of women and men, especially among poor, discriminated and disadvantaged communities. This report presents the results of an independent evaluation of the contribution of UNDP to strengthening local governance. The report sets out the findings of the evaluation and assesses the relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP work in local governance.

Local governance means different things to different people. Some see it largely as processes of decentralization, while others regard it as a catch-all for everything that happens at the community level. There is insufficient clarity and agreement on the outcomes of local governance initiatives, making evaluation difficult. The scope of the evaluation has thus been limited to examining two critical functions of local governance that cut across the UNDP focus areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, as well as crisis prevention and recovery: local governance for promoting democratic representation and establishing entitlements, and local governance for improved provision of goods and services.

The evaluation concludes that UNDP has not fully capitalized on the comparative advantage it has in strengthening local governance. It suggests, in part, that this relates to the absence within UNDP of a common understanding of, and sufficient corporate guidance on, strengthening local governance. There are numerous examples of support to local governance that have been innovative and effective and that have benefited many local communities. However, other initiatives have had limited impact and some have tended to be ad hoc and isolated, rather than systematic and strategic. UNDP has paid insufficient attention to establishing entitlements for women and men, especially for the poor and marginalized, to ensure effective responsiveness from subnational governments to demands made by communities or to engage with non-state actors. UNDP has also been unable to tap the extensive knowledge on local governance that exists within the organization to improve programming. The absence of a strategic framework of cooperation with its associated funds and programmes at the corporate level as well as at the country level has limited the potential to maximize results.

The evaluation recommends that UNDP should more explicitly and effectively mainstream local governance into all its programmatic areas of support by developing a coherent framework that is firmly grounded in the practice of human development. In developing new pilot initiatives on local governance, UNDP should be more rigorous in ensuring that initiatives can be, and are, upscaled in support of broader policy and programmatic development results. UNDP should more pro-actively and systematically collate, codify, analyse, distil and disseminate the lessons learned from the extensive experience it has in the field of local governance. The evaluation also recommends that UNDP should strengthen its partnerships with its associated

funds and programmes in order to enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives in local governance.

I hope that this evaluation will be useful for UNDP to strengthen its country, regional and global-level support to programme countries in local governance. I also hope that as countries continue to experiment with local governance, this evaluation contributes to strengthening their knowledge of ways in which human development can be advanced through local governance.

Saraswathi Menon
Director, UNDP Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ART	Support to Thematic and Territorial Networks for Human Development
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CBO	Community-based organization
CSO	Civil society organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IDP	Internally displaced person
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
LDC	Least developed country
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRG4SD	Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development
ODA	Official development assistance
PB	Partnerships Bureau
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
RBA	Regional Bureau for Africa
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The demands on the United Nations Development Programme to assist countries with local governance reforms are rapidly growing given the increasing realization that such reforms are critical for bringing about transformations in the lives of men and women, especially among the poor, those who are discriminated against, and disadvantaged communities. Recognizing the growing importance of local governance reforms, the Executive Board in September 2008 approved the present thematic evaluation of the contribution of UNDP to strengthening local governance.

From a human development perspective, promoting local governance is intrinsically important as it enhances people's capabilities to participate in decision-making. It is also instrumentally significant because of the contribution that improved local governance can make to service delivery and standards of living. UNDP, through the focus areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, environment and energy, and crisis prevention and recovery, supports local governance reforms that: (a) create and establish entitlements, especially for the poor and marginalized through enhanced democratic participation and representation; and (b) improve public provision of goods and services to ensure that, at a minimum, citizens enjoy universal, equitable and non-discriminatory access. The scope of the evaluation has been limited to examining these two dimensions of UNDP support to local governance.

UNDP has supported local governance and active decentralization processes for the best part of 30 years, and more intensively since 2000. While the first multi-year funding framework, (MYFF 1) for 2000-2003, mentions three relevant corporate objectives relating to local governance, the second, MYFF 2, for 2004-2007, identifies local governance as one of seven service lines (line 2.6) under the core goal of 'fostering democratic governance', together with decentralization and 'urban/rural development'. The UNDP Strategic Plan (2008-2013) internalizes local governance priorities and, in its section 1, underscores the importance of civic engagement and using local government 'capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect'. It identifies several priority areas for UNDP support, including capacity strengthening of national and local authorities to undertake participatory planning processes, assessment and adoption of effective service delivery systems. It also affirms the need to restore the foundations for local capacities for development, planning, management, and conflict resolution.

The evaluation assesses local governance interventions using the following criteria: (a) relevance of UNDP outcomes, outputs and activities; (b) responsiveness of UNDP to changing conditions and needs; (c) effectiveness of UNDP in achieving stated results; (d) efficiency of UNDP regarding use of human and financial resources; and (e) sustainability of the results to which UNDP contributes. In addition, the evaluation assesses the extent to which UNDP cooperation in the implementation of local governance has affected the role and economic and social status of women. It also reviews the way in which UNDP has been able to forge partnerships to promote local governance.

The evaluation has carried out a meta-analysis of 37 Assessment of Development Results reports, an analysis of close to 80 outcome and project evaluations that have a local governance component, and an in-depth scrutiny of country programme and project documents, progress and completion reports and national strategy documents. In addition, three types of country-level analyses

have been carried out. The first is a desk review of available local governance-related documents for 50 countries—in 30 of which, during the period 2004-2007, more than 10 per cent of the total programme budget was devoted to local governance-related activities, and another 20 were suggested by regional bureaux and others as having significant interventions in local governance. A subset of 11 countries of the 50 were randomly identified for a more in-depth examination; and telephone interviews have been conducted with key personnel from within and outside UNDP to validate the findings emerging from the desk review. Lastly, six countries, namely, Bolivia, Comoros, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ukraine, were purposively selected (to represent different regions, different levels of human development and different settings) in order to gain a better on-the-ground understanding of local governance reforms. Detailed interviews with stakeholders and partners within and outside UNDP were conducted to further validate the overall findings of the assessment.

UNDP supports a wide range of interventions to promote local governance, including local governance for improved service delivery and acceleration of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); for State-building and peacebuilding; for enhanced democratic representation; and for ensuring environmental sustainability. Many local governance initiatives focus on women and indigenous peoples, often in places where local governance is still taking shape. An important emphasis is placed on strengthening the inclusiveness and accountability of subnational governments, ensuring they have the capacity to manage the opportunities and responsibilities created by decentralization and devolution. At the subnational level, local institutions reflect great differences in history, culture, capacity, infrastructure, styles and practices. Responsive to this diversity, UNDP emphasizes local governance for improved service delivery in order to improve the ability and capacity of local governments to become better administrators, raise revenue and deliver high-quality services. It works to help strengthen and deepen democratic representation by engaging with marginalized groups and local leaders to promote accountability, inclusion and participation, and the representation of citizens.

UNDP supports MDG localization. It helps develop the capacities of local governments to formulate, plan, monitor and implement participatory local development plans, working together with civil society and other local organizations. UNDP also promotes efforts to include marginalized groups and communities whose voices are too often unheard. It works with national Governments to prepare reliable statistics on poverty and MDGs disaggregated by region and to provide policy advice on, for example, how to develop and implement fiscal transfer schemes and socio-economic policies that would benefit the poorest regions. UNDP helps countries strengthen their capacity to address environmental challenges at the global, national and community levels where the poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean, affordable energy services. UNDP activities have been aimed at improving access to sustainable energy services, effective water governance, sustainable land management to combat desertification and land degradation, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including through the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme.

As a co-sponsor of UNAIDS, UNDP helps countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies; build national capacity to mobilize all levels of government and civil society for a coordinated and effective response to the epidemic; and protect the rights of people living with AIDS, women, and vulnerable populations. UNDP supports countries to create an enabling human rights environment, promote gender equality, and address HIV-related vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls. In the area of crisis prevention and recovery, UNDP helps

address the causes of violent conflict through development programmes that promote participation, consensus-building and the non-violent management of conflict. It advocates for early recovery through the strengthening of post-crisis governance, facilitating effective local-level early recovery, and supporting coordinated early recovery planning. In post-conflict recovery and disaster recovery phases, UNDP assists countries that have experienced severe disruptions in critical national or local capacities, by strengthening post-crisis or post-disaster governance functions and restoring the foundations for development at the local level.

MAIN FINDINGS

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

UNDP support for local governance reforms has been highly relevant. UNDP country programme documents, which include support to local governance reforms, have typically been drawn up in partnership with national Governments. This has ensured both government ownership and alignment with national priorities and national development and poverty reduction plans. The correspondence with national priorities has been further ensured by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, in which UNDP plays an active and central role, and which has provided a strategic framework of cooperation between the overall activities of all United Nations agencies. Beyond broader programmatic relevance, UNDP activities have frequently been relevant in addressing specific development concerns, both at the policy and operational levels, relating to strengthening democratic representation and participation as well as the delivery of services.

UNDP has responded positively to national Governments in extending support for local governance reforms; however, since that is demand-driven, it has at times resulted in an ad hoc rather than strategic approach. UNDP has often responded positively to specific requests from national Governments and formulated projects or programmes in support of local governance. For example, in Bhutan, UNDP has contributed to the country's successful transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy by consistently responding to requests from the Royal Government of Bhutan. However, UNDP has not always been sufficiently pro-active, in part, because of the absence, in many settings, of a longer-term strategic plan or road map drawn up (in consultation with government and non-state stakeholders) for UNDP support to strengthen local governance. Notwithstanding the frequent absence of such plans, there are numerous instances where UNDP has been able to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging or changing circumstances, such as Georgia's fast-moving reform agenda, to national requests for extending support to local governments and communities by setting up regional offices, as in Peru, and area offices, as in Uzbekistan.

The absence of a unifying framework for local governance and guidance notes drawing on UNDP cumulative experience in different political settings has tended to limit the organization's capacity to adequately respond to the requirements of strengthening local governance. Many of the commonly used terms in the context of local governance—local governments, local authorities, subnational governments, local development, local economic development, local area development, local human development—have meant different things to different people within and outside UNDP. Similarly, the dynamics of decentralization and local governance processes have not always been fully understood. In the absence of a unifying framework and common understanding, UNDP has not been able to fully leverage its potential comparative advantage. UNDP relevance has been further diminished by the failure to develop adequate knowledge products that distil experiences of strengthening local governance in different settings to inform policymakers and practitioners in governments and communities.

UNDP support for local governance has effectively created entitlements through increased democratic representation and contributed to improved service delivery. There have been numerous instances where UNDP has effectively generated numerous positive benefits. In many countries, UNDP has helped build capacities of state and non-state actors, empower local communities, given voice and representation to the socially disadvantaged, built trust between government and people, promoted dialogue on local governance, improved service delivery and developed different models of community contribution, financing and participation. Several interventions for the inclusion of indigenous and marginalized groups have been effective, as have interventions extending support to local governance under conditions of conflict recovery and prevention.

There have been instances in several countries of UNDP successes in promoting gender issues in local governance; however, a strategic and systematic effort at mainstreaming gender concerns into local governance has been missing. UNDP has been actively promoting gender issues in local governance in a number of countries, but systematic gender analysis of local governance interventions has not regularly been conducted. Though there has been recognition that women's empowerment has meant more than their participation in electoral politics, appropriate indicators for assessing improvements in gender relations and greater equality in the benefits flowing to women and men have not been worked out for most local governance initiatives. Similarly, capacity-building initiatives have targeted women but adequate data have not been gathered to assess whether or not women have benefited from greater awareness and training.

UNDP-supported local governance projects have, on occasion, been innovative and scaled up; however, in other instances, UNDP initiatives have remained high profile 'boutique projects', pilots or one-time-only localized initiatives and have not made a broader development contribution. There are several instances of UNDP-supported local governance initiatives being regarded as innovative and scaled up, as in Cambodia, Mozambique and Nepal. However, it has not been atypical for local governance initiatives to be set up as 'boutique projects' upon the strong initiative of one or several individuals within UNDP, external experts or government officials and politicians. Such projects have not been scaled up, partly because they tended to be cost-ineffective and there has been little national ownership. Interventions have remained pilots or one-time-only demonstration projects when they have not been backed by sufficient advocacy and stakeholders' involvement during the design, planning and implementation stages; and have not necessarily tied in with larger efforts at reforming legal and policy frameworks and public administration, or with resource mobilization and management efforts. Moreover, UNDP has tended to view its interventions in local governance as ends rather than as necessary means to an end. In Ecuador, for instance, the UNDP and UN-HABITAT programme for enhancing institutional capacities for urban development management by linking land survey maps with land registers made a 'significant contribution' by creating certainty regarding land property, legalizing properties in urban areas and increasing municipal revenues from property tax. However, it is not clear whether or not this led to increased social investments, reduced urban poverty and improved service delivery for the poor. Overall, a focus on activities, processes and outputs without a long-term vision and strategy has led to UNDP often losing sight of people and their human development.

Context-specific factors have played a critical role in achieving the effectiveness of local governance initiatives. Political stability, the dynamics of political parties, the presence and engagement of non-state actors, the degree of local ownership, the extent of trust between local institutions and the public, and people's access to local governments and other institutions have been among key context-specific factors that have directly affected local governance projects. Effectiveness has been boosted by strong support

of the political leadership and the existence of the right incentives for central and provincial governments to decentralize and empower local governments. Interventions to improve service delivery have been more effective when UNDP has simultaneously extended support for capacity-building, improving accessibility of service users, raising awareness and promoting outreach, and when local governance reforms have had the backing of strong national governance legislative and policy frameworks as well as government resources, both financial and human. In conflict situations, factors positively influencing outcomes have included the presence of a strong peace infrastructure made up of networks, communities, and highly trained human resources for peacebuilding, the strategic engagement by UNDP of various people's groups, government agencies and local government units, the existence of peace agreements and active civil society participation.

Deficiencies in the results framework developed by UNDP have been a common factor affecting accountability of local governance initiatives. Many UNDP-supported projects in local governance have not had clear statements of results backed by corresponding indicators and markers of progress. Outcome statements have frequently been too general and unclear or not meaningful and measurable. Indicators at the outcome and output levels have not been clear and have lacked baselines and targets. These deficiencies have compounded weak monitoring in the area of local governance and have hampered a systematic impact and outcome evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance.

While UNDP has delivered goods and services in line with administrative procedures, its efficiency in supporting local governance initiatives has been adversely affected by cumbersome procurement processes, a weak field presence and rigid project management. The transparency of UNDP procedures across projects—where UNDP support has been restricted to administration of funds or to management of procurement and where UNDP has played a (more) substantive programmatic role—has added to UNDP credibility in the field. Project partners, by and large, have agreed that UNDP procedures and processes have been 'rather agile and unencumbered' compared with those of the Government. At the same time, there have been frequent complaints that UNDP procedures have been lengthy, especially those linked to procurement, causing delays and adversely affecting the ability of UNDP to deliver against results. In some cases, a mismatch of funding and programme needs—i.e., country offices having spread their resources too thin across an ambitious country programme—has adversely affected the efficiency of operations. UNDP has also often not been present at the subnational level and UNDP staff has therefore frequently been overstretched when it has come to dealing with local governments. Moreover, UNDP has not always had the capacity to provide the robust, professional responses necessary to handle complicated and deep-rooted challenges of local governance. Finally, inflexibility in modifying projects to changing circumstances as well as the lack of synergy between similar projects within a country and across thematic clusters have also constituted factors limiting efficiency.

Insufficient attention to key design, advocacy and implementation elements have contributed to a weak record of sustainability. UNDP initiatives in local governance have been more sustainable when the organization has worked simultaneously on legislative frameworks for decentralization, nurtured effective partnerships with the Government, community-based organizations (CBOs) and communities, and developed appropriate methodologies and approaches that could be replicated. On the other hand, several factors have adversely affected sustainability. Weak risk analysis (political, administrative, social, corruption, etc.), poor advocacy to promote broad-based ownership, insufficient micro-macro linkages and unrealistic timelines have prevented adoption of projects for scaling-up nationwide. Sustainability has been adversely affected when resource implications have not been

fully factored in and this has resulted in insufficient capacity-building efforts within government and among non-state actors. The limited transfer of in-house knowledge on local governance to other units within UNDP and to partners has contributed to this. In addition, the withdrawal of funds and staff at the end of the project as well as the high turnover of staff both in government (at all levels), within partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and within UNDP have adversely affected sustainability.

Sustainability of local governance initiatives has been more difficult to achieve in conflict situations. Political instability in contexts of conflict, emergency and recovery has jeopardized sustainability. Strengthening the policy environment for peacebuilding has often required efforts to address key conflict issues, such as natural resource extraction, equitable distribution of resources, injustice, and marginalization of disadvantaged sectors. At the national level, peace and development efforts have failed to take root when local governance reforms have not been accompanied by sufficient allocation of resources; and at the local level, service delivery, capacity-building for peace, and confidence-building among groups and sectors have not always taken place on a continuing basis. Sustainability has also been hindered by a weak policy environment for peacebuilding at the national level, the inconclusive status of peace negotiations with rebel groups, episodes of armed conflict that set back the gains of peace on the ground, and leadership shifts among partners resulting from elections, political appointments and institutional changes that cause delays or adjustments in programme implementation.

UNDP has built good working relations with central Governments on issues of local governance; however, it has been less successful in establishing strong linkages with sectoral line ministries and subnational levels of government, thereby undermining the potential contribution of UNDP. Links with central Governments have been particularly strong, based on a long history of cooperation in many countries. While proximity to government has most often been seen as an advantage, there have been times when it adversely affected the image of UNDP, especially in the eyes of non-state actors. UNDP has not always made the most of its proximity with the Government to push the agenda of local governance, particularly with line ministries other than the one dealing with local governance. For instance, a formal consideration of energy has been largely missing from the decentralization and sector-specific policies of several least developed and sub-Saharan African countries in which UNDP has worked. UNDP has also not capitalized on the potential linkages it could have built with other United Nations agencies to promote decentralization and local governance within different line ministries. Although improvements have been seen with the drive for One UN reforms, modalities of joint funding and programming for local governance have still been in an experimental phase. Although country offices have experimented with a variety of different modalities to improve effectiveness of operations at the subnational and local levels, UNDP has not been successful in developing appropriate modalities for working with provincial, district and local governments.

UNDP has not played a sufficiently pro-active role in engaging with civil society, thus distracting from efforts to strengthen local governance. The volume of partnerships with civil society has been high, there have been many levels of engagement, and partnerships have, in many cases, been strong. UNDP has created effective platforms for exchange of ideas and experiences, helped to instill trust between government and communities, and contributed to enhancing the legitimacy of governments in the eyes of non-state actors. UNDP support has assumed a special relevance in conflict-affected countries, when it has contributed to supporting infrastructure repair and building or creating relationships between different levels of government and civil society. However, UNDP has yet to work out effective mechanisms for partnering with non-state actors. Most country offices have lacked a long-term strategic focus and plan for

engagement with civil society organizations, and downstream service delivery efforts have been greater than upstream policy participation. This has limited the impact that local governance reforms could have had on enhancing human development.

UNDP has cooperated well with other development partners in strengthening local governance initiatives and has often assumed a leadership role in supporting donor coordination; however, opportunities for closer integration of partner efforts have been missed. The role of UNDP vis-à-vis other donors and development partners has varied from country to country. It has, in some instances, assisted Governments with aid coordination. In many countries, UNDP has partnered with other United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund to promote local governance reforms. Often being the first to have initiated work in support of local governance, UNDP has assumed a natural leadership role, and in many countries, has been instrumental in bringing in other donors and helping Governments coordinate donor assistance and pooling resources. In Cambodia, for instance, UNDP has established partnerships with United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and international NGOs. While the coordination role of UNDP has often been appreciated, it has not necessarily meant that UNDP subnational and local initiatives have been meaningfully coordinated or integrated with other projects or activities supported by other agencies, or even more substantially integrated with UNDP action at other levels.

UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have worked together effectively on local governance issues in least developed countries; however, respective roles and responsibilities have not always been clear, which has led to inefficiencies. The strategic and results agendas of UNDP and UNCDF have been integrated within the Strategic Plan. Working together, they have been able to leverage respective expertise and resources in support of local governance reforms particularly because of their perceived political neutrality and the long-standing trust built with national Governments. At the country level, the UNCDF local governance portfolio has generally been well aligned and integrated with that of UNDP. Nonetheless, there have been instances where UNCDF and UNDP have not been able to make the most of the opportunities for supporting local governance. This has occurred largely because roles and responsibilities of the two agencies have not been clarified, understood and communicated. Other gaps have been evident. The failure to jointly develop strategic plans for local governance at the country level (based on an assessment of the historical and political background, the presence and role of other donors supporting local governance, and of risks), the neglect of advocacy and lobbying functions (both within the United Nations and also outside), insufficient attention to analysis, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned have limited the impact on capacity-building and sustainability. There has usually been strong evidence of cooperation between UNCDF and UNDP at the country level, based on an understanding of the comparative advantages and mutual benefits. But that has not necessarily been the case at other levels of the organization.

There have been several examples of effective partnerships between UNDP and UNIFEM in the area of local governance; however, such partnerships have been opportunistic and have not been well defined or strategic. Owing to the complementary nature of support that UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) have offered, the two organizations have worked side-by-side in many countries and, in some instances, such as in Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, have been involved in successful joint initiatives. Despite this close proximity at the country level, cooperation arrangements have not usually been strategic or well defined. At the corporate level, cooperation between UNDP and UNIFEM

has been somewhat lacking. Competition, at times, between UNDP and UNIFEM for limited resources, as well as confusion among both staff and stakeholders about the division of responsibilities between UNDP and UNIFEM, has been responsible for this.

UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) have worked together closely on local governance initiatives, although the benefits of volunteerism have remained unclear and controversial in UNDP. UNDP and UNV have had a long tradition of working as partners in local governance. There has been considerable overlap between UNV work and the activities of UNDP in local governance. However, while UNV has been a part of UNDP, the promotion of volunteerism has not figured in the UNDP strategic results framework. There have been other deficiencies in the UNDP-UNV working arrangements. Projects have been affected by a lack of clarity and common understanding between UNDP and UNV of their respective roles and responsibilities. In some projects, UNVs have been unclear about reporting lines. Other projects have suffered from a lack of sufficient commitment from and engagement by UNDP.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: UNDP has not fully capitalized on the comparative advantage it has in strengthening local governance.

The analytical framework of human development and human security as well as human rights developed and championed by UNDP (that draws attention to enhancing people's capabilities) gives the organization a distinct advantage in advocating and promoting the practice of local governance and is a powerful context for local governance reforms. However, UNDP has not always used human development as an organizing frame for strengthening and assessing the outcomes of local governance initiatives. Nor have these perspectives been systematically integrated into efforts at promoting local governance reforms.

Despite the credibility and trust it enjoys with national Governments, UNDP has not systematically attempted to engage in dialogue with all the ministries with which it partners to more broadly promote the practice of local governance. In most instances, UNDP interactions have been confined to the particular ministry promoting local governance.

Although virtually all bureaux and programme units deal with issues of local governance, UNDP has not been able to establish systems that promote better communication and exchange of ideas and experience across its various bureaux and their sub-units. As a result, mainstreaming and integration of the idea of local governance across practice areas have been uneven, limited and deficient. That has been particularly so at headquarters, where the work of the various bureaux and their sub-units remains compartmentalized.

Conclusion 2: The contribution of UNDP has been limited by the absence of a common understanding and sufficient corporate guidance on strengthening local governance.

There has been little consistency and common understanding of local governance within UNDP. Ambiguity has surrounded the usage of terms such as local development, local economic development, local area development, local territorial development, regional development, local human development, and local sustainable development, and local governments, subnational governments and local authorities. Similarly, whereas decentralization and local governance are different processes, the dynamics of both processes have not always been fully understood. Available toolkits and briefing notes have offered limited guidance on a few topics, but have not provided the overarching framework within which to address issues of local governance.

Conclusion 3: Outcomes from UNDP support to local governance have been mixed. Whereas some initiatives have had a significant national impact, others have tended to be ad hoc and isolated, not systematic and strategic.

Bureaux within UNDP have showcased numerous examples of support to local governance that have been innovative and effective and have benefited a large number of local communities. There have been instances where pilot projects have been scaled up nationally and the UNDP leadership role has been widely acknowledged. At the same time, there have also been projects that have had very limited impact for a variety of reasons. UNDP has often failed to ensure national ownership (not merely government ownership) of local government reforms. What has been responsible for the limited impact has been the failure to develop a strategic plan and vision for countries of UNDP support for local governance for the constructive engagement of governments and non-state actors. Even where such a plan and vision have existed, faulty design, limited buy-in from Governments, poor advocacy, insufficient resources for scaling up, and inadequate capacity within UNDP and outside have limited the impact of local governance reforms.

Conclusion 4: UNDP has not paid sufficient attention to establishing entitlements for men and women, especially for the poor and marginalized, to ensuring effective responsiveness from subnational governments to demands made by communities, and to engaging with non-state actors.

Local governance initiatives have sought to improve the lives of the poor, especially the marginalized, the socially discriminated and disadvantaged groups in society. Such a focus on men and women and their well-being—the essence of the human development approach—has often been lost in the preoccupation of UNDP with activities, processes and project objectives. As a result, UNDP local governance initiatives have often shied away from an explicit focus on improving representation and empowerment of poor and marginalized groups or service delivery for the disadvantaged. Furthermore, UNDP has yet to crystallize the lessons learned from various experiences and work out effective modalities of support and partnership with subnational governments and non-state actors. Similarly, UNDP has not pro-actively supported non-state actors by encouraging establishment of necessary legal and regulatory frameworks, building their capacity, and creating national and subnational NGO platforms for enhancing their contribution to strengthening local governance. As a result, their potential to work closely for the empowerment of poor and disadvantaged communities and to bring about improved accountability in service delivery by correcting imbalances and inefficiencies in resource allocations has not been tapped fully.

Conclusion 5: UNDP has not been able to tap the extensive knowledge on local governance within the organization for better programming.

Few institutions engaged in local governance could have the rich experience that UNDP has in the field. Despite the advantage of working in over a 150 countries and in very diverse settings, UNDP has not yet established itself as a knowledge organization where the experience of its managers is systematically captured, analysed, organized, distilled into collective intelligence and made available for use within and outside the organization. Country offices have not been able to tap effectively into the wealth of UNDP experience either through the regional service centres or headquarters. Communication between and within bureaux and other programme units has also been limited. Although virtually all bureaux and programme units have dealt with issues of local governance, the different bureaux (especially the Bureau for Development Policy, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Partnership Bureau) have pursued different approaches and have had only limited cooperation and contact with each other. Most groups and divisions seem to have been working in their own silos without using local governance as the common platform to come together and think strategically. Systems have not been fully in place for disseminating and sharing learning within the organization and with external partners. Knowledge products have not been produced regularly and systematically to cover the wide range of topics under local governance. Formal and informal networks have been established, but

they have not been sufficiently servicing managers within UNDP or policymakers and practitioners outside the organization. Failure to tap effectively into the knowledge base has deeply hindered the effectiveness of the organization in its efforts at strengthening local governance.

Conclusion 6: The absence of a strategic framework of cooperation with its associated funds and programmes at the corporate level as well as at the country level has limited the potential to maximize results.

Joint programming and collaboration have not developed into a strategic partnership for advancing the respective corporate missions based on a careful assessment of opportunities, roles and responsibilities. Despite the long tradition of partnering with UNCDF and UNV, joint efforts at strengthening local governance have been constrained by the frequent absence of strategic partnerships, particularly at the country level. Even where such agreements have existed, collaboration has often been reduced to a management arrangement for project implementation. At the project level, the absence of a mutually agreed upon framework specifying the roles and responsibilities of the partners at the country level has limited the effectiveness of the partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNDP should more explicitly and effectively mainstream local governance into all its programmatic areas of support by developing a coherent framework that is firmly grounded in the practice of human development.

UNDP should develop a unified framework that identifies and establishes the many linkages of the essential constituents of local governance with human development. Central to such an exercise will be the articulation of theories of change that underscore the different connections between various local governance reform measures and an expansion of human capabilities. That should help UNDP to look beyond processes and projects that promote participation, market-led development, biodiversity, etc., to more tangible outcomes such as political empowerment, greater voice for the disadvantaged, transparency and accountability as well as promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the poor, peace and security, and conflict prevention.

Such an overarching framework for local governance should be informed by learning from the rich and diverse experience of UNDP in this area. While developing such a framework, it will be important to keep in mind that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach may dilute the relevance, hamper local ownership and adversely affect the sustainability of local governance reforms. Guidance notes need to be updated and revised based on the wealth of existing UNDP knowledge and experience in the field of local governance, and new ones need to be developed to address different aspects of local governance and decentralization in different contexts.

Recommendation 2: In developing new pilot initiatives on local governance, UNDP should be more rigorous in ensuring that they can be, and are, upscaled in support of broader policy and programmatic development results.

UNDP should invest more thoroughly in the development of pilot initiatives in order to ensure their success. At the outset, that would involve conducting in-depth problem analysis and involving the central Government, subnational governments, local communities, non-state actors and other development partners in order to establish the initiative's potential for success. That approach will facilitate the development of mechanisms that will support the upscaling of the pilot initiative and the sustainability of its benefits. It would imply the establishment of rigorous planning frameworks, including meaningful indicators, baselines and targets. It would also require regular monitoring and evaluation, including of unintended effects, and involving all stakeholders, in order to learn from experience as the project is implemented. Finally,

exit strategies should be clearly defined and implemented and lessons learned documented as upscaling, in most cases, will be led by national authorities with the support of other partners.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should more pro-actively and systematically collate, codify, analyse, distil and disseminate the lessons learned from the extensive experience it has in the field of local governance.

UNDP needs to more systematically produce knowledge products that distil the lessons learned from its vast experience in local governance across diverse and difficult settings. The extensive body of knowledge regarding local governance should be properly codified, collated and analysed. Where such documentation and analyses exist, effective mechanisms should be established for bureaux and managers within UNDP and outside to tap them effectively and systematically.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should strengthen its partnerships with its associated funds and programmes in order to enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives in local governance.

UNDP should take measures to further strengthen and streamline corporate arrangements for deepening local governance in partnerships with the associated funds and programmes. In order to improve the effectiveness of their partnership, at the country level, UNDP and UNCDF should jointly develop a long-term strategic plan for local governance which is consistent with and integral to national development plans and priorities. That would help in more systematically addressing deficiencies in capacity-building and resource mobilization that arise and adversely affect sustainability. Better understanding and communication of the roles and responsibilities of UNDP and UNCDF would help to reduce inefficiencies in operations. They should work on improving advocacy and lobbying functions, both within the United Nations and outside.

The UNDP partnership with UNV at the country level should move beyond project collaboration and become more strategic, based on a shared long-term vision of strengthening local governance. UNDP needs to make a more explicit commitment to the mandates of UNV, and not view the partnership merely as a management arrangement. In other words, UNDP should commit itself to partnering with UNV, on mainstreaming volunteerism for the many benefits that such mainstreaming brings to people, while ensuring that the deployment of volunteers builds local capacities in a sustainable manner.

Chapter 1

RATIONALE, SCOPE AND APPROACH

1.1 BACKGROUND

The evaluation of the UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance was approved as part of the programme of work of the UNDP Evaluation Office at the September 2008 session of the Executive Board.[1] The present report sets out the findings of the evaluation which assesses the relevance, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP work in the area of local governance.

Local governance and decentralization are integral to establishing democratic systems that advance human development of women and men. Democratic processes matter for human development because people everywhere want to be free to determine their destinies, express their views and participate in the decisions that shape their lives. These capabilities are just as important for widening people's choices as being able to read or enjoy good health. Even when democratic institutions are firmly established, citizens often feel powerless to influence national politics. The solution lies in the widening and deepening of democracy, a key goal of strengthening local governance.

From a human development perspective, promoting local governance is intrinsically important as it enhances people's capabilities to participate in decision-making. And it is also instrumentally significant because of the contribution improved local governance can make to service delivery and standards of living.

UNDP has supported local governance and decentralization processes for the best part of 30 years, and more intensively since 2000. Three corporate objectives of the first Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF 1) which spanned 2000–2003 related directly or indirectly to local governance: (i) strengthen capacity of key governance institutions for people-centered development and foster social cohesion; (ii) promote decentralization that supports participatory local governance, strengthens local organizations and empowers communities; and (iii) promote efficiency and accountability in a public sector that serves all citizens. The second Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF 2) for 2004–2007 placed emphasis on: (i) decentralization policies including fiscal and legal frameworks; (ii) institutions and policies to improve local governance in urban and rural areas and improve rural-urban relations; (iii) capacities and partnerships of local governance actors in urban and rural areas for policy formulation, service delivery and resource management; and (iv) women's participation in decentralized governance as decision-makers, implementers and managers.

The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2008–2013 makes frequent references to local governance.[2] It emphasizes the importance of civic engagement and using local government 'capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect.' It commits UNDP to 'identify policy options, undertake diagnostic studies and conduct training to build local and national capacity.' It affirms the need to restore the foundations for local development for crisis prevention and recovery by strengthening local capacities for

[1] Decision 2008/31 adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session, 2008.

[2] Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, 'UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008–2011, Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Updated Pursuant to Decision 2007/32', June 2008.

development, management, resolutions and planning. Similarly, several priority areas for UNDP support in energy and environment have been identified including capacity strengthening of national and local authorities to undertake participatory planning processes, assessment and adoption of effective service delivery systems.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The principal objectives of the evaluation are to: (i) ascertain the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP support to local governance; (ii) clarify the strategic role of UNDP vis-à-vis other development partners in providing local governance-related support to programme countries; and (iii) provide actionable recommendations on UNDP strategies, polices, approaches and interventions for local governance. The evaluation is both retrospective and formative and covers programmes during the period 2000–2009. The evaluation covers relevant programmes at the global, regional and country levels, covering Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

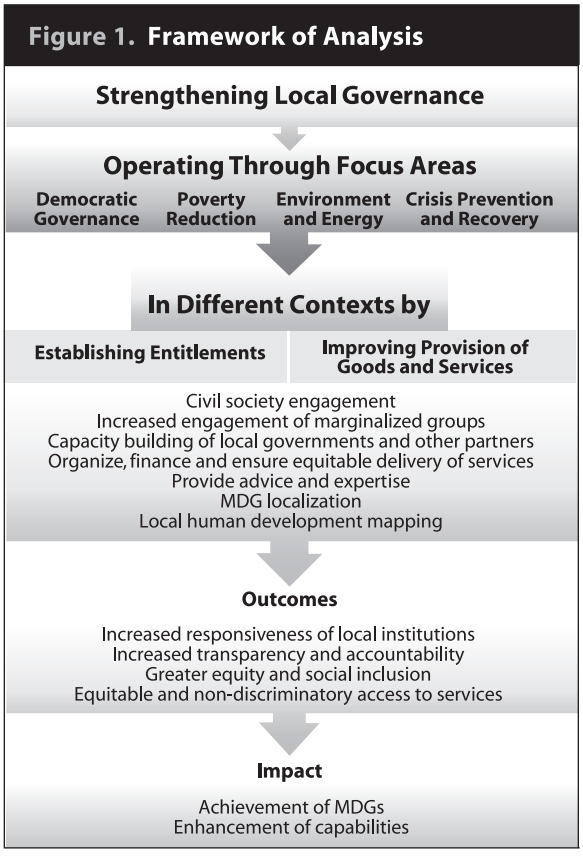
Local governance means different things to different people. Some see it largely as processes of decentralization, while others regard it as a catch-all for everything that happens at the community level. On the other hand, some discount the importance given to community-level outcomes and emphasize the need for national legislation and overall governance and democratic reforms without which local governance cannot improve. As a result, there is insufficient clarity and agreement on the outcomes of local governance initiatives, making evaluation difficult. For disaster-risk reduction, local-government support depends upon national-level efforts at decentralization, legislation and institutions for disaster-risk management.

Bearing in mind the above challenge, the scope of the evaluation has been limited to examining two critical functions of local governance that cut across the UNDP focus areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment as well as crisis prevention and recovery:

- Local governance for promoting democratic representation and establishing entitlements.
- Local governance for improved provision of goods and services.

Both require a number of initiatives including civil society engagement, increased engagement of marginalized groups, and capacity building of local governments and other partners to organize, finance and ensure equitable delivery of services. It is not always the case that UNDP gives equal importance to both these dimensions in every country. These interventions could be expected to result in increased responsiveness of local institutions, increased transparency and accountability, greater equity and inclusion and access to equitable and non-discriminatory services. This could ultimately have an impact on enhancing human capabilities. The analytical framework used for the evaluation is schematically presented in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1. Framework of Analysis



1.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation assesses local governance interventions using the following criteria:

- **Relevance and strategic positioning:** The evaluation seeks to draw conclusions as to how UNDP has positioned itself vis-à-vis Governments and their programmes as well as other development agencies and civil society organizations to maximise its relevance and leverage within the sphere of local governance.
- **Responsiveness:** Local governance is as political as it is technical. Adaptability and rapidity of action and responsiveness to changing conditions and needs are as important to achieving lasting results as sound design. The evaluation assesses implementation from this standpoint and draws lessons from different modalities applied.
- **Effectiveness:** The evaluation assesses performance of the programme in terms of its achievement of results at the outcome level. The evaluation also assesses the extent of national ownership, how UNDP has gone about maximising it and the way in which it has affected the results achieved.
- **Efficiency:** The evaluation assesses the efficiency of operations in terms of timeliness in implementation as well as, to the extent possible, of resource utilization.
- **Sustainability:** Local governance programmes involve long-term capacity building. The sustainability of programmes is centrally important to the outcomes and impact of such programmes. The evaluation assesses the sustainability of UNDP interventions and factors that enhance or undermine long-term sustainability of institutions and of local residents.

In addition, the following two dimensions are reviewed:

- **Gender:** The evaluation assesses the extent to which UNDP cooperation in the implementation of local governance has affected the role and economic and social status of women.
- **Partnerships:** The evaluation has limited itself to assessing key partnerships with the associated funds and programmes that report to the Administrator of UNDP: the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); and United Nations Volunteers (UNV). The evaluation also assesses the complementary role of other UNDP units, including the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the Bureau of Partnership (PB) and the regional bureaux, in providing support or managing initiatives in local governance.

1.4 EVALUABILITY AND LIMITATIONS

Explaining causality and why an intervention has failed is not easy even if sufficient information is available about design and context. For instance, increased participation in electoral politics may not yield the desired results of correcting existing imbalances in allocating resources, ensuring benefits flow to the poor or ending corruption. Much would depend upon whether a national framework for decentralization exists, and upon the incentives to national level politicians, bureaucrats and service providers to devolve power and resources. It would also be contingent upon the quality of public administration systems and motivating officials to enhance performance, eliminate leakage, improve efficiency and eliminate corruption. Similarly, citizens may be unwilling to participate in electoral politics even when they are educated and aware of their rights and entitlements. This can happen if people are disillusioned with their political leaders or if they believe that their participation will make no difference to the quality of local governance.

Local governance-related outcomes depend on the context and design of interventions. Contexts vary from country to country, within a country, from one region to another, from one province to another and from one locality to another. The wide variations in context make it extremely difficult to evaluate outcomes in terms of

effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability across locations and over time. For instance, opportunities and limitations of the normative frameworks in each country delineate not only the levels of decentralization (including delegation and deconcentration) and local governance but the impact and scope of outcomes as well. Similarly, the success of efforts to improve democratic participation would depend on a number of factors including the nature of local politics, the presence of interest groups, the history of political parties and the degree of competition among contestants. It would be further affected by context-specific factors such as the levels of education and awareness of the voters, the degree of social and economic inequalities, and the extent of discrimination against minority and other disadvantaged communities. Outcomes would also depend upon how well even standard interventions (such as increasing participation in elections) are designed and tailored to address the specific cultural, social and historical features of the local environment. Evaluation becomes difficult in the absence of sufficient knowledge about local contexts and design specificities.

The evaluation also faced challenges related to the weaknesses in the results frameworks (in terms of clear outcome statements) and the absence of sufficiently robust measures of outcomes and appropriate indicators that can track progress in local governance. Moreover, the evaluation has been limited by the non-availability of specialized data on the evaluation of specific local governance initiatives. Obtaining valid and comparable data posed a challenge, partly due to the complexity of the theme to be evaluated, and partly because a broad theme such as local governance is not readily captured by UNDP monitoring and evaluation systems. Ideally, a thematic evaluation requires a global monitoring framework that collects financial and programme information from all countries that have relevant programme activities. This was not available. It was not possible to identify and obtain appropriate baseline data to assess outcomes. The evaluation was heavily dependent on secondary sources and meta-evaluations. However, the quality of outcome and project evaluations remains poor. Only nine out of the 24 outcome evaluations were rated by the Evaluation Office as being satisfactory in terms of quality. As a result, the evaluation has had to rely on interviews and triangulation as a method for verifying evidence.

1.5 EVALUATION APPROACH

Bearing in mind the evaluability-related challenges, evidence was gathered from a meta-analysis of UNDP experience with strengthening local governance in 69 countries across the different regions (see Annex 3).

The evaluation relies on two main sources of data: (i) in-depth country analysis; and (ii) interviews with key personnel in UNDP and other partner agencies (see Annex 4). The team also undertook the following types of country-level analyses.

- The evaluation draws extensively on information about local governance initiatives from Assessment of Development Results (ADR) relating to 38 countries undertaken by the Evaluation Office since 2000.
- The evaluation draws on the findings from 24 countries of outcome evaluations of local governance programmes.
- A desk review of 50 countries from the different regions was undertaken drawing on relevant country programme and project documents, progress and completion reports, results-oriented annual reports, national strategy documents and reports, relevant reports by partners, as well as evaluation reports. In 30 of the selected countries, more than 10 percent of the total programme budget was devoted to local governance-related activities reported under service line 2.6 during the MYFF 2 period. Another 20 countries were proposed by regional bureaux and others as having significant interventions in local governance that were not reported under service line 2.6, but would have been reported under other service lines related to governance, poverty, environment or crisis prevention and recovery.

- A subset of 11 countries out of the 50 were randomly identified for a more in-depth examination: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Detailed reviews of the quality of local governance results statements and corresponding indicators contained in the Country Programme Documents were conducted. Moreover, telephone interviews were conducted with key personnel in many of these countries to validate some of the findings emerging from the detailed desk review.
- Six country case studies for illustration: six countries were selected (to represent different regions, different levels of human development and different settings) for gaining a better on-the-ground understanding of the way local governance initiatives play out at the country level: Bolivia, Comoros, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ukraine.

A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

- Representatives of political parties, think tanks, civil society activists, women's groups, independent intellectuals (including journalists and academics) and other multilateral and bilateral agencies not directly collaborating with UNDP on local governance with a view to obtaining broad information on the performance of local governance efforts in the country;
- Government officials, direct beneficiaries of UNDP local governance programmes, UNDP project personnel, and UNDP Country Office personnel, United Nations personnel in agencies directly collaborating with UNDP on local governance, bilateral donors, and non-governmental organisation or agency counterparts involved with the UNDP local governance projects and programmes; and
- Key personnel at UNDP headquarters, regional offices and in other partner organizations were interviewed to validate findings and to gather insights into the operational and other dimensions of UNDP efforts at strengthening local governance.

In order to ensure consistency and a common approach to qualitative data analysis, relevant tools were developed, including an evaluation matrix with key evaluation questions (see Annex 2), a common understanding of key stakeholders and partners as well as guidelines for approaching them, basic interview protocols, a template for recording and reporting on interviews and standard case study report formats, and so on. Data from different sources, including the country case studies, review of outcome and project evaluations, headquarters and regional centre interviews, were synthesized with a view to answering the key questions contained in the evaluation matrix.

This report comprises four chapters. Chapter 2 describes local governance-related development challenges in UNDP programme countries and provides an overview of some of UNDP key related responses. Chapter 3 analyzes UNDP performance in supporting local governance, based on the evaluation criteria set out above. Chapter 4 provides the overall conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

Chapter 2

CONTEXT AND UNDP RESPONSE

2.1 CONTEXT

The demands on UNDP to assist countries with local governance reforms are rapidly growing. This is because of the increasing realization that such reforms are critical in bringing about transformations in the lives of men and women, especially among poor, discriminated and disadvantaged communities.[3]

Strengthening local governance and decentralization can potentially contribute to enhancing human development. Decentralizing power from the centre to the provinces, districts and villages enables people to participate in decision-making directly. Local officials and politicians can be much more open to public scrutiny than national Governments—and more accountable to the communities and individuals they are meant to serve. Local governments, being closer to the people, can be more responsive to local needs, make better use of resources and direct them towards the provision of basic social services. Local governance can also potentially enhance efficiency and cut costs. If local communities assume ownership, they are likely to keep a tight lid on expenditures and to use the resources more efficiently. With projects monitored locally, lines of communication should be shorter, with fewer delays due to conflicts between project staff and the beneficiaries.

However, as the Human Development Reports note, local governance by itself cannot guarantee human development outcomes. It can help poor people most when local politics is democratic, with strong structures and open participatory practices. But often, political parties are disorganized; representatives find it difficult to maintain close contact with their constituencies; oversight and regulatory agencies lack well-trained staff; and bureaucrats are under-paid, overworked or both. Far from strengthening local democracy, local governments can actually reinforce the power and influence of local elites. Local officials are no less immune to elite capture than officials in central Governments. Local democratic institutions in many countries are overburdened. They lack the resources and competencies to function effectively. Even where arrangements for accountability exist, they do not function well in many democracies. They do not promote the interests of most people; and they do an even worse job protecting the interests of minority groups, women and poor people.

Decentralization does not also automatically produce efficiency gains. If poorly planned and executed, decentralization can add to costs rather than reduce them. One common danger is duplicating layers of administration at national regional and local levels. Another risk is that the benefits of decentralization can be offset by the losses in economy of scale. While decentralization may in some cases help raise standards of service, there is also the danger of letting standards slip especially if appropriately trained and qualified staff is not locally available. Decentralization can also aggravate existing inequalities and disparities in society if more of the services are funded

[3] This section draws on the following: Pranab Bardhan and Dileep Mookherjee (ed) 'Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries – A Comparative Perspective', MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 2006; World Bank, `Decentralization in Client Countries: An Evaluation of World Bank Support 1990 -2007', World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, Washington D.C., 2008; OECD, `Lessons Learned on Donors Support to Decentralization and Local Governance', DAC Evaluation Series, OECD, 2004; UNDP, 'Why Political Economy Analysis Matters for Development and How it Can be Useful for UNDP', Draft Presentation, June 2010', UNDP, New York; UNDP Human Development Reports 1993, 1994 and 2002; several internal UNDP reviews, practice notes, evaluations and other documents.

locally. Passing on more responsibility for resource mobilization to local governments can benefit rich areas and it can hurt poorer ones unless there are adequate compensating mechanisms in place.

Effectiveness of interventions to strengthen local governance depends on the context. For instance, the same intervention could have very different outcomes in conflict-affected countries, transition countries, countries with fragile public institutions, countries facing a crisis in democratic governance, disaster-affected countries and countries facing significant challenges in public accountability and transparency. Outcomes would also depend upon the political commitment to decentralization and the existence of national frameworks for local governance.

This has two implications for assessing UNDP support for strengthening local governance reforms. Firstly, the priorities of UNDP support would have to be carefully tailored to suit the country context. For example, in countries where the national Government is contemplating the introduction of local governance policies and legislation, UNDP intervention might include technical advice on options available, advice on sequencing, advice on the range of functions that can be delivered by local authorities, as well as advice on resourcing, representative arrangements, elections and participatory processes. In countries where the Government is hostile to decentralization or is not taking any action, UNDP interventions could include encouragement (advocacy and lobbying) and piloting of projects to demonstrate that participation at the lower levels is non-threatening and useful for advancing human development. In countries where local governance structures are in place, UNDP often supports capacity building and training of elected representatives. Secondly, evaluation becomes not only important but equally complex. A specific UNDP programme for strengthening local governance is not 'good' or 'bad' in itself, but its 'success' needs to be judged in relation to the initiative's starting point or the context in which it took place.

2.2 POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PARTNERS

The MYFF 1 for 2000–2003 mentions three relevant corporate objectives relating directly or indirectly to local governance[4]: (i) strengthen capacity of key governance institutions for people-centred development and foster social cohesion; (ii) promote decentralization that supports participatory local governance, strengthens local organizations and empowers communities; and (iii) promote efficiency and accountability in a public sector that serves all citizens.

The MYFF 2 set the priorities for UNDP programmes and projects for 2004–2007. In the MYFF 2, local governance figures as one of seven service lines (2.6) under the Core Goal of 'fostering democratic governance' together with decentralization and 'urban/rural development' as follows[5]:

2.1 Policy support for democratic governance;

2.2 Parliamentary development;

2.3 Electoral systems and processes;

2.4 Justice and human rights;

2.5 E-governance and access to information;

2.6 Decentralization, local governance and urban/rural development;

2.7 Public administration reform and anti-corruption.

The substantive text for service line 2.6 addresses activities that encompass: the review and reform of legislation and policies; capacity development, particularly for local government planning

[4] Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, 'Report on the Multi-Year Funding Framework 2000–2003: Supplementary Information and Revised Integrated Resources', 2003.

[5] Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, 'Second Multi-Year Funding Framework 2004–2007', September 2003.

and fiscal management; and inclusive systems of consultation with local communities that involve women and ethnic minorities. The service line's relation to the achievement of the MDGs is also elaborated upon, stating that for UNDP, 'this relationship has three aspects: participatory planning monitoring and oversight; the capacities of local bodies including locally elected representatives and public services that need strengthening to ensure that resources are used in accordance with intended development outcomes; and local elections, democratic party structures and civil society involvement to improve the responsiveness of local governance for the public good'.

The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2008–2013 draws attention to the importance of civic engagement and using local government 'capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect'. It commits UNDP to 'identify policy options, undertake diagnostic studies and conduct training to build local and national capacity.' It affirms the need to restore the foundations for local development for crisis prevention and recovery by strengthening local capacities for development, management, resolutions and planning. It identifies several priority areas for UNDP support including capacity strengthening of national and local authorities to undertake participatory planning processes, assessment and adoption of effective service delivery systems. The Strategic Plan differs in approach from the MYFF, and instead of creating service lines corresponding to practice areas, internalizes local governance priorities into the aims of each of the four practice areas.

Under the area of democratic governance, local governance is raised in a number of contexts related to civic engagement and the provision of policy and services, such as using local government 'capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect'.[6] In reference to poverty reduction, though the term local governance is not stated, local governance is invoked under the heading 'promoting inclusive growth, gender equality and achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs', where, for example, it states, 'based on national requests, UNDP will help identify policy options, undertake diagnostic studies and conduct training to build local and national capacity.'[7] In the area of crisis prevention and recovery, the concept of local governance is brought up directly and indirectly, such as within the context of UNDP strengthening local capacities for development, management, resolutions and planning. More specifically, one of UNDP aims within this practice area is 'restoring the foundations for local development', which focuses on direct assistance at the community level.[8]

UNDP in its work relating to energy and environment invokes local governance through local capacity and service delivery. The Strategic Plan highlights, for instance, that access to environmental and energy services is essential for poverty reduction and economic growth. The scaling-up of environmental (such as water and other ecosystem services) and energy service delivery to ensure nationwide coverage will require considerable institutional capacity development. This is especially true at the local level since service delivery is increasingly decentralized to local public authorities. UNDP will strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities to undertake participatory planning processes and to assess and adopt effective service delivery systems, including

6 Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, 'UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008–2011, Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Updated Pursuant to Decision 2007/32', June 2008.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

data generation and analysis as a basis for policy design.[9] According to a recent publication by the Energy and Environment Group, 'local action, action that reflects the demands, perspectives, and commitment of local actors, is critical to sustainably managing the environment and energy to reduce poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Local actors are the chief stewards of the world's ecosystems.'[10]

ASSOCIATED FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

Three major partnerships have been of particular importance for UNDP, those of UNCDF, UNV and UNIFEM. All three are expected to undertake their programming in close association with the core UNDP programme and to report to the Administrator of UNDP. In the case of UNCDF and UNIFEM, they also potentially constitute a substantive resource available for the design and implementation of local governance strategies and programmes.

UNCDF was founded in 1966 as an independent instrument of the United Nations. Since 1973, it has focused its investments in least developed countries (LDCs) and is the only United Nations entity working exclusively in LDCs.[11] UNCDF works to help reduce poverty by piloting small-scale investments in two areas of concentration: local governance and microfinance.

The strategic and results agendas of UNCDF and UNDP are fully integrated within the framework of the UNDP Strategic Plan, reflecting the complementary nature and added value of the partnership. The local development work, accounting for 70 percent of UNCDF's overall portfolio, is fully integrated with the work of UNDP in local governance. All of UNCDF's local development programmes are joint programmes with UNDP.

UNCDF local development programmes promote a decentralized, participatory approach to the provision of basic infrastructure (health, education, transportation, markets, and water systems) and the management of natural resources. The development of partnerships with programme country Governments, local authorities and communities is emphasized to ensure that local investments match local needs, are managed efficiently, and are sustainable. The Fund uses seed capital to develop local institutional capacities in planning and financial management by coupling real resource management responsibilities with capacity-building support services.[12] UNCDF had Local Development Programmes in 40 of the 49 LDCs.[13] Mozambique is one example of how a UNCDF-led consortium of five donors (UNDP, UNCDF, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Department of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) tested a scaled up local governance model that was then replicated by the Government and adopted as official policy.[14]

UNV is a United Nations organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. It is active in 140 countries. The current UNV business model, approved by the Executive Board in June 2006, defines three areas of intervention that are

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9 Ibid.

10 UNDP, 'Local Capacity and Action for the Environment and Sustainable Development', New York, UNDP, 2010 (draft report).

11 UNCDF, 'Sectoral Report for the Five-Year Mid-term Review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2001–2005' June 2006.

12 UNCDF, 'Briefing Note,' February 2002.

13 UNCDF, `Sectoral Report for the Five-Year Mid-term Review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries 2001 -2005' June 2006.

14 Ibid.

mainstreamed within its programmes: advocacy, integration and mobilization.[15]

UNV helps countries to foster and develop volunteerism as a force for sustainable development and provide strategic advice on the role and contribution of volunteerism and options for civic engagement in development programmes. The agency helps countries to improve public inclusion and participation in social, economic and political development, and supports the growth of volunteerism within communities as a form of mutual self-help. UNV volunteers help to organize and run local and national elections and support a large number of peacekeeping and humanitarian projects.[16] In India, an ongoing UNV project empowers the rural poor to take more ownership over achieving the MDGs through the national UNV volunteers who see that the project happens according to the wishes of the community who proposed it and also work with authorities to ensure the project is implemented as effectively as possible.[17]

Established in 1976, UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations, dedicated to advancing women's rights and achieving gender equality. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that foster women's empowerment. UNIFEM works on the premise that it is the fundamental right of every woman to live a life free from discrimination and violence and that gender equality is essential to achieving development and building just societies.

Active in all regions and at different levels, UNIFEM works with countries to formulate and implement laws and policies to eliminate discrimination and promote gender equality in areas such as land and inheritance rights, decent work for women, and ending violence against women. UNIFEM also aims to transform institutions to make them more accountable to gender equality and women's rights, to strengthen the capacity and voice of women's rights advocates, and to change harmful and discriminatory practices in society.[18] In Madagascar, UNIFEM established a mechanism through which civil society can collectively engage to monitor laws and action plans and work with the Government to counter sexual and gender-based violence.[19]

UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Though UNDP does not have formal corporate agreements with other United Nations agencies to partner in local governance reforms, collaboration takes place quite frequently at the country level. This is often orchestrated by the Resident Coordinator and has been encouraged, in recent years, as part of the One United Nations initiative.

At the same time, UNDP has been partnering with a range of bilateral and other international development agencies that are becoming more interested in supporting decentralization and local governance. This is the result of a growing preoccupation with accountability, and the greater interest in bottom-up participation as a means to bolster mainstream Government institutions. It is common to find UNDP partnering with bilateral agencies from the United States of America, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Also actively collaborating with UNDP have been the Irish, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish agencies. Similarly, a number of multilateral agencies including the World Bank, the African

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15 Remarks by Flavia Pansieri, Executive Coordinator, UNV, on the occasion of UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board Annual Meeting, Geneva, 30 June 2010.

16 UNV website excerpt from 'What we do'. See <http://www.unv.org/ua/what-we-do.html>.

17 UNV Empowering grassroots governance 29 June 2010. See <http://www.unv.org/en/what-we-do/thematic-areas/marginalized-groups/doc/empowering-grassroots-governance.html>.

18 Excerpt from UNIFEM website. See <http://www.unifem.org>.

19 Excerpt from UNIFEM website, 'UNIFEM Takes Action Worldwide'. <http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/democratic_governance/unifem_takes_action.php>.

Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the European Union Aid Agency, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as international foundations have partnered with UNDP to promote local governance.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

UNDP partners with a range of civil society organizations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic and research institutions, media and advocacy groups, youth organizations, bodies of elected representatives and so on. In some countries, UNDP also partners with traditional village decision-making bodies, faith-based NGOs and religious leaders. The nature of partnership and extent of collaboration are once again a function of the context in which UNDP operates. In some countries and regions, such non-state actors are quite prominent. In other regions, especially when it comes to strengthening local governance, credible NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) with the requisite competencies are not easy to find.

SUB-NATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Apart from partnering with national Governments, UNDP has also nurtured partnerships with and among sub-national Governments. Recognizing their development potential, sub-national governments (cities, provinces, states, regions) have started creating associations worldwide to unify their voices—for example, the United Cities and Local Governments, founded in 2004, and the Forum of Global Association of Regions, established in 2007. Thematic networks such as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives for Cities and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development for Regions have been playing an important role in the climate and environment agenda at subnational levels. These networks have observer status at United Nations meetings. Regional blocs such as the European Union in Europe or the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine in West Africa have gone one step further by creating their coordination forum for subnational governments (Committee of Regions for the European Union and *Conseil des collectivités territoriales* currently being set up for the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine).

Sub-national governments in industrialized countries have also been active in mobilizing expertise, funds and private sector investment for development in the form of decentralized cooperation that is gradually growing in importance within Official Development Assistance.[20] UNDP has been a pioneer in engaging with these stakeholders to work in a multilateral framework, by mobilizing their financial resources as well as their expertise for the service of sub-national governments in developing countries.

2.3 LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN UNDP FOCUS AREAS AND REGIONS

UNDP supports a wide range of interventions to promote local governance. It supports local governance for improved service delivery and MDG acceleration; for state and peacebuilding; for enhanced democratic representation; and for ensuring environmental sustainability. Many local governance initiatives focus on women and indigenous peoples, often in places where local governance is still taking shape. Emphasis is placed on strengthening the inclusiveness and accountability of sub-national governments, ensuring they have the capacity to manage the opportunities and responsibilities created by decentralization and devolution. At the subnational level, local institutions reflect

[20] As an example of the greater involvement of European sub-national authorities in decentralized cooperation it is observed that, while the German Länder were responsible for 6.9 percent of ODA in 1996, in 2002–2003 this share reached 11 percent in 2005, according to OECD data: OECD, `Aid Extended by Local and State Governments', Pre-print of the DAC Journal 2005, Volume 6/4, Development Assistance Committee Secretariat, Statistics and Monitoring Division, 2005.

great differences in history, culture, capacity, infrastructure, styles and practices. Responsive to this diversity, UNDP supports local governance for improved service delivery in order to improve the ability and capacity of local governments to become better administrators, raise revenue and deliver high-quality services. UNDP supports efforts at strengthening and deepening democratic representation by engaging with marginalized groups and local leaders to promote accountability, inclusion and participation, and the representation of citizens.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

UNDP supports local governance in four primary focus areas: i) enhanced democratic representation; ii) improved service delivery and MDG acceleration (including the prevention of the spread of HIV and reduction of its impact); iii) sustainable development; and iv) state and peacebuilding.

UNDP supports a wide range of interventions to promote local governance.[21] Many local governance initiatives focus on women and indigenous peoples, often in places where local governance is still taking shape. An important emphasis is placed on strengthening the inclusiveness and accountability of sub-national governments, ensuring they have the capacity to manage the opportunities and responsibilities created by decentralization and devolution. At the sub-national level, local institutions reflect great differences in history, culture, capacity, infrastructure, styles and practices. Responsive to this diversity, UNDP supports local governance for improved service delivery to improve the ability and capacity of local governments to become better administrators, raise revenue and deliver high-quality services. UNDP supports efforts at strengthening and deepening democratic representation by engaging with marginalized groups and local leaders to promote accountability, inclusion and participation, and the representation of citizens.

The 'support to Thematic and Territorial Networks for Human Development', better known as ART, was established in 2005. The ART International Initiative promotes and supports the formulation and implementation of framework programmes. Formerly known by the acronym ART GOLD (governance and local development), ART offers a joint planning methodology for local, national and international actors to contribute to human development in different countries and to achieve the MDGs in a coordinated and complementary way. The ART Initiative has 16 country-specific programmes and one regional programme with seven participating countries in Latin America.

UNDP has been active in mobilizing support for local governance by developing strategic alliances with European regions and local authorities for decentralized cooperation—with and through the United Nations. The aim is to facilitate the setting up of international, national and local structures for local governance and development and to broker United Nations partnerships that help foster United Nations reform. More specifically, the objectives of the partnership are to provide support to regional and local governments interested in establishing collaboration.

UNDP focuses its work in local governance on strengthening the inclusiveness and accountability of sub-national governments, ensuring they have the capacity to manage the opportunities and responsibilities created by decentralization and devolution. At the subnational level, local institutions reflect great differences in history, culture, capacity, infrastructure, styles and practices.

UNDP work also addresses access to information, integrity, accountability, transparency, human rights, gender equality, leadership and critical choice capacities, sectoral governance and knowledge management. Many local governance initiatives focus on women and indigenous peoples, often in places where local governance is still taking shape.

[21] Excerpt from UNDP website: Local Governance. See <http://www.undp.org/governance/focus_local_governance.shtml>.

POVERTY REDUCTION

In supporting poverty reduction efforts by national Governments, UNDP supports the view that achieving the MDGs can only happen through action at the local level—in villages and towns, provinces and regions. Also, local development should be embedded in national development processes.[22]

In supporting MDG localization—translating national MDGs so that they are relevant, applicable and attainable at the local level—UNDP recognizes the key role of sub-national and local governments in putting plans into action and keeping national Governments in touch with people's needs, progress made and challenges ahead. With a few exceptions and irrespective of the constitutional system of a given country, national policy decisions are translated at a more decentralized and deconcentrated level thus making subnational governments key in implementation and investment decisions. UNDP helps develop the capacities of local governments to formulate, plan, monitor and implement participatory local development plans, working together with civil society, the private sector and other local organizations. UNDP also promotes efforts to include marginalized groups and communities whose voices are too often unheard. Furthermore, UNDP works with national Governments to prepare reliable statistics on poverty and MDGs disaggregated by region and to provide policy advice on, for example, how to develop and implement fiscal transfer schemes and socio-economic policies that would benefit the poorest regions.

Within many countries, some regions lag far behind others for reasons such as their geography, social exclusion, conflict or natural disaster. For these regions, blanket national economic and social policies to promote development are not enough. This is why UNDP works within specific areas with the local governments supporting programmes that provide small businesses with skills training and access to microcredit and farmers with agricultural extension services, connecting smaller farmers with large exporters.

The Human Development Reports have very often emphasized the importance of local governance, participation and democracy. For example, the Human Development Report 1993, examines how—and how much—people participate in the events and processes that shape their lives. Similarly, the Human Development Report 2002—'Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World'—carries an extensive discussion on decentralization and local governance within the broader framework of promoting the practice of democracy. In addition to recognizing the intrinsic and instrumental role of local governance, broader participation in decision-making and more equitable access to higher quality services, these reports have emphasized the importance of strengthening the enabling environment to empower individuals, households, and communities beyond participation. Many analyze empowerment and capacity building of partners beyond Government, including vulnerable groups. Recommendations relate to the implementation challenges that UNDP faces in reaching marginalized groups, in addition to mainstreaming gender-based analysis, and how to empower groups as agents of change. The Human Development Report prepared and disseminated a 'Guidance Note on Decentralization' in collaboration with BDP.[23] This note outlines key policy issues and offers examples of the contributions of national Human Development Reports working on local governance and related themes.

UNDP works to prevent the spread of HIV and reduce its impact. As a development partner and co-sponsor of UNAIDS, UNDP helps countries to put HIV at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies, to build national capacity to mobilize all levels of government and civil society for a coordinated and effective response to the epidemic, and to protect the rights of people

[22] Excerpt from UNDP website: Participatory Local Development. See <http://www.undp.org/poverty/focus_local_development.shtml>.

[23] UNDP, 'Decentralized Governance for Development: A Combined Practice Note on Decentralization, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development', UNDP, April 2004.

women and vulnerable populations and those living with HIV and AIDS. UNDP encourages the participation of diverse stakeholders, including civil society and people living with AIDS in the design and implementation of national strategies, strengthens the governance of response to HIV by supporting national and local AIDS authorities to increase capacity for coordinating action on HIV, and also promotes greater involvement of women and men living with HIV and civil society in the design, implementation and evaluation of AIDS programmes. UNDP supports countries to create an enabling human rights environment, promote gender equality, and address the HIV-related vulnerabilities and needs of women and girls.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing that energy and environment are essential for sustainable development and that the poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean, affordable energy services, UNDP helps countries strengthen their capacity to address these challenges at global, national and community levels, seeking out and sharing best practices, providing innovative policy advice and linking partners through pilot projects that help poor people build sustainable livelihoods. Areas of activity include access to sustainable energy service, effective water governance, sustainable land management to combat desertification and land degradation, and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.[24] UNDP work focuses on: strengthening national policy frameworks to support energy for poverty reduction; promoting energy services to support growth and equity with a specific focus on the situation of women; promoting clean energy technologies to mitigate climate change; and increasing access to investment financing for sustainable energy, including through the Clean Development Mechanism.

UNDP helps countries and communities maintain and benefit from the biodiversity and ecosystem services that underpin human welfare and economic development, and provide the poor with food security, fuel, shelter, medicines and livelihoods—as well as clean water, disease control, and reduced vulnerability to natural disasters. UNDP supports the sustainable management of agriculture, fisheries, forests and energy, and a pro-poor approach to conservation and protected areas, biotechnology and the development of viable, new markets for ecosystem services. UNDP supports the sustainable use of marine, coastal and freshwater resources and improved access to water supply and sanitation services by helping national Governments develop appropriate local, national and regional water governance frameworks, and application of integrated water resources management approaches[25].

UNDP assists countries and communities in land governance, drought preparedness, reform of land tenure and promotion of innovative and alternative sustainable land practices and livelihoods. Special emphasis is given here to the situation of rural women. UNDP supports institutional and systemic capacity building to address desertification and land degradation of rural poverty reduction, through local, national and global multi-stakeholder dialogue and action[26].

UNDP is an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)[27] and manages the GEF Small Grants Programme[28]. This

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[24] UNDP Intranet: Practices, Environment and Energy, Access to Sustainable Energy Services. See <http://practices.undp.org/pcb/index.cfm?tab=121676&prac=121518&doc=&src=121676>.

[25] UNDP Intranet: Practices, Environment and Energy, Effective Water Governance. See <http://practices.undp.org/pcb/index.cfm?tab=121678&prac=121518&doc=&src=121678>.

[26] UNDP Intranet: Practices, Environment and Energy, Sustainable land Management to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation. See <http://practices.undp.org/pcb/index.cfm?tab=121679&prac=121518&doc=&src=121679>.

[27] UNDP Intranet: Practices, Environment and Energy, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity. See < http://practices.undp.org/pcb/index.cfm?tab=121680&prac=121518&doc=&src=121680>.

[28] Excerpts from GEF Small Grants Programme website. See <http://sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?module=ActiveWeb&page=WebPage&s=AboutSGP>.

supports NGOs and CBO projects in developing countries demonstrating that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives.

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

Through its crisis prevention and recovery interventions, UNDP works with national and local governments and actors to prevent the incidence of violent conflict and natural disasters, to mitigate the consequences when these crises occur and to support national recovery efforts at national and local levels. This involves engaging with and supporting local governments, notably through early recovery interventions, implemented during humanitarian timeframes post-conflict and post-disaster, when local government resources (human, physical, financial) can be very stretched or severely depleted. As part of this support, UNDP programming includes: establishing the foundations for peace and security; helping to address the causes of violent conflict through development programmes promoting participation, consensus-building and non-violent management of conflict; supporting programmes to promote gender equality and women's empowerment; supporting governments at all levels with the development of plans, policies and capacities for disaster risk reduction and recovery; and providing a bridge between the humanitarian agencies that handle immediate needs and long-term development following disaster through early recovery including specific assistance to local governments to fulfill their role as service providers. By championing the integration of conflict sensitivity throughout all development programming in crisis settings, UNDP facilitates 'the creation of opportunities and the political, economic and social spaces within which indigenous actors can identify, develop and use the resources necessary to build a peaceful, equitable and just society'.[29]

Within its local governance interventions in immediate post crisis contexts, UNDP addresses the needs of internally displaced persons as a key priority within its early recovery interventions. Support to other local governance mechanisms including NGOs and CBOs that may exist at the local level, forms a second element of UNDP work on local governance in early recovery.[30]

UNDP has also been promoting the importance of local governance to reduce risks with regards to decision-making (such as public sector investments in health and education), land-use planning as well as specific areas such as urban risk management. The UNDP programming approach in Disaster Risk Reduction acknowledges that risks manifest locally and solutions for risk reduction ought to be embedded in local level risk management. In the disaster recovery phase, UNDP works with high-risk countries to build Government capacity to manage the recovery process and to have the necessary institutional, financial and technical capacity in place before a disaster occurs so that recovery is quick and effective if disaster strikes. In response to a disaster, UNDP supports Governments in assessing recovery needs and in formulating recovery plans and programme implementation from early to sustained recovery.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY

The form and substance of local governance initiatives varies from one region to another, within a region, and from one country to another (depending upon the level of human development and the nature of the political regime), giving UNDP different experiences across the world. Briefly described below are some of the main activities for strengthening local governance undertaken by the different bureaux within UNDP.

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[29] United Nations General Assembly Security Council, `Prevention of Armed Conflict' A/55/985-S/2001/574, Report of the Secretary-General, 7 June 2001.

[30] UNDP Intranet: Practices, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Post-Conflict Recovery. See <http://practices.undp.org/cpr/4/4_0.cfm?src=121517dev>.

The Africa region[31] has by far the most UNDP-supported projects in local governance and decentralization. Projects in Africa are generally concerned with the early stages of decentralization, such as finalizing the legal framework in Burkina Faso, initiating the consultative process for a review of decentralization linked to the role of the Government in peacebuilding in Burundi, assessing local governance capacity in post-conflict Liberia and supporting the Ministry of Decentralization in Madagascar. Training and promoting partnerships are also central activities supported by UNDP.

In the Arab States region[32], UNDP has been supporting cautious experimentation with decentralization. In Djibouti and Yemen, UNDP, for instance, is helping with implementing decentralization laws, while in Lebanon and Sudan, projects focus on capacity development in particularly needy regions. Where local governance infrastructure is more developed, as in Morocco and Egypt, UNDP supports programmes that strengthen information systems, e-governance and accountability.

The Asia and the Pacific regions[33] have different projects reflecting the enormous diversity among and within the region's 24 countries in terms of political regimes, human development indicators and degree of decentralization. UNDP projects are tailored to fit the country's requirements and include projects ranging from encouraging participation by traditional authorities in Pacific Island states, supporting decentralization and deconcentration in Cambodia, local governments in Sri Lanka, decentralizing planning and expenditure management in Laos to capacity building for more autonomous local government in the Indonesian province of Aceh.

In the Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States[34], UNDP has concentrated its efforts at re-orienting the state away from central planning, standardization and bureaucratic dysfunctions of the one-state regimes towards modern management systems appropriate to market economies. This has involved bringing about radical changes to local governance by providing a variety of inputs—knowledge-based advice at central and regional levels in Moldova, transparent local budgetary and financial systems in Kyrgyzstan and a participatory approach to local development in Ukraine. Several initiatives promote cooperative regional development such as the establishment of a network of municipalities in Kosovo and inter-municipal cooperation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. UNDP also supports efforts at reducing the regional inequalities in many countries such as the 'Zeravshan Valley Initiative' in Tajikistan.

In the Latin America and the Caribbean region[35], decentralization is a high priority for many countries. In Bolivia, Colombia, Panama, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago, UNDP supports national institutions to implement and strengthen decentralization processes. In Brazil, UNDP implements a number of projects that support the regionalization process, whereas in Haiti, Honduras, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Uruguay, UNDP uses territorial development as an entry point for fostering pro-poor policies, inclusive development and strengthening local service delivery.

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31 UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of UNDP Recent and Current Interventions in the Africa Region', UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, January 2010.

32 UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of UNDP Recent and Current Interventions in the Arab States Region', UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, January 2010.

33 UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of UNDP Recent and Current Interventions in the Asia Pacific Region', UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, January 2010.

34 UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of UNDP Recent and Current Interventions in the Eastern Europe and CIS region', UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, January 2010.

35 UNDP, 'Public Administration and Local Governance: An Overview of UNDP Recent and Current Interventions in the Latin America and the Caribbean Region', UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, January 2010.

2.4 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Estimates of the total amount of financial resources allocated by UNDP for strengthening local governance across all the practice areas are not readily available. An important consideration in this regard is that local governance-related initiatives are conducted in all focus areas of the Strategic Plan and are thus not necessarily—in the context of UNDP monitoring and reporting systems—accounted for under the rubric of democratic governance, let alone local governance. Initiatives with sizable local governance components may thus be reported under the poverty, environment and energy or crisis prevention and recovery focus areas. While an attempt was made, in the context of a scan of 50 countries conducted under the evaluation, to obtain financial data pertaining to all initiatives with local governance components, it was not possible to reconcile the information received, or to disaggregate data in a manner that would have provided a reliable picture of the amount of financial resources allocated to local governance across the countries included in the scan.

According to a recent report, UNDP effectively delivered $4.1 billion worldwide in 2009, of which 35 percent ($1.44 billion) was spent on initiatives classified under Democratic Governance. Totalling 74 percent of expenditures, *Strengthening Responsive Institutions* constituted the largest area of intervention, compared to 17 percent dedicated to *Fostering Inclusive Participation* and nine percent to *Grounding Democratic Governance in International Principles.* Within the responsive institutions component, 70 percent—or a total of $747 million—was spent on national, regional and local levels of government, representing the service lines of public administration and local governance.[36]

Public administration and local governance are high on the agenda in all regional bureaux. Recent and ongoing public administration and local governance-related projects have been reported by 40 countries of the African region (45 country offices), 25 countries in the Asia Pacific (24 country offices), 22 countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (28 country offices), and 16 countries in the Arab states region (18 country offices). Most of UNDP public administration and local governance-related projects are implemented in the LDCs and Lower Middle Income Countries. It should be noted, however, that the projects reported were deemed by the respective programme units to be addressing primarily public administration and local governance-related issues and did not, therefore, necessarily take into account the plethora of sector-oriented initiatives (addressing issues of poverty, environment and energy, crisis prevention and recovery, AIDS or gender, for example) which may have had a significant local governance component.

[36] UNDP, 'An Overview of Trends and Developments in Public Administration and Local Governance', September 2010.

Chapter 3

ASSESSMENT OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

This chapter presents the main findings relating to the relevance and responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP contribution to promoting and strengthening local governance. It also examines the extent to which UNDP has made use of partnerships. Gender-related issues relating to the promotion of local governance are integrated in all aspects of the analysis.

3.1 RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

UNDP support for local governance reforms has been highly relevant in a number of countries. There are several reasons for this. UNDP Country Programme Documents, which include support to local governance reforms, are typically drawn up in partnership with national Governments. This has ensured both Government ownership as well as alignment with national priorities and national development and poverty reduction plans. In Cambodia, for instance, both the Royal Government and UNDP regard governance reforms aimed at democratization and decentralization as being paramount for the country to bury its tragic past and move towards promoting peace, harmony and human development. Similarly, UNDP in Indonesia supports the democratization process as well as disaster reconstruction and prevention—both national priorities of the Government.

The correspondence with national priorities has been further ensured by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process (in which UNDP plays an active and central role), which has provided a strategic framework for cooperation between the activities of all United Nations agencies. Beyond broader programmatic relevance, UNDP activities have frequently been relevant in addressing specific developmental concerns, both at the policy and operational level, relating to strengthening democratic representation and participation as well the delivery of services. Moreover, UNDP support for the 'localization of the MDGs—an effort at strengthening local governance—is consistent with national commitments towards achieving the MDGs by 2015.

Beyond broader programmatic relevance, UNDP activities have frequently been relevant in addressing specific developmental concerns, both at the policy and operational level, relating to strengthening democratic representation and participation as well the delivery of services. This has happened especially when support for local governance initiatives by UNDP is 'demand driven' and UNDP formulates a project or programme in support of local governance in response to a request from the national Government. For example, UNDP has consistently responded to requests from the Royal Government over the course of Bhutan's successful transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy in March 2008. This has included capacity and institution development of constitutional bodies such as the Election Commission of Bhutan, Anti-Corruption Commission, Parliament, Royal Audit Authority, Royal Court of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, and local governments. UNDP has similarly responded to the national demands by setting up regional offices (as in Peru) and area offices (as in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) to extend support to local governments and communities. Stakeholders and development partners also frequently acknowledge the ability of UNDP to respond to resource mobilization requirements.

Relevance of UNDP-support is further derived from the value-addition to national Governments. UNDP has assisted national Governments with effective donor coordination and provided much-needed support to government institutions. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, there has been close partnership between UNDP and the Australian Government Overseas Aid Programme and also between UNDP and key Papua New Guinea government agencies at the national level as well as in the provinces, districts and local governments. This partnership has enabled UNDP to become known as a donor partner responsible for managing and promoting local governance and decentralization. In other contexts, the involvement of UNDP in such initiatives has helped to instill trust between Government and communities and contributed to enhancing the legitimacy of Governments in the eyes of non-state actors. In Bolivia, UNDP has maintained a good relationship with the successive Bolivian Governments and retained a position of leverage over the years. Upon Eva Morales's accession, an initial Government antagonism toward international cooperation brought a difficult conjuncture to agencies in general, but ever since UNDP has managed to restore the good terms in its relationship with the Government. UNDP is now a valued partner. UNDP support has also helped forge and strengthen partnerships between local governments and members of civil society. It has created platforms for the exchange of ideas and experiences, and often a space for non-state actors to interact with policymakers. The involvement of UNDP in such initiatives has helped to instill trust between Government and communities and to preserve the legitimacy of Governments in the eyes of non-state actors at key moments of political crisis.

UNDP-support for local government initiatives assumes a special relevance in conflict-affected countries when the state is unable to deliver basic services. Under these circumstances, UNDP has focused on building or creating relationships between different levels of Government and civil society. In cases where the reach of governance institutions is limited or is perceived as illegitimate (as in Iraq or Sudan), outcome evaluations speak of the mitigation benefits of UNDP involvement by bridging the trust gap between citizens and Government institutions. Also, in circumstances where it is difficult for traditional governance institutions to deliver programmes and in regions where it is difficult for other institutions to work, UNDP has filled vital governance and service-delivery gaps through service-delivery and community-development projects.

UNDP has done well to ensure the relevance of its support during post-conflict recovery. It has used its goodwill, proximity and trust with national and local governments to advance the agenda of local governance. In Southern Sudan, UNDP support is within the framework for democratic transformation—as outlined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in January 2005 – which provided the framework and platform for UNDP engagement. In Lebanon, the 2002–2006 UNDP Country Cooperation Framework with the Government of Lebanon mentions 'empowerment at the local level' as a priority area for UNDP programming. Within that area, the document emphasizes 'strengthening of municipalities and local governance structures, with the main objective of assisting the Government in reinforcing the capacities of municipalities and considering options for stronger local government, rendering development efforts in the peripheral areas more efficient, responsive and participatory in the long term'.

There are instances where UNDP has responded well to changing circumstances within difficult and challenging political contexts. For instance, in Afghanistan, for at least the first three years following the Bonn Agreement of 2001, UNDP was relegated to 'gap filling.' Thereafter, UNDP claimed a limited niche during the 'early recovery' phase as the administrator of last resort for donor funds for sensitive tasks. This, according to the ADR, was 'at the expense of a more concerted effort to address key institutional changes required for lasting peace. It also risked branding

UNDP as a non-substantive agency, a legacy that it has had to work hard to overcome, and to some extent has, since 2005.' However, after 2004, UNDP, at the insistence of the Minister of Finance, was repositioned to strengthen the institutions of state. 'This mandate was interpreted strictly by UNDP at the expense of the broader aspects of governance including the role of civil society. In the past two years, UNDP has begun to reverse this by increasing its involvement with civil society.'[37]

Being demand-driven has at times resulted in an ad-hoc rather than strategic approach to local governance. In other words, UNDP has not always been sufficiently pro-active. Partly responsible for this has been the absence, in many settings, of a longer-term strategic plan (based on a political economy analysis) or road map drawn up (in consultation with Government and non-state stakeholders) for UNDP support to strengthening local governance. For instance, the contribution of UNDP to peace building efforts in the Philippines was limited by the absence of a multi-sectoral peace and conflict analysis with strong risk assessment components. Even when strategic analyses are available, the absence of a unifying corporate framework, alternative approaches to local governance, or guidance notes drawing on cumulative experience limits the relevance of UNDP. Notwithstanding the frequent absence of such plans, there are numerous instances where UNDP has been able to respond swiftly and effectively to emerging or changing circumstances—such as Georgia's fast-moving reform agenda—and to national requests for extending support to local governments and communities.

The rationale for choosing certain priorities over others within local governance is not always obvious. For instance, in Mali, the process by which education and AIDS were identified over many others as priority areas for strengthening local governance reforms was not clear. Again, UNDP does not seem to have exit strategies for its interventions. For instance, political developments can easily place local projects at high risk.

The absence of a unifying framework for local governance and guidance notes drawing on the cumulative experience UNDP in different political settings has tended to limit the organization's capacity to respond adequately to the requirements of strengthening local governance. Many of the commonly used terms in the context of local governance—local governments, local authorities, sub-national governments, local development, local economic development, local area development, territorial development, local human development—have meant different things to different people within and outside UNDP. Similarly, the dynamics of decentralization and local governance processes have not always been fully understood. In the absence of a unifying framework and common understanding, UNDP has not been able to fully leverage its potential comparative advantage. UNDP relevance has been further diminished by the failure to develop adequate knowledge products that distil experiences to inform policymakers and practitioners in Governments and communities. This has led, as in the case of Sierra Leone, to UNDP 'losing its voice and importance', especially when there are other donors offering much larger funds and expertise in support of local governance.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

There has been evidence of UNDP support for local governance effectively creating entitlements through increased democratic representation and contributing to improved service delivery. UNDP has helped build capacities of state and non-state actors, empower local communities, give 'voice' and representation to the socially disadvantaged, build trust between Government and people, promote dialogue on local governance, improve service delivery and develop different models of community contribution, financing and participation. Several interventions for the inclusion of

[37] UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Assessment of Development Results for Afghanistan', New York, 2009.

indigenous and marginalized groups have been effective as have interventions extending support to local governance under conditions of conflict recovery and prevention.

There have been numerous instances where UNDP has effectively generated many positive benefits. Raising awareness among citizens about their rights and entitlements has been an important element of UNDP support for strengthening local governance and improving service delivery. For instance, UNDP supported client-based awareness raising campaigns as a key part of the Albanian Security Sector Reform in five prefectures (Tirana, Vlora, Lezha, Shkodra, and Kukes) and addressed: (i) police transparency and accountability; and (ii) community safety and security. A customer satisfaction survey found that the programme had definitely increased security levels, reduced level of crime, especially in armed crimes, enhanced quality of services provided by the police (reduced incidence of police brutality, for example), improved citizen-police communication and cooperation and increased citizens respect for the police.[38] E-governance measures employed in Armenia, Macedonia and Ukraine, supported the digitization of all Government materials, capacity training for civil servants, public capacity building for the Internet, setting up Citizen Access Points in communities, thereby creating a virtual bridge between citizens and governance structures. Similarly, UNDP has formulated the Access to Justice project at the district level in Afghanistan and a Rule of Law programme in Sudan to educate the public about their human rights and to confer legitimacy to all levels of governance. Both have resulted in an increased number of cases being brought to trial.

UNDP has pioneered several community-based poverty reduction initiatives that have benefited many communities. Stakeholders in Ukraine had several observations on the effectiveness of UNDP support for local governance reforms. At an individual level, community members felt a sense of empowerment and pride in being able to effect positive change in their community. Working together to identify common community needs and raise funds has brought community members together to manage and monitor community development projects. They have set in place systems to track the use of public funds and ensure accountability. The community-based approach has also increased the overall number of local development initiatives taking place in the project site. In the case of the Crimea, the creation of community organizations in multi-ethnic communities has resulted in diverse ethnic groups working on addressing common needs that transcended ethnicity and other actual and perceived differences. Similarly, the joint Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV)-UNDP pilot on MDG localization (2005–2008) was implemented in 15 countries. A review in eight of these countries points out that the partnership has contributed to improving local and national awareness (in Niger and Uganda), improved ownership by encouraging the inclusion and participation (of *'regulos'*—traditional leaders in Guinea Bissau), strengthened capacities of local governments and non-state actors in conducting participatory MDG-oriented planning processes (Viet Nam and Tanzania), increased participation strengthened capacity of civil society actors to monitor progress on the MDGs (Albania and Niger), and improved integration of MDGs in policy development at the local level (Benin).[39]

Similarly there are several instances of projects and community-based initiatives in Energy and Environment that have resulted in tangible benefits. This is especially the case when civil society participation has been effective in the mobilization and management of local resources. A recent evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (which allows UNDP to contribute to direct global environmental benefits while also

[38] UNDP, 'Public Assessment and Customer Satisfaction Survey – Support to Security Sector Reform', Final Report, November 2005 (Albania).

[39] SNV-UNDP, 'Going Local to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals – Stories From Eight Countries', 2010.

addressing the livelihood needs of local populations) rated the overall effectiveness of projects and found 94 percent of these Small Grants Programme projects to be in the satisfactory range (37 percent were highly satisfactory).[40] There are similarly several instances of successful outcomes at the country level. In Bangladesh, for instance, the Sustainable Environmental Management Programme has contributed substantially toward: 'establishing community-based approaches to the management of Ecologically Critical Areas, floodplain and wetland areas, upland areas, water supply and sanitation systems, and urban solid waste management … the programme added to the experience and knowledge in mobilizing community involvement in conservation and resource management activities and livelihoods. Several of the sub-projects reportedly led to replication of these approaches in nearby communities. In some cases, the programme undoubtedly also enhanced access to land and resources for the very poor.'[41]

Other outcomes of the primary community-based model included: (i) increased demonstration of the use and effectiveness of community based approaches to environmental and natural resources management; (ii) development of processes, technical guides and knowledge products; (iii) strengthened skills of Government and NGO staff in the use of community based approaches; and (iv) replication of these approaches in some areas based on the awareness and examples created by some of the sub-projects. Furthermore, successful sub-national level initiatives have demonstrated the viability and effectiveness of promoting the links between NGOs and the private sector (such as the Solid Waste Management Project, a component of the Sustainable Environmental Management Programme). They have also shown the need to integrate local communities in design and implementation and assessment of their own development initiatives for good governance.[42]

Formation of outreach groups and forums have been identified as one of the most effective methods by which UNDP has supported inclusion of marginalized groups. For example, Ukraine's Rayon Youth Policy and Strategy led to creation of a Youth Ombudsman position, expansion of the Peer Education course to include a Legal Education Programme for Youth and a Sub-programme on Violence in the Family. This strategy has affected the role and involvement of youth in local and central level policy making which has in turn affected the support and resources (such as Violence in Families workshops) delivered to this previously overlooked group.[43] Town hall meetings have been used to varying degrees of success to increase citizen participation within the governmental decision making process. For example, the creation of Moldova's Orhei Rayon Strategic Tourism Plan depends upon the participation of those living near major tourist sites and has increasingly involved the participation of Village Councils. This has resulted in entrepreneurial activity by the community involved to create the resources necessary (e.g. pensions) to support the burgeoning industry.[44] Over 1,000 communities across Ukraine are engaged in bringing real change in their lives in partnership with local authorities with support and funding from the Community Based Approach

[40] GEF-UNDP, 'Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme', Evaluation Report 39, Evaluation Office, GEF: Washington D.C., 2008.

[41] Ferguson, Alan, 'Outcome Evaluation of UNDP Bangladesh – Environment and Sustainable Development Programme', Regional Consulting Ltd., December 2007–January 2008.

[42] Ferguson, Alan, `Outcome Evaluation of UNDP Bangladesh – Environment and Sustainable Development Programme', Regional Consulting Ltd., December 2007–January 2008.

[43] Musisi, Christine and Olga Prutsakova, `Outcome Evaluation on Healthy Lifestyles Promotion in Ukraine' Evaluation Report, UNDP Ukraine, February 2004.

[44] Muravschi, Alexandru and Erik Whist, `Evaluation of UNDP Outcome in Moldova of Capacities and Partnerships of Local Governance Actors Developed in Urban/Rural Areas for Transparent and Accountable Policy Formulation, Service Delivery and Resource Management', UNDP, December 2005.

to Local Development Project—a joint initiative of the European Union and UNDP. All these community organizations are working to improve local living conditions and solve the existing problems through sustaining multilateral partnerships, mutual cooperation and self-help.

Available evidence points to several instances where UNDP has been effective in extending support to local governance under conditions of conflict recovery and prevention. For instance, it financed the first of the Iraq Reconstruction and Employment Programmes—a nationwide programme to create short term employment on projects to rehabilitate village or town infrastructure. Individuals from affected communities were selected to repair water systems. 'The material impact might not have been considerable' but this is regarded as a 'bold initiative at a time when nothing else was available.'[45] In Afghanistan, UNDP has contributed to: preparing and passing a new constitution; holding presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections; establishing key institutions within the newly formed upper and lower houses of Parliament; demobilizing and disarming militias and illegally armed groups; strengthening capacity at the centre of Government; creating capacity in state institutions at the central, provincial and district levels; and reforming the civil service. Similarly, in Mindanao and other areas affected by conflict in the Philippines, UNDP-supported peacebuilding and the pursuit of peace benefits at the local level have been institutionalized through various local Executive Orders, Peace Units created in local executives' offices, legislative action and financial allocations which attest to Local Government Units' commitment to continue the initiatives even after crisis prevention and recovery programmes phase out. UNDP has been commended for 'bringing about transformations towards peace at personal, relational and institutional levels, indicating among others, changes in mindsets, enhanced perspectives on tolerance and diversity improved relations among former antagonists, and establishment of mechanisms for institutionalizing peace building among Local Government Units.'[46]

It has not always been easy to engage constructively with the many stakeholders within and outside Government in local governance reforms at the local and national levels. In Viet Nam, for example, the process of administrative decentralization which was moving relatively rapidly was not matched by effective mechanisms for citizen involvement and transparency at the local level. Similarly, in Zambia, UNDP partnership with NGOs and CBOs was found to be weak due to the major focus on Government programmes even though Zambia already has a fairly vibrant civil society movement. In Mali, local government authorities need to be given greater powers if service delivery is to be improved in a substantive way. However, genuine decentralization that would allow elected councillors to manage local development in collaboration with local staff and sector ministries has not yet come about. Most sector ministries are still implementing development and infrastructural programmes and even preventing the commune authorities from rapidly taking over their responsibilities for local development. This is where genuine negotiation needs to take place between the local government authorities and Government, despite all the conflicts of interest that are likely to ensue. This problem comes on top of institutional difficulties, including the absence of a genuine programme of de-concentration and the delays in adapting the statutory framework and policies for the individual sectors. UNDP and other actors have not been able to effectively iron out institutional bottlenecks that prevent efficient and equitable allocation of resources for local development. Pilot initiatives within decentralization and local governance have not always been linked effectively to sustainable systems that are inclusive and comprehensive in nature.

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[45] Freedman, Jim, Eduardo Quiroga, Amal Shlash and John Weeks, 'Outcome Evaluation of UNDP Governance, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and Poverty Reduction Initiatives in Iraq', UNDP, 2009.

[46] UNDP, 'Conflict Prevention and Recovery, Outcome Evaluation', UNDP Philippines, 2008.

There exist a number of modalities through which UNDP can engage with civil society organizations both in policy dialogue as well as in project implementation. Modalities for formal partnerships with civil society are included in the comprehensive guidance provided in the partnerships section of the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures, updated earlier this year. However, many country offices have not systematically identified opportunities for strategic engagement with non-state actors in order to strengthen local governance even where the potential exists. As a result, many civil society organization (CSO) partnerships remain 'stand-alone' initiatives; they are seldom viewed as strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing democratic (local) governance and poverty reduction.

Normative frameworks and political commitment to local governance reforms are critical for ensuring that UNDP interventions produce the desired outcomes. However, UNDP has no jurisdiction or control over processes as many decisions that need taking are political. Again, UNDP can only indirectly influence but not ensure performance monitoring and evaluation of local governance reforms by the State. Many countries do not track and assess the performance of their own national Governments and line ministries, let alone the performance of sub-national governments. Despite these limitations and qualifications, UNDP has met with reasonable success in its efforts at strengthening local level planning and budgeting. Much less successful have been attempts to improve implementation and accountability. For instance, in efforts at decentralization, it has been difficult to achieve, as in India for example, financial (transfer of funds and proper sharing of funds) and functional devolution (transfer of functions and functionaries, expenditure autonomy).

UNDP has documented lessons learned and supporting research in local governance and decentralization. For example, a recent evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States commends UNDP for the key contributions made through 'research, development and dissemination of knowledge products, capacity development, and policy advice.' The Report points out: 'the regional programme made a unique, sustainable and very important contribution to development results by establishing and enhancing a Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform to support regional cooperation. Since the contribution in the area of democratic governance depends, to a great extent, on the political context and the level of economic development of the countries involved, this practice had to be very sensitive and flexible to adjust to the variety of circum¬stances in different countries. Respondents in all the countries spoke highly of the potential of the current democratic governance practice.'[47] Similarly, recognizing that more and more Governments in the developing world look at decentralization as a mechanism for improving their efficiency and effectiveness will be important. UNDP worked in close collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on a two-year research project to directly contribute to the process of knowledge generation in this area by examining the experience of ten countries (Brazil, Honduras, India, Jordan, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda). The knowledge products emanating from the action research project supported by UNDP on 'The Role of Participation and Partnership in Decentralized Governance: A Brief Synthesis of Policy Lessons and Recommendations of Nine Country Case Studies on Service Delivery for the Poor' is another good example of communicating and disseminating the lessons learned from the experiences of decentralization on poverty alleviation, and particularly the contribution of increased participation in decision-making processes and increased opportunities for partnership between civil, private and government actors at the local level.[48]

[47] UNDP, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of the Independent States 2006-2010'.

[48] Work, R., 'The Role of Participation and Partnership in Decentralized Governance: A Brief Synthesis of Policy Lessons and Recommendations of Nine Country Case Studies on Service Delivery for the Poor', UNDP, 2005.

However, analyses of lessons learned of the rich experience of UNDP in the area of local governance and decentralization have not been systematically conducted by all regional bureaux and practice areas. A systematic effort has not been made to analyze the outcomes and disseminate the findings and lessons learned to policymakers and other stakeholders operating in different contexts of local governance reforms. The Democratic Governance Group of the BDP hosts a 'Democratic Governance Practice Network', a knowledge network that has provided a platform for UNDP-wide discussions and exchanges of practices and lessons learned related to democratic governance. On occasion, DGP-Net has facilitated discussions on issues related to local governance and, most notably, initiated an 'e-discussion' in 2007 entitled 'Towards a Local Governance and Development Agenda: Lessons and Challenges'[49], which elicited a record 153 responses from UNDP staff and partners. Moreover, BDP has, on occasion, issued guidance notes on local governance-related issues, for example: 'Decentralized Governance for Development';[50] 'Fiscal Decentralization and Poverty Reduction';[51] and more recently 'A Users Guide to Measuring Local Governance'.[52] However, dissemination has often been limited to the democratic governance practice area and guidance notes have not tended to be considered authoritative within, let alone beyond, the democratic governance practice area.

UNDP-supported local governance projects have, on occasion, been innovative and scaled up. However, in other instances, UNDP initiatives have remained high profile 'boutique projects', pilots or one-off localized initiatives and have not made a broader developmental contribution. There are several instances of UNDP-supported local governance initiatives being regarded as innovative and scaled up as in Cambodia, Mozambique and Nepal. For instance, the project in Southern Sudan has been rated as being 'highly innovative' for its deliberate involvement of traditional leaders in local governance. UNDP has encouraged the direct involvement of traditional authorities in determining state legislation and structures—reinforcing the pledge to promote participatory democracy outlined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and subsequent legal frameworks. However, it has not been atypical for local governance initiatives to be set up as 'boutique projects' on the strong initiative of one or several individuals within UNDP, external experts or Government officials and politicians. Such projects have not been scaled up partly because they tended to be cost-ineffective and there has been little national ownership. Interventions have remained pilots or one-off demonstration projects when they have not been backed by sufficient advocacy and stakeholders' involvement during the design, planning and implementation stages; and have not necessarily tied in with larger efforts at reforming legal and policy frameworks and public administration, or with resource mobilization and management efforts. For instance, several questions have been raised about the Millennium Villages projects. How costly are the interventions? Can they be sustained and replicated? Have the Government and regional authorities been sufficiently engaged and involved so that they can learn lessons from the piloting?

Scaling up of such projects does not occur either when sufficient efforts have not been made during the planning and implementation stages to link such initiatives with national efforts. Local governance interventions need to be viewed as part of a broader system, determined by national legislation, decentralization and other policies and power relations. Interventions targeted only at the community or local government level may

[49] UNDP, 'DGP-Net E-Discussion, Local Governance and Development Agenda', Consolidated Reply, December 2007.

[50] UNDP, 'Decentralized Governance for Development: A combined Practice Note on Decentralization, Local Governance and Urban/Rural Development', April 2004.

[51] UNDP, 'UNDP Primer: Fiscal Decentralization and Poverty Reduction', November 2005.

[52] UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, 'A Users Guide to Measuring Local Governance', 2009.

benefit but this will have a limited impact unless they are tied in with larger efforts at reforming legal and policy frameworks, public administration and human resource management.

UNDP has tended to view its interventions in local governance as ends rather than as necessary means to an end. In Ecuador, for instance, the UNDP and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in enhancing institutional capacities for urban development management, by linking land survey maps with land registers, made a 'significant contribution' by creating certainty regarding land property, legalizing properties in urban areas and increasing municipal revenues from property tax. However, it is not clear whether or not this led to increased social investments, reduced urban poverty and improved service delivery for the poor. Overall, a focus on activities, processes and outputs without a long-term vision and strategy has led to UNDP often losing sight of people and their human development. A recent evaluation of UNDP support in Cambodia points out, for instance, that 'full achievement of desirable outcomes has often been compromised by a lack of focus on the people. In the area of democratization and decentralization, people's participation and empowerment remain limited: in the environmental programmes, there is more emphasis on conservation and less on sustainable livelihoods of the poor who depend on environmental resources; in the poverty-related programmes, more success has been achieved in building capacity for market-led development than in creating employment opportunities for the poor.'[53]

UNDP has been actively promoting gender issues in local governance in a number of countries. For instance, the Bangladesh Election Commission in place since 1996 has sought to ensure that women were comfortable voting and in doing so ensured that a portion of the election staff were women in order to appease women's fears and to provide a comfortable context for them to exercise their rights and participate in decision-making processes. And to encourage these women to register, Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs worked with Imams and other religious leaders to reassure women that taking their photos for the electoral list was appropriate. This was part of a clearly stated mandate to ensure every citizen was reached during the voter registration process regardless of his or her location, condition or nature.

However, a strategic and systematic effort at mainstreaming gender concerns into local governance has been missing. A systematic gender analysis of local governance interventions has not been regularly conducted. Though there is recognition that women's empowerment has amounted to more than their participation in electoral politics, appropriate indicators for assessing improvements in gender relations and greater equality in the benefits flowing to women and men have not been formulated for most local governance initiatives. Similarly, capacity building initiatives have targeted women but adequate data have not been gathered to assess whether or not women have benefited from a higher awareness and training.

In conflict situations, factors positively influencing outcomes would include the presence of a strong peace infrastructure made up of networks, communities, and highly trained human resources for peace building, the strategic engagement by UNDP of people's groups, government agencies and local government units, the existence of peace agreements and active civil society participation. On the other hand, effectiveness has been hindered by a weak policy environment for peacebuilding at the national level, the inconclusive status of peace negotiations with rebel groups, episodes of armed conflict that set back the gains of peace on the ground, and leadership shifts among partners resulting from elections, political appointments and institutional changes that caused delays or adjustments in programme implementation.

[53] 'Assessment of Development Results for Cambodia', UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Assessment of Development Results for Cambodia', New York, 2010.

Local governance interventions require strong national governance frameworks within which to plan and implement local governance initiatives. In the absence of a national framework for decentralization, interventions tend to become one-off projects. Outcomes also depend critically on the availability of human and financial resources in support for local governance. A shortage of well-trained and knowledgeable staff to lead, guide, plan and implement at the national as well as local community level very often proves to be a major factor limiting the effectiveness of interventions.

Context-specific factors have played a critical role in affecting the effectiveness of local governance initiatives. Political stability, the dynamics of political parties, the presence and engagement of non-state actors, the degree of local ownership, the extent of trust between local institutions and the public, and people's access to local governments and other institutions have been among key context-specific factors that have directly influenced local governance projects. For example in Comoros, effectiveness of UNDP support has been limited by the frequent changes in Government, the related difficulty in partnering with stakeholders to develop a perspective plan for governance, and the constraints in being able to effectively tap the knowledge within the organization. Effectiveness has been boosted by strong support of the political leadership and the existence of the right incentives for central and provincial governments to decentralize and empower local governments. Interventions to improve service delivery have been more effective when UNDP has simultaneously extended support for capacity building, improving accessibility of service users, raising awareness and promoting outreach, and when local governance reforms have had the backing of strong national governance legislative and policy frameworks as well as Government resources—financial and human.

Effectiveness at strengthening local governance in complex environments has been limited by the failure to conduct a comprehensive risk analysis of the situation and of the challenges. For example, an evaluation of UNDP projects in the Occupied Palestinian Territory points out that the project objective was over ambitious given the timeframe and available financial and staff resources, and the complex and endemic nature of both conflict and corruption in the area. Another limiting factor has been limited awareness building and advocacy. This project was 'apparently not well publicized among key civil society organizations, donors or the Association for Palestinian Local Authorities'. There was also little evidence that it has triggered more work in this field by other stakeholders or the Government.

3.3 EFFICIENCY

Assessing the efficiency of UNDP support to local governance has not been easy. Most project and other evaluation reports make general comments relating to features of UNDP operations but do not provide sufficient evidence that address issues of efficiency. Some of the observations are positive while others focus on the need for improvement.

Stakeholders acknowledge that the transparency of UNDP procedures across projects—both where UNDP support has been restricted to administration of funds or to management of procurement and where UNDP has played a (more) substantive programmatic role—has added to the credibility of UNDP in the field. Project partners, by and large, have agreed that UNDP procedures and processes have been 'rather agile and unencumbered' compared with those of the Government in question. A caveat is in order. Such a view is typically expressed as a comparative assessment, particularly when UNDP is compared with the Government in question. In other words, UNDP staff and UNDP procedures are often seen as being much better.

While UNDP has delivered goods and services in line with administrative procedures, its efficiency in supporting local governance initiatives has been adversely affected by cumbersome procurement

processes, a weak field presence and rigid project management. There have been frequent complaints that UNDP procedures have been long-winded, especially those linked to procurement, causing delays and adversely affecting the ability of UNDP to deliver against results. The House of Representatives' Committee of the Autonomies in Bolivia, for instance, found the procedures to obtain technical assistance too lengthy and complicated, and too demanding on them vis-à-vis their capacities and know-how. This adversely affected the efficiency of the project (technical assistance arrived too late or not at all) and its efficacy (the quality of the Committee's product was impaired and delayed which reduced its usefulness and timeliness). Similarly, in Sierra Leone UNDP failed to deliver efficiently on projects that required direct procurement and logistic inputs. Partners felt that the bureaucratic nature of procurement affected the ability of UNDP to deliver against results. These delays and hold-ups are typically related to internal procedures as well as to difficulties of coordination among partners. By contrast, technical support provided by UNDP, which by its nature is more process-orientated, was seen as being timely and appropriate.

In some cases, the shortage of financial resources has adversely affected efficiency. For instance, the evaluation of a UNDP project in the Occupied Palestinian Territory points out that limited project resources may have denied UNDP the opportunity to emerge as a strategic actor in the attempt to ensure accountability and transparency. The limited resources were put into the development of a toolkit—leaving little for much-needed advocacy and partnership building. Again, a mismatch of funding and programme needs—country offices having spread their resources too thinly across an ambitious country programme—has adversely affected the efficiency of operation. UNDP has often not been present at the sub-national level. UNDP staff has therefore frequently been over-stretched when it has come to dealing with local governments. In Southern Sudan, for instance, sufficient investments of time and resources had not been made during the preparatory phase for developing appropriate systems of consultations, delegation and coordination. Moreover, UNDP has not always had the capacity to provide the robust, professional responses necessary to handle complicated and deep-rooted challenges of local governance. Many country offices overstretch themselves and spread their resources too thinly, resulting in limited impact.

Despite the assertion in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008–2013 that UNDP will not normally engage in 'small-scale projects without country-wide impact', this continues to be a problem with many country programmes. It also implies that local governance interventions remain ad hoc and are reduced to projects. It has also meant that prioritization tends to be based on funding rather than on a careful problem analysis. This was the situation in Comoros, for instance, where despite the years of long engagement, UNDP does not have an internally coherent and comprehensive approach towards its local governance and decentralization interventions.

Constraining the formulation of effective strategies is insufficient access to a systematic body of knowledge on local governance. In the absence of a systematic review of the experience with these different modalities, almost every country office finds itself in an experimental mode.

The pressure on UNDP capacity relates partly to the large number of small projects that country offices are required to support. Capacity (expertise and knowledge) to work on local governance at the country-office level is often limited, as is the ability to tap into (possible) knowledge through the regional centres and headquarters. The range of skills needed is large starting with advocacy, public administration, project management, planning and budgeting to political analysis and public finance. It calls for an understanding of the local politics, the sociocultural and economic background of the local communities, the efficiency of local public administration, the various forms of discrimination and inequality, the obstacles to participation, the presence and

capacity of NGOs, and so on. This also includes the capacity of UNDP country offices to manage the political processes surrounding decentralization ad local governance.

Strategic planning is additionally impaired by the high turnover of staff within UNDP and also in Government. As a result, institutional memory is lost and many interventions seem to get extended or recycled. It has also been pointed out that UNDP is often not present at the sub-national level and this adversely affects efficiency of operations. Finally, inflexibility in modifying projects to changing circumstances and the lack of synergy between similar projects within a country and across thematic clusters have also limited efficiency.

Deficiencies in the results framework developed by UNDP have been a common factor affecting efficiency of local governance initiatives. Many UNDP-supported projects in local governance have not had clear statements of results backed by corresponding indicators and markers of progress. Outcome statements have frequently been too general and unclear or not meaningful and measurable. Many relate to outputs and not to outcomes. Part of the problem arises because it is not easy to have clear outcome statements corresponding to a typical project timeframe for interventions that UNDP supports. As a result, outcome statements are often written as outputs since outcome changes could take longer than the project's lifespan.

There are also gaps in the identification of indicators. In some cases, indicators are simply not mentioned. In others, there are fundamental problems with the appropriateness of the indicators identified. In yet other cases, where outcome indicators are mentioned, the absence of baseline data makes it impossible to assess performance and progress. Moreover, many national statistical systems and country offices do not have the required data and monitoring systems that would enable the measurement of progress towards Country Programme Document results in local governance. These deficiencies have compounded weak monitoring in the area of local governance and hampered a systematic impact and outcome evaluation of UNDP contribution to strengthening local governance.

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

UNDP results of local governance support with respect to sustainability are mixed. The assessment reveals that insufficient attention to important design, advocacy and implementation elements have contributed to a weak record of sustainability. UNDP initiatives in local governance have been more sustainable when working simultaneously on legislative frameworks for decentralization, nurturing effective partnerships with Government, CBOs and communities, and developing appropriate methodologies and approaches that could be replicated.

At the same time, several factors have adversely affected sustainability. Weak risk analysis (political, administrative, social, corruption, and so on), poor advocacy to promote broad-based ownership, insufficient micro-macro linkages and unrealistic timelines have prevented adoption of projects for scaling up nationwide. Sustainability has been adversely affected when resource implications have not been fully factored in and this has resulted in insufficient capacity building efforts within Government and among non-state actors. In many cases, concerns of sustainability have not been adequately factored into the project at the design stage. Contributing to this has been the limited transfer of in-house knowledge on local governance to other units within UNDP and to development partners. Also, the withdrawal of funds and staff at the end of the project as well as the high turnover of staff in Government (at all levels), within partner NGOs and within UNDP have also adversely affected sustainability.

UNDP-supported initiatives have not focused sufficiently on long term sustainability of local governance initiatives that require changes in the behaviour and attitudes of local and national stakeholders towards accountability,

decentralization and local governance. UNDP supported projects make only an indirect reference to the need for such behavioural and attitudinal changes. Many UNDP project officers focus on immediate activities and outputs of the projects and lose sight of the bigger challenges of ensuring accountability, people's empowerment, representation of the marginalized and systemic changes needed to build the foundation of strong local governance. Very few mechanisms and methods exist within UNDP for monitoring behaviour changes and tracking improvements. It is also important for local governance initiatives to be integrated into the larger context of promoting democracy, transparency and accountability. This is not always done. For instance, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the UNDP-project was not integrated into a longer-term UNDP anti-corruption and transparency governance strategy. There was no provision in the project for measuring the impact on changes in capacity, attitudes, perceptions and ultimately performance of Local Government Units over time—measurements that, in any case, go beyond the short-lived cycle of a project. As a result, many perceived the effort of UNDP as a stand-alone project.

Sustainability is better ensured through continued investments in capacity building of different stakeholders (not just Governments) at the local level over a long period of time. In Mali, for instance, various stakeholders, especially at local levels, acknowledge the positive impact of UNDP supported decentralization and local development interventions over the past eight last years. The early period was difficult with little administrative or political capacity to further the decentralization process. Elected officials were not aware of even terms like action plan, programme development and annual planning. UNDP began by investing in training and awareness creation. Today the situation is different. Investment in the capacity building of elected councillors has improved the overall development framework. Investing in capacity building of NGOs and CBOs also contributes to sustainability. However, there are instances when capacity building initiatives linked to local governance have failed due to insufficient and poor utilization of funds, training that is inappropriate to the context, raising trainee expectations unrealistically, and poor follow-up.

Issues of sustainability have been more difficult to address in conflict situations. Ensuring scaling up and replicating local governance interventions to become sustainable over the long term is no simple task. Political instability in contexts of conflict, emergency and recovery tends to jeopardize sustainability. It has not always been easy to strengthen the policy environment for peace building that often requires efforts to address key conflict issues, such as natural resource extraction, equitable distribution of resources, injustice, and marginalization of disadvantaged sectors. These are not easy to influence. At the national level, peace and development efforts have failed to take root and become self-sustaining because local governance reforms have not been accompanied by sufficient allocation of resources; and at the local level, service delivery, capacity-building for peace, and confidence-building among groups and sectors have not always taken place on a continuing basis. Sustainability has also been hindered by a weak policy environment for peace building at the national level, the inconclusive status of peace negotiations with rebel groups, episodes of armed conflict that set back the gains of peace on the ground, and leadership shifts among partners resulting from elections, political appointments and institutional changes that cause delays or adjustments in programme implementation.

While playing a catalytic role, UNDP has to be conscious of not creating dependency on UNDP by local governance stakeholders, especially in conflict-affected countries and some LDCs. This could happen when UNDP becomes involved with the provision of basic services when there is a weak or non-existent local government structure. These projects then yield only temporary outcomes in terms of individual and community empowerment and improvements in access to basic services.

3.5 PARTNERSHIPS

This section presents an assessment of UNDP partnerships with Government, civil society organizations and other international partners. It also comments specifically on UNDP partnership with other United Nations agencies as well as with its associated funds and programmes: UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNV.

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENTS

UNDP has, over the years, built strong working relations with central Governments on issues of local governance. This has been the outcome of a long history of cooperation in many countries. The trust and credibility that UNDP has established as a catalytic partner has been an important factor enabling UNDP to play an effective role in introducing essential national legislation for electoral and governance reforms. For instance, UNDP has played such a role in Southern Sudan by encouraging the inclusion of traditional authorities in local governance under the Local Government Act of 2009 and in facilitating collaboration between the Local Governance Board and other donors as part of the Local Government Recovery Programme that began in 2006. In many countries such as Cambodia and Mozambique, UNDP, as the first international agency to support programmes under democratic governance, has played a key role in supporting national Governments with the introduction of legislation for local governance reforms.

UNDP representatives and programme officers in country offices have, by and large, done well in terms of handling sensitivities surrounding issues of local governance. Dealing with Governments on issues of local governance requires considerable skills. It can become a tight-rope walk in many instances, especially during periods of crisis and conflict and high political instability.

While proximity to Government is seen as an advantage, there are times when this has adversely affected the image of UNDP especially in the eyes of non-state actors. Such situations have arisen when UNDP has to work with authoritarian regimes. While engagement is justified on the grounds of the principle of universality and continuing to promote principles of human development, there are times when the failure of UNDP to address issues of public accountability and transparency reduces its own credibility.

UNDP has not always made the most of its proximity to Government to push the agenda of local governance, particularly with line ministries other than the one dealing with local governance. In many countries, responsibility for decentralization and local governance is entrusted to a separate ministry, and UNDP has worked closely with such ministries to usher in useful reforms to promote decentralization and local governance. However, UNDP has been much less successful and effective in promoting decentralization and local governance across other sectoral line ministries—be it health, education, rural development or environment. This is partly because the idea of local governance and its importance have not yet got fully internalized within UNDP and therefore in Governments. For instance, a recent review of whether and how the energy-decentralization nexus is taken into consideration within national decentralization policies and sector-specific policies for the LDCs and sub-Saharan African countries by UNDP concluded that 'for most of the countries reviewed, formal consideration of energy is largely missing in their decentralization policies. Sector-specific policies (relating, for example, to agriculture, forestry and waster, as well as energy) are more likely to consider energy within the context of decentralization, but they are disproportionately focused on supply-side issues, and pay only limited attention to energy uses that are particularly important to the poor.'[54] A reason for this could be because the responsibility for promoting local governance within UNDP rests in the Democratic Governance practice area

[54] UNDP, 'Energy in National Decentralization Policies – A Review Focusing on Least Developed Countries and Sub-Saharan Africa', Energy and Environment Group, New York, 2009.

and interactions with other practice areas (at the country level and headquarters) are not regular or formalized.

UNDP has similarly been less successful in developing appropriate modalities for working with sub-national (state or provincial) and local levels of government. UNDP country offices have experimented with different modalities to improve effectiveness of operations at the local community level. There are numerous examples of UNDP starting sub-national offices, appointing local representatives, hiring technical and other staff on contract at the level of local governments, engaging CBOs and so on. But these have tended to remain tentative and experimental. In some instances, they have created dependency of the local government on UNDP staff, and in other instances, the sustainability of operations is threatened when UNDP withdraws. Many times, technical specialists appointed by or paid for by UNDP are reluctant to join local governments; in other instances, local governments find it difficult to retain such technical experts especially if they have to be absorbed at higher-than-normal salaries.

UNDP has also not capitalized on the potential linkages it could build—especially with other United Nations agencies—to influence different line ministries' Governments on local governance. For instance, UNDP could enter into more formal arrangements with the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) to work with the line ministries that UNICEF deals with on a regular basis (health, education, water and sanitation, etc.) to promote the practices of local governance. The UNDAF process and the One United Nations effort are enabling such collaboration to emerge, but there is still a long way to go.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The volume of UNDP partnerships with civil society has been high, there have been many levels of engagement, and partnerships have, in many cases, been strong. UNDP has created effective forums for exchange of ideas and experiences, helped to instill trust between government and communities, and contributed to enhancing the legitimacy of Governments in the eyes of non-state actors. UNDP engagement with civil society, however, varies from one country to another, within a country, and from one local community to another. Much depends upon the existence and capacity of credible NGOs and the skills they possess. UNDP support has assumed a special relevance in conflict-affected countries, when it has contributed to supporting infrastructure repair, and building or creating relationships between different levels of government and civil society.

While levels of engagement may be high in some countries, they may be low or non-existent in other countries. The strength of UNDP engagement depends on both the commitment of the country office to genuinely partner with civil society organizations, as well as on the strength of national and local civil society. Though UNDP recognizes the important role of civil society organizations—and of non-state actors more generally—in the advancement of human development, yet in most cases, UNDP does not play a pro-active role in engaging with civil society. There could be several legitimate reasons for not engaging with CSOs in certain contexts. They might not enjoy credibility or they might not have the necessary skills for improving local governance. In certain political contexts, UNDP offices might have to be circumspect in engaging with CSOs except with the express support of the national Government. Most country offices have lacked a long-term strategic focus and plan for engagement with civil society organizations. Typically, 'downstream' service delivery efforts have been greater than 'upstream' policy participation. This has severely limited the impact that local governance initiatives could have on enhancing human development.

A recent evaluation study, for instance, comments on the low priority and lack of commitment to civil society organizations in Africa: 'at the end of the day, as inter-governmental organizations,

UNDP and United Nations agencies more generally, are state-centric in orientation. Their mandate is clearly to serve the Member States that compose the United Nations system. The primary relationship of UNDP has been and continues to be with partner Governments and there seems little incentive for concerned staff to change what has become the natural order of things.'[55] Ideally, UNDP should engage systematically and simultaneously with Governments and non-state actors. However, in the absence of a corporate policy directive and explicit mandate to mainstream civil society engagement as an essential element of achieving overall goals of human development, UNDP tends to 'projectize' the nature of its engagement with CSOs.

UNDP, in most countries, views NGOs as 'junior' partners and 'contractors' for the implementation of specific projects. Their capacities are used mainly for short-term programme implementation. Even with these contractual arrangements, there appears to be a degree of unease and discomfort. UNDP has yet to tap the full potential of NGOs and other CSOs to contribute to improve policy formulation and implementation. No serious effort is being made to evolve long-term partnerships or support them with capacity building in advocacy as well as programme implementation. Offering UNDP advisory services to NGOs, for instance, is not common practice. This is another reason why it has been difficult to scale up many UNDP-supported interventions in local governance. With a few exceptions, UNDP has not used its proximity to national Governments to develop civil society legislative and policy frameworks. These findings reinforce this assessment of UNDP partnerships with civil society and strengthen the findings of the 2008 global inventory conducted to understand the magnitude, the challenges and opportunities of country office engagement with civil society.[56]

PARTNERSHIP WITH DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

UNDP has cooperated well with development and international partners in strengthening local governance initiatives and has often assumed a leadership role in supporting donor coordination. Many recognize the positive role played by UNDP given its explicit mandate to promote democratic governance in the countries where it operates. The role of UNDP vis-à-vis other international development partners, however, varies from country to country as does its coordination role. In Cambodia, for instance, UNDP has established partnerships with United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and international NGOs. Often the first to have initiated work supporting local governance, UNDP has assumed a natural leadership role, and in many countries, has been instrumental in bringing in other donors and helping Governments coordinate donor assistance and pooling resources. In Rwanda, for instance, UNDP plays more than one role: donor, facilitator, spokesperson, catalyst, special Government partner, and so on. In some countries, UNDP plays the lead role whereas in others, it is relegated to being one among many partners especially if the funds that UNDP contributes to local governance are relatively small. Partners have found UNDP to be enormously helpful in opening opportunities to interact with Governments and reach other partners. UNDP is also credited with helping pool resources and, thereby, adding value to the local governance process. In countries where there is competition, the failure to strategically position itself among international actors within the national context or to take the initiative has pushed UNDP into becoming a junior player. For instance, in Bolivia, UNDP conducts much of its decentralization and local governance work in consultation with the Group of Development Partners in

[55] UNDP, `Final Draft Evaluation Report on the Regional Project to Develop the Capacity of CSOs to Participate in Policymaking and to Support Civil Society – Assessments in RBA Countries', 22 June 2010.

[56] UNDP, 'Country-level Engagement with Civil Society: A Global Snapshot', 2009.

which the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, the Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo play more prominent roles. UNDP does work in partnership, but is sometimes perceived as disengaged, pursuing its own path. This is attributed to the approach of UNDP of targeting the national level as its main field of action. More recently, UNDP has positioned itself as leader on the issue of autonomous decentralization, working closely with the central administration.

UNDP has, in some instances, assisted Governments with aid coordination. Though the coordination role of UNDP is often appreciated, it does not necessarily mean that UNDP sub-national and local initiatives are meaningfully coordinated or integrated with projects and activities supported by other agencies, or even more substantially conjoined with UNDP action in different sectors. For instance, even though the various Oruro initiatives in Bolivia (concerning indigenous culture-based planning, training inter-cultural public management and community-oriented fields of practical expertise) are linked together, the intervention seems isolated and removed from other initiatives that UNDP is involved in at the national level. Similarly, UNDP has not fully capitalised on opportunities for closer integration with other development partners, essential for advancing human development at local levels. Collaborations at the community level with other development partners, where they exist, remain, by and large, confined to information sharing. Little effort has been made by UNDP to examine potential complementarities with other development agencies working at the community level as a way of further strengthening and sustaining its support to local governance reforms.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES AND ASSOCIATED FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNDP has partnered with other United Nations agencies such as UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, UN-Habitat and the United Nations Population Fund in many countries to promote local governance reforms. However, UNDP has not systematically capitalized on the potential linkages it could have built with the other United Nations agencies to promote decentralization and local governance. Though improvements have been seen with the push for One United Nations reforms, modalities of joint funding and programming for local governance are still in an experimental phase. In Sierra Leone, for instance, UNDP has a coordinating role in the context of UNDAF. The United Nations Country Team looks to UNDP for leadership on local governance-related issues but it is not always forthcoming (Country Team partners are 'waiting for guidance').

The UNCDF-UNDP strategic partnership in LDCs is built on the unique investment mandate of UNCDF as being complementary and supplementary to UNDP. UNCDF, for instance, has the mandate to make capital investments; UNDP does not. Both UNCDF and UNDP support enhanced representation and inclusion as essential for local development. Much like UNDP, UNCDF seeks to enhance the capacity of government institutions for strengthening local development, and it advocates for policies that promote decentralization for local development. The UNCDF competitive advantage resides clearly in this role for which it has been widely recognized as a 'laboratory' of decentralization.[57] Using carefully documented evidence from pilot projects, UNCDF canvasses for scaling up and mobilizes donors to provide funds.

[57] ECI Africa, `Senegal: Final Evaluation Rural Decentralization Support Program (Padmir)', Submitted to UNCDF, Final Report, 6 June 2007.

The relationship between UNDP and UNCDF has evolved over the years. While UNCDF, traditionally, focused primarily on capital investment, it became increasingly involved in local governance-related issues after the mid-1990s in order to ensure that its capital investment was socially appropriate and sustainable. At the same time, there was a need to engage more in up-stream work, which raised the issue of its comparative advantage vis-à-vis UNDP in dealing with policy and legal and regulatory issues pertaining to local governance and decentralization – more the traditional domain of UNDP. Today, the strategic and results agendas of UNDP and UNCDF have been integrated within the Strategic Plan. As a result, UNCDF's local governance portfolio has generally been well aligned and integrated with that of UNDP.

The establishment of joint programmes in local governance as the primary modality for cooperation between UNDP and UNCDF at the country level has encouraged joint mobilization of resources as well. The formulation of development outcomes and outcome indicators in the Strategic Plan enables both organizations to be more effective in achieving results. This has also contributed to rationalizing management and operational responsibilities at the headquarters, regional and country levels. Joint programmes focus on three areas: policy, institutions and investments. UNCDF supports the local planning process and makes capital investment block grants, which allow local governments to put their development plans immediately into action. This helps demonstrate to local citizens that given the means their elected officials can respond to the need for a new health station, irrigation system, refurbished school or village water supply. UNDP interventions usually focus on national decentralization policies and on building the capacity of central Government and national NGOs to provide appropriate support to local governments.

Joint UNDP-UNCDF interventions vary according to national contexts. In Ethiopia, Eritrea, Lao PDR, and Timor Leste, for instance, the focus has been on piloting in a small number of districts where joint programmes have helped make the case for the role of local government and also established participatory planning processes. In contrast, in countries such as Bangladesh, Mozambique and Uganda, pilots have led to national replication of the local governments systems involving partners with deeper pockets such as the World Bank and the European Union. In other cases (such as in Nepal, Tanzania and Yemen), where pilot activities have helped make the case or where there is strong national commitment to decentralization, joint programmes have worked simultaneously at local and national levels focusing on fiscal decentralization and national systems of public expenditure management.

Working together, UNDP and UNCDF have been able to leverage respective expertise and resources in support of local governance reforms particularly because of their perceived political neutrality and the long-standing trust built with national Governments. There has usually been strong evidence of cooperation between UNCDF and UNDP at the country level based on an understanding of the comparative advantages and mutual benefits. In Yemen, for instance, where there is a strong, mutually supportive, relationship based on a division of labour, UNCDF manages and disburses funding for all capital investment and international technical advisory support, whereas UNDP manages and disburses funding for national capacity building and policy-related advisory activities.[58] Similarly, in Malawi, UNDP provides funding and technical assistance for capacity building, including the salaries of Government staff hired to support the decentralization programme, and the UNCDF provides funding and technical assistance relating to investment

[58] UNCDF, 'Yemen: Decentralization and Local Development Support Programme Report on the Final Evaluation of the UNDP and UNCDF Local Development Programme', submitted to the UNCDF, June 2008.

capital, its use and management.[59] In Lao PDR, UNCDF support is in the form of financing local planning, budgeting and capital investment in infrastructure and associated service delivery through a District Development Funds modality coupled with training and back-up technical advice. UNDP, on the other hand, finances and provides technical support and training for the administrative re-organization.[60]

UNCDF tends to support constructive change at the community level, but it often lacks the resources, both human and financial, to work with Government actors at higher levels especially for ensuring sustainability and scaling up of the local development initiatives. While this is not to say that UNCDF does not support higher-level activities, this has been a good part of the focus and investment of UNDP. For instance, in Yemen, UNCDF and UNDP helped secure the positioning of the local governance programme within the national Government by establishing contact and dialogue at a politically higher level.[61] UNCDF and UNDP took an early lead in donor harmonization within and outside the United Nations family and persuaded others to fund the upscaling of the Decentralization and Development Support Programme meant for institutional development and capacity building to more governorates and districts beyond the piloting phase.

Working together, UNCDF and UNDP have been able to support policy changes particularly because of their political neutrality and the long-standing trust that they have built with national Governments. There have, however, been instances when UNCDF and UNDP have not been able to make the most of the opportunities for supporting local governance. This occurs largely because roles and responsibilities of the two agencies have not been clarified, understood or communicated. For instance, in Cambodia, while the ending of the UNCDF Local Development Fund Project created an opportunity for cooperative effort between UNDP and UNCDF to continue to support the fiscal decentralization efforts initiated by UNCDF and the UNDP within its broader Decentralization Support Project, the management arrangements of the project were confusing. This happened partly because of the turnover of personnel within UNDP and UNCDF offices during the initial stages of the project (leading to lack of continuity and loss of institutional memory) and the absence of a clear Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and UNCDF. Other management arrangements have also not worked. For instance, UNCDF did not have a physical presence in Cambodia during the period of the project and programme management support was based in the UNCDF New York City office. This meant UNDP had to assume some of the administrative, logistical and financial support requirements not originally envisaged.

Other gaps are also evident. The failure to develop strategic plans jointly for local governance at the country level, based on an assessment of the historical and political background, the presence and role of other donors supporting local governance, and of risks. Another common reason for the slow pace of impact and limited experience with replication and scaling up has been the neglect of advocacy and lobbying functions (both within the United Nations and also outside) by UNDP and UNCDF. Also, insufficient investment was made to document, analyze and draw lessons from successes and initiatives that have been scaled up.

While there is strong evidence of cooperation between UNCDF and UNDP at the country level based on an understanding of their comparative

[59] UNCDF, 'Malawi: Final Evaluation of the UNDP and UNCDF's Local Development Programme', submitted to UNCDF, Final Evaluation Report, 10 January 2008.

[60] UNDP, 'Lao PDR: Final Report of the Mid-term Review: Governance, Public Administration Reform and Decentralized Service Delivery Project', Saravane Province', 1 April 2009.

[61] UNCDF, 'Yemen: Decentralization and Local Development Support Programme Report on the Final Evaluation of the UNDP and UNCDF Local Development Programme', submitted to the UNCDF, June 2008.

advantages and mutual benefits, this has not necessarily been the case at other levels. The confusion between the purported emphasis of UNDP on 'democratic governance' and that of UNCDF on 'local development' has lingered over the reporting period. This has given rise to occasional animosity and, in some instances, competition for resources and visibility.

Factoring in the multifaceted approach of UNDP towards issues of local governance and decentralization, driven, in part, by the mandates and development agendas of different UNDP bureaux and programme units, has proved a challenge in the evolving relationship between UNDP and UNCDF. In some cases, these mandates and agendas did not, from the perspective of UNCDF, appear to be pursued in a coherent or synchronized manner, and did not always coexist easily at the country or corporate level. In some of the LDCs in which UNCDF operates, it might encounter multiple initiatives for local governance sponsored by UNDP headquarters units and relating to issues of decentralization (such as BDP's democratic governance group), MDG-localization (for example BDP's poverty group), small grants for CSOs involved in climate change and biodiversity protection initiatives (such as BDP's environment and energy group), crisis prevention and recovery or particular funding modalities (such as the Art Gold initiative of the PB). While UNCDF has therefore, at times, struggled to clarify its role in the context of a particular programme country, it has also faced a UNDP that has not always spoken with one voice, which has complicated programming and implementation.

Overall, there appears to be a continuing need to differentiate more clearly between the roles and responsibilities of UNDP and UNCDF and to make the distinctions 'cleaner and clearer'. In the meantime, renewed efforts to cooperate are welcomed by all parties. UNCDF appears to be particularly concerned to establish its role as an agency that provides 'proof of concept' through an approach that combines capital investment with efforts to strengthen local governance, and that motivates other partners, including UNDP and, in particular, bilateral and multilateral donors including the World Bank, to take the 'concept' forward and to scale it up. In the meantime, there are signs that while UNDP continues to struggle somewhat to align and integrate its different approaches towards local governance internally, there appears to be an increasing interest in engaging with UNCDF on issues of mutual concern, including on the 'scaling up of MDGs at the local level' and crisis prevention and recovery.

There are several examples of effective partnerships in strengthening local governance between UNDP and UNIFEM given particularly the several areas of overlap between advancing human development and enhancing women's economic security and rights, reducing the prevalence of violence against women and promoting gender justice in democratic governance in stable and fragile states. There are many examples of solid partnership in the area of local governance. This overlap exists because of the complementary nature of support that UNDP and UNIFEM offer. UNDP frequently depends on UNIFEM expertise and experience in substantive areas involving women whilst UNIFEM needs UNDP to ensure gender concerns are mainstreamed and scaled up across Governments and in civil society. UNIFEM, for instance, leverages its support to women's political participation through new efforts to go 'beyond the numbers' and to build the political impact of women in politics. It invests in the capacity of women and men voters to be effective constituencies for gender equality policies from political parties. It advances women's leadership and influence in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction, and truth and reconciliation processes. UNIFEM also works with UNDP to demonstrate the importance of gender-sensitive incentive systems, performance measures, and procedures for gender responsive planning, programming and budgeting at national and local levels, including capacity development in gender responsive budgeting. Due to the complementary nature of support that UNDP and UNIFEM offer each other, the two

organizations have worked side-by-side in many countries and, in some instances, as in Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, have been involved in successful joint initiatives.

The Gender Equitable Local Development project is a UNCDF-UNIFEM-UNDP initiative designed to facilitate the achievement of gender equality and justice through improved well-being and status of women. The project is being implemented in five African countries: Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. In Albania, UNIFEM has taken the lead in the provision of technical expertise to support implementation and strengthening of institutional mechanisms and systems for the Law on 'Gender Equality in Society' with UNDP providing oversight, coordination and services in support of UNIFEM operations and administration.

Despite this close proximity at the country level, cooperation arrangements have been opportunistic rather than strategic or well defined. Responsible for this has been competition at times between UNDP and UNIFEM for limited resources, as well as confusion among both staff and stakeholders about the division of responsibilities between UNDP and UNIFEM. Country studies show that there is sometimes little or ineffective cooperation between UNDP and UNIFEM.

UNDP and UNV have a long tradition of working as partners in local governance. There is a considerable overlap between UNV's work and the activities of UNDP in local governance. UNV projects typically address stakeholder inclusion and participation (primarily through the provision of awareness raising and coaching and networking support) and community mobilization through voluntary action (primarily through partnership building and leadership development). There has been considerable synergy between the work of UNDP and that of UNV. Whereas UNDP, as part of capacity development, tends to concentrate more on Governments, UNV concentrates on meso-level institutions such as CSOs, CBOs, volunteer-involving organizations and youth and community groups. This focus is followed by a micro-level (community level or grassroots level) capacity-development and training focus that builds on community mobilization for participation in specific UNV project activities, including training and sensitization.

UNV-UNDP collaboration has: (a) successfully guided and supported the creation of councils, committees, groups and organizations for participation in local development and the advancement of key issues; (b) increased networking, exchange activities, cooperation and partnerships development; (c) provided a wide variety of capacity-building, sensitization and training initiatives for stakeholders at all levels; (d) helped increase networking, exchange activities, cooperation and partnerships development among stakeholders; and (e) increased pro-active dialogue and trust between CSOs and state and local authorities and involvement in local development decision-making.[62] For instance, UNV and UNDP played an important role when, in cooperation with the Government of China, they made a joint effort to promote volunteerism through the 2008 Olympics Games. This initiative contributed to enhancing the capacity of national volunteer partners to support the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. It has also opened up opportunities for Olympic volunteers after the games to participate in China's development. Representatives of the Beijing Volunteer Association have acknowledged the contribution of UNDP, especially in terms of introducing international good practices in volunteerism. With support from UNDP, the Beijing Volunteer Association engaged high-level expertise to train a group of core Olympic volunteer leaders. They note that without support from UNDP, it would be difficult to have such high-quality training.

[62] UNV, 'UNV Synthesis of Evaluations – A Synthesis of UNV Evaluations from 2000 through 2009', April 2010 [Draft 1.2]

Despite the many years of collaboration between UNDP and UNV, the benefits of volunteerism have remained unclear and controversial in UNDP. A recent report synthesizing the findings emerging from 73 UNV project and thematic evaluations undertaken between 2000 and 2009 suggests that 'a number of projects benefitted from a very positive and supportive relationship between UNV and UNDP and other United Nations agencies.' However, while UNV is a part of UNDP, the promotion of volunteerism does not figure in the UNDP strategic results framework, or as a practice area. This means all project scenarios in which project documents are largely defined by UNDP (including monitoring and evaluation) leave UNV little room to formally insert volunteer-related objectives, activities and indicators unless it is proactively engaged in the design from early on.

There are other gaps in the UNDP-UNV working arrangements. Projects have been affected by a lack of clarity and common understanding among UNDP and UNV volunteers of their respective roles and responsibilities. In some projects, UNV volunteers were unclear about reporting lines while in others, they were assigned project management agencies that lacked the coordination abilities to oversee UNV Volunteer activities in their various host organizations. Some projects suffered from a lack of commitment from UNDP. In some cases, delays in project formulation meant that even though the project was well-aligned with the local UNDP Country Programme, the opportunity to have it reflected in the prevailing UNDAF was missed; this ultimately influenced the extent and continuity of UNDP support. In others, UNV Volunteer relations with UNDP were minimal. Administrative backstopping was often available, but technical assistance and operational follow-up were limited.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions and recommendations provided below are based on the wealth of findings described in Chapter 3. The conclusions should be seen as mutually reinforcing, conveying an overall sense of UNDP strengths and challenges in supporting the establishment of entitlements and improving the delivery of goods and services, through local governance. The recommendations highlight the most critical areas in which UNDP could bolster its developmental contribution in this field. Bearing in mind its comparative advantages in the area of democratic governance, UNDP is presented with significant opportunities to support the human development of women and men in programme countries through a more explicit and integrated focus on local governance.

Conclusion 1: UNDP has not fully capitalized on the comparative advantage it has in strengthening local governance.

The analytical framework of human development and human security as well as human rights developed and championed by UNDP (that draws attention to enhancing people's capabilities) gives the organization a distinct advantage in advocating and promoting the practice of local governance and is a powerful context for local governance reforms. However, UNDP has not always used human development as an organizing frame for strengthening and assessing the outcomes of local governance initiatives. Nor have these perspectives been systematically integrated into efforts at promoting local governance reforms. UNDP has tended to view its interventions in local governance as an end rather than as the necessary means to an end.

Despite the credibility and trust it enjoys with national Governments, UNDP has not systematically attempted to engage in dialogue with all the ministries with which it partners to more broadly promote the practice of local governance. In most instances, UNDP interactions have been confined to the particular ministry promoting local governance. UNDP has been much less successful and effective in promoting decentralization and local governance across other sectoral line ministries, be it health, education, rural development or the environment. This is partly because the idea of local governance and its importance have not yet been fully internalized within UNDP, or therefore, within Governments.

Although virtually all bureaux and programme units deal with issues of local governance, UNDP has not been able to establish systems that promote better communication and exchange of ideas and experience across its various bureaux and their sub-units. As a result, mainstreaming and integration of the idea of local governance across practice areas have been uneven, limited and deficient. That has been particularly so at headquarters, where the work of the various bureaux and their sub-units remains compartmentalized. Analyses of lessons learned of the rich experience of UNDP in the area of local governance and decentralization have not been systematically done by all regional bureaux and practice areas.

Conclusion 2: The contribution of UNDP has been limited by the absence of a common understanding and sufficient corporate guidance on strengthening local governance.

There has been little consistency and common understanding of local governance within UNDP. Ambiguity has surrounded the usage of terms such as local development, local economic development, local area development, local territorial development, regional development, local human development, and local sustainable development, and local governments, subnational governments and local authorities. Similarly, whereas decentralization and local governance

are different processes, the dynamics of both processes have not always been fully understood. Available toolkits and briefing notes have offered limited guidance on a few topics, but have not provided the overarching framework within which to address issues of local governance. UNDP relevance has been further diminished by the failure to develop adequate knowledge products that distil experiences to inform policy-makers and practitioners in Governments and communities. This has led to UNDP 'losing its voice and importance' especially when there are other donors offering much larger funds and expertise in support of local governance.

Conclusion 3: Outcomes from UNDP support to local governance have been mixed. Whereas some initiatives have had a significant national impact, others have tended to be ad hoc and isolated, not systematic and strategic.

Bureaux within UNDP have showcased numerous examples of support to local governance that have been innovative, effective and have benefited a large number of local communities. There have been instances where pilot projects have been scaled up nationally and the UNDP leadership role has been widely acknowledged. At the same time, there have also been projects that have had very limited impact for a variety of reasons. UNDP has often failed to ensure national ownership (not merely government ownership) of local government reforms. What has been responsible for the limited impact has been the failure to develop a strategic plan and vision for countries of UNDP support for local governance for the constructive engagement of Governments and non-state actors. Even where such a plan and vision have existed, faulty design, limited buy-in from Governments, poor advocacy, insufficient resources for scaling up, and inadequate capacity within UNDP and outside have limited the impact of local governance reforms. Scaling up of projects does not happen where insufficient efforts have been made during the planning and implementation stages to link such initiatives with national efforts. Local governance interventions need to be viewed as part of a broader system, determined by national legislation, decentralization and other policies and power relations. Interventions targeted only at the community or local government level may benefit but this will have a limited impact unless they are tied in with larger efforts at reforming legal and policy frameworks, public administration and human resource management.

Conclusion 4: UNDP has paid insufficient attention to establishing entitlements for men and women, especially for the poor and marginalized, to ensuring effective responsiveness from subnational governments to demands made by communities, and to engaging with non-state actors.

Local governance initiatives have sought to improve the lives of the poor, especially the marginalized, the socially discriminated and disadvantaged groups in society. Such a focus on men and women and their well-being—the essence of the human development approach—has often been lost in the preoccupation of UNDP with activities, processes and project objectives. As a result, UNDP local governance initiatives have often shied away from an explicit focus on improving representation and empowerment of poor and marginalized groups or service delivery for the disadvantaged. Furthermore, UNDP has yet to crystallize the lessons learned from various experiments and work out effective modalities of support and partnership with subnational governments and non-state actors.

There are a number of modalities through which UNDP can engage with CSOs both in policy dialogue and project implementation. However, many Country Offices have not systematically identified opportunities for strategic engagement with non-state actors in order to strengthen local governance even where the potential exists. As a result, many CSO partnerships remain 'stand-alone' initiatives; they are seldom viewed as strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing democratic (local) governance and poverty reduction. Similarly, UNDP has not pro-actively supported non-state actors by encouraging establishment of necessary legal and regulatory frameworks, building their capacity, and creating national and subnational

NGO platforms for enhancing their contribution to strengthening local governance. As a result, their potential to work closely for the empowerment of poor and disadvantaged communities and to bring about improved accountability in service delivery by correcting imbalances and inefficiencies in resource allocations has not been tapped fully.

Conclusion 5: UNDP has not been able to tap the extensive knowledge on local governance within the organization for better programming.

Few institutions engaged in local governance could have the rich experience that UNDP has in the field. Despite the advantage of working in over a 150 countries and in very diverse settings, UNDP has not yet established itself as a knowledge organization where the experience of its managers is systematically captured, analyzed, organized, distilled into collective intelligence and made available for use within and outside the organization. Country offices have not been able to tap effectively into the wealth of UNDP experience either through the regional service centres or headquarters. Communication between and within bureaux and other programme units has also been limited. Although virtually all bureaux and programme units have dealt with issues of local governance, the different bureaux (especially the Bureau for Development Policy, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Partnership Bureau) have pursued different approaches and have had only limited cooperation and contact with each other. Most groups and divisions seem to have been working in their own silos without using local governance as the common platform to come together and think strategically. Systems have not been fully in place for disseminating and sharing learning within the organization and with external partners. Knowledge products have not been produced regularly and systematically to cover the wide range of topics under local governance. Formal and informal networks have been established, but they have not been sufficiently servicing managers within UNDP or policymakers and practitioners outside the organization. Failure to tap effectively into the knowledge base has deeply hindered the effectiveness of the organization in its efforts at strengthening local governance.

Conclusion 6: The absence of a strategic framework of cooperation with its associated funds and programmes at the corporate level as well as at the country level has limited the potential to maximize results.

Joint programming and collaboration have not developed into a strategic partnership for advancing the respective corporate missions based on a careful assessment of opportunities, roles and responsibilities. Despite the long tradition of partnering with UNCDF and UNV, joint efforts at strengthening local governance have been constrained by the frequent absence of strategic partnerships, particularly at the country level. Even where such agreements have existed, collaboration has often been reduced to a management arrangement for project implementation. At the project level, the absence of a mutually agreed upon framework specifying the roles and responsibilities of the partners at the country level has limited the effectiveness of the partnership.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNDP should more explicitly and effectively mainstream local governance into all its programmatic areas of support by developing a coherent framework that is firmly grounded in the practice of human development.

UNDP should develop a unified framework that identifies and establishes the many linkages of the essential constituents of local governance with human development. Central to such an exercise will be the articulation of theories of change that underscore the different connections between various local governance reform measures and an expansion of human capabilities. That should help UNDP to look beyond processes and projects that promote participation, market-led development, biodiversity, etc., to more tangible outcomes such as political empowerment, greater voice for the disadvantaged, transparency and accountability as well as promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the poor, peace and security, and conflict prevention.

Such an overarching framework for local governance should be informed by learning from the rich and diverse experience of UNDP in this area. While developing such a framework, it will be important to keep in mind that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach may dilute the relevance, hamper local ownership and adversely affect the sustainability of local governance reforms. Guidance notes need to be updated and revised based on the wealth of existing UNDP knowledge and experience in the field of local governance, and new ones need to be developed to address different aspects of local governance and decentralization in different contexts.

Recommendation 2: In developing new pilot initiatives on local governance, UNDP should be more rigorous in ensuring that they can be, and are, upscaled in support of broader policy and programmatic development results.

UNDP should invest more thoroughly in the development of pilot initiatives in order to ensure their success. At the outset, that would involve conducting in-depth problem analysis and involving the central Government, subnational governments, local communities, non-state actors and other development partners in order to establish the initiative's potential for success. That approach will facilitate the development of mechanisms that will support the upscaling of the pilot initiative and the sustainability of its benefits. It would imply the establishment of rigorous planning frameworks, including meaningful indicators, baselines and targets. It would also require regular monitoring and evaluation, including of unintended effects, and involving all stakeholders, in order to learn from experience as the project is implemented. Finally, exit strategies should be clearly defined and implemented and lessons learned documented as upscaling, in most cases, will be led by national authorities with the support of other partners.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should more proactively and systematically collate, codify, analyze, distil and disseminate the lessons learned from the extensive experience it has in the field of local governance.

UNDP needs to more systematically produce knowledge products that distil the lessons learned from its vast experience in local governance across diverse and difficult settings. The extensive body of knowledge regarding local governance should be properly codified, collated and analysed. Where such documentation and analyses exist, effective mechanisms should be established for bureaux and managers within UNDP and outside to tap them effectively and systematically.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should strengthen its partnerships with its associated funds and programmes in order to enhance the effectiveness of its initiatives in local governance.

UNDP should take measures to further strengthen and streamline corporate arrangements for deepening local governance in partnerships with the associated funds and programmes. In order to improve the effectiveness of their partnership, at the country level, UNDP and UNCDF should jointly develop a long-term strategic plan for local governance which is consistent with and integral to national development plans and priorities. That would help in more systematically addressing deficiencies in capacity-building and resource mobilization that arise and adversely affect sustainability. Better understanding and communication of the roles and responsibilities of UNDP and UNCDF would help to reduce inefficiencies in operations. They should work on improving advocacy and lobbying functions, both within the United Nations and outside.

The UNDP partnership with UNV at the country level should move beyond project collaboration and become more strategic based on a shared long-term vision of strengthening local governance. UNDP needs to make a more explicit commitment to the mandates of UNV, and not view the partnership merely as a management arrangement. In other words, UNDP should commit itself to partnering with UNV, on mainstreaming volunteerism for the many benefits that such mainstreaming brings to people, while ensuring that the deployment of volunteers builds local capacities in a sustainable manner.

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Local governance is a key area of UNDP work. From a UNDP perspective, local governance is supported as a critical mechanism in empowering sub-national levels of society to ensure that local people participate in, and benefit from their own governance institutions and development services. Institutions of decentralization, local governance and urban/rural development aim to bring policy formulation, service delivery and resource management within the purview of men and women.

Local governance has been an integral theme of the first and second MYFFs, covering the periods 2000–2003 and 2004–2007, respectively. The new Strategic Plan (2008–2013) takes forward UNDP's work in local governance. In particular, in focusing on 'strengthening responsive governing institutions' (the second key results area of the Strategic Plan's second goal, which is dedicated to 'fostering democratic governance'), the Strategic Plan covers issues of local governance. UNDP's support in the area of local governance encompasses the review and reform of policies and legislation; capacity development (especially for local government planning and fiscal management); and inclusive systems of consultation with local communities that involve women and ethnic minorities. The issue of local governance is given importance under all four goals of the Strategic Plan.

Preliminary evidence indicates that UNDP support to local governance has increased significantly over the past two decades. Between 2000 and 2007, approximately 1,100 local governance-related projects were implemented in 110 countries. During the period of the second MYFF, a budget of $1.4 billion was allocated to local governance-related activities at the country level, and additional initiatives were conducted at the regional and global levels.[63]

This evaluation will review the work of UNDP over the course of the last two MYFFs in supporting programme countries in the area of local governance, and will be forward looking with regard to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The evaluation will assess the contribution of other UNDP units, including the BDP, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Partnership Bureau and the regional bureaux, in providing support or managing initiatives in these areas. Moreover, the evaluation will also be conducted in close cooperation with UNDP's partners on local governance-related issues, in particular the UNCDF and UNV.

The evaluation was approved as part of the programme of work of the UNDP Evaluation Office at the September 2008 session of the Executive Board, in Decision 2008/31.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation will be to facilitate the Executive Board's review of UNDP local governance-related activities and achievements over the past decade, and provide strategic inputs into its deliberations on the role of local governance in the future work programme of UNDP.

[63] This budgetary figure only refers to UNDP activities explicitly reported in the context of decentralization and local governance. Other decentralization and local governance-type activities have been reported in the context of poverty reduction, crisis prevention and management, and other UNDP areas of work which are more difficult to capture.

The evaluation will also provide UNDP management with conclusions and recommendations that are expected to assist in identifying strategies and operational approaches to further strengthen UNDP development effectiveness through its support to local governance, in coordination with its development partners.

III. OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Ascertain the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP support to local governance;
- Clarify the strategic role of UNDP vis-à-vis other development partners in providing local governance-related support to programme countries;
- Provide actionable recommendations on UNDP strategies, polices, approaches and interventions for local governance.

IV. SCOPE AND PRELIMINARY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Thematic evaluations provide an opportunity to evaluate UNDP programmes in a strategically important thematic area from a global strategic perspective. The evaluation is, therefore, global, covering relevant programmes at the global, regional and country level covering Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The evaluation covers programmes that were ongoing during the period 2000–2009, but because the enterprise management system (ATLAS) data base of UNDP was rolled out only in 2004, and due to the limited availability of specific programme and project-related data prior to that date, the principal focus of the evaluation will be from 2004, the beginning of the second MYFF onwards.

In evaluating UNDP contribution to local governance since 2000, the conceptual framework is provided by the first and second MYFFs. However, the Strategic Plan approved by the UNDP Executive Board in 2008[64] constituted the primary frame of reference for the evaluation. Local governance remains an important approach to the achievement of the democratic governance objectives stated therein as follows:

> 'To consolidate and deepen democracy, free and fair elections must go hand in hand with efforts to support all people in attaining the opportunity to participate in the decisions affecting their lives. Local, regional and national Governments must use their capacity and resources to deliver effective economic and social policies that promote human development and manage the public services that citizens expect. Moreover governance needs to be grounded in the principles of human rights, transparency and honesty, and gender equality embodied in the United Nations Charter and internationally agreed mandates …. UNDP democratic governance initiatives are designed to support the efforts of programme countries to enhance participation in public policy dialogues and decision-making.'[65]

In evaluating UNDP support in local governance, these expected results will provide an overall orientation for the inquiry. The following are six issue-areas that need to be addressed by this evaluation:

1. In a highly decentralized programming environment, how does UNDP make strategic decisions on where, how and to what extent to engage in decentralization and the strengthening of local governance?

[64] Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA, `UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008 -2011, Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development Updated Pursuant to Decision 2007/32', June 2008.

[65] Ibid, paragraphs 84–87.

2. Is there any evidence of a common approach or philosophy applied by UNDP to local governance? Does the range of programme activities lend itself to the greater substantive development of product lines and substantive approaches for different economic and developmental environments as well more centralized substantive technical support and backstopping.
3. What value added does engagement with UNDP on local governance provide to Government and civil society? How does UNDP deliver this value added and what can realistically be done to increase the value added that it provides?
4. What partnerships have been forged by UNDP in the delivery of local governance assistance? What are these partnerships based on and what roles do the different partners play?
5. Significant resources have been channelled through UNDP for local governance over the period in question. What results have been produced? To what extent and how has UNDP assistance fostered greater decentralization and strengthened local governance? To what extent and how has UNDP assistance for local governance contributed to the achievement of other corporate objectives such as poverty reduction, gender equality, and the achievement of MDGs?
6. How can relevance, effectiveness and efficiency be raised with a view to strengthening the contribution of UNDP to development results through local governance?

Local governance activities are not universal in UNDP country programmes. In order to ensure that the evaluation can draw conclusions from programmes that have a degree of critical mass and have significant national ownership, the exercise will focus on country programmes in which UNDP pays particular importance to local governance activities, eliminating only those countries in which local governance interventions have been sporadic and not a significant cornerstone of UNDP support.

The contribution of UNDP units, including the Bureau for Development Policy, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, the Partnerships Bureau and regional bureau in providing support or managing initiatives in these areas will be reviewed, as well as the contributions resulting from key partnerships with other entities reporting to the Administrator of UNDP, most notably UNCDF, UNIFEM and UNV.

The evaluation will proceed on the understanding that all UNDP activities achieve results in partnership with other entities including government agencies, multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental entities. Particular attention will be paid to assessing partnership with other United Nations agencies and multilateral organizations such as UN-HABITAT, FAO, the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and the Regional Development Banks.

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the programmes have contributed to the achievement of strategic objectives as stated in the Strategic Plan, the MYFFs and relevant programme frameworks including Country Programmes, Regional Programmes and the Global Programme. In doing so, the evaluation will seek to assess the extent to which the UNDP approach has evolved and to what extent it has drawn on key intellectual products from outside the organization as well as from within.

Taking into account the above, the evaluation will assess local governance programmes and projects based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance and strategic positioning:** The evaluation will seek to draw conclusions as to how UNDP has positioned itself vis-à-vis Governments and their programmes as well as other development agencies and CSOs to maximise its relevance and leverage within the sphere of local governance.
- **Responsiveness:** Local governance is as political as it is technical. Adaptability and rapidity of action and responsiveness to changing conditions and needs are as important

to the achievement of lasting results as sound design. The evaluation will assess implementation from this standpoint and seek to draw lessons from different modalities applied.

- **Effectiveness:** The evaluation will assess performance of the programme in terms of its achievement of results at the outcome level and above. The evaluation will also seek to assess the extent of national ownership, how UNDP has gone about maximizing it and the way in which it has affected the results achieved.
- **Efficiency:** The evaluation will assess the modalities applied with a view to assessing efficiencies in terms of timeliness in implementation as well as, to the extent possible, cost efficiencies of the modalities themselves.
- **Sustainability:** Local governance programmes involve long-term capacity building. The sustainability of programmes is centrally important to the outcomes and impact of such programmes. The evaluation will evaluate the sustainability of UNDP interventions and factors that enhance or undermine long-term sustainability of institutions and of local residents,
- **Gender:** To what extent and in what way has UNDP cooperation in the implementation of local governance affected the role and economic and social status of women?
- **Partnership and Coordination:** This evaluation operates on the understanding that all of the intended outcomes of UNDP programmes are to be achieved in partnership with other stakeholders. The evaluation will evaluate the nature, extent and modalities of such partnerships and the way in which UNDP has coordinated with key stakeholders.

V. PRELIMINARY APPROACH

In view of the complexity of UNDP support to local governance, the evaluation will seek to obtain data from a range of sources, including through desk reviews and document analyses, surveys and questionnaires, as well as stakeholder consultations, interviews and focus groups at UNDP headquarters and in a range of programme countries, and other relevant institutions or locations. The rationale for using a range of data sources (data, perceptions, evidence) is to triangulate findings in a situation where much of the data, due to the very nature of UNDP work in local governance, is qualitative, and its interpretation thus critically dependent on the evaluators' judgment. Triangulation provides an important tool in shoring up evidence by using different data sources to inform the analysis of specific issues.

Where possible and appropriate, the evaluation should seek to obtain evidence as to what may or may not have occurred in the absence of UNDP work in local governance. Some programme countries may not have benefited from UNDP support in this area for a range of reasons. Such programmes may thus serve to provide insights into the relative value added of UNDP work in local governance.

The evaluation will be based on the following sources of data: (i) in-depth country analysis; and (ii) interviews with key personnel in UNDP and other partner agencies.

Country-level analyses should include the following:

- A review of ADR reports;
- Outcome evaluation reports;
- A scan of local governance programmes and projects. This scan will assist in (i) determining the availability of data on which to base the evaluation, (ii) obtaining a better understanding of the overall profile of local governance programmes and projects, as well as trends in implementation over the past decade, (iii) developing operational categories for the evaluation, and (iv) defining a sampling methodology for case studies.
- In-depth studies of programme countries, including desk-based studies and country case studies.

Supplementary interviews may include:

- Semi-structured 'outsider' stakeholder group or individual interviews with, inter alia, representatives of political parties; civil society activists; women's groups; and independent intellectuals, including journalists, academics and think tanks; and other multilateral and bilateral agencies not directly collaborating with UNDP on local governance with a view to obtaining broad information on the performance of local governance efforts in the country.
- Semi-structured 'insider' stakeholder group or individual interviews with, e.g., government officials, direct beneficiaries of UNDP local governance programmes, UNDP project personnel, and UNDP Country Office personnel, United Nations personnel in agencies directly collaborating with UNDP on local governance, bilateral donors, and NGO or agency counterparts involved with UNDP local governance projects and programmes.
- Headquarters and other interviews to validate findings and to gather insights into the operational and other dimensions of UNDP efforts at strengthening local governance.

Stakeholders will be consulted during different phases of the evaluation in order to (i) ensure an adequate understanding of the nature of UNDP local governance work in general terms, as well as in different countries and circumstances, (ii) validate the overall evaluation approach, (iii) ensure that the evaluation report is factually correct and contains no errors of interpretation, and (iv) facilitate the formulation of conclusions and recommendations that are relevant and utilization-focused.

VI. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

In keeping with its basic mandate, the Evaluation Office will have overall responsibility for the content and production of the evaluation report and its presentation to the Executive Board. The Evaluation Office will manage the evaluation process, put in place a quality assurance system, provide administrative and substantive backstopping support, and ensure the coordination and liaison with concerned agencies at headquarters as well as the country level. It will also ensure that evaluations are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System, as approved by the members of the United Nations Evaluation Group on 19 July 2007.

OPERATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

A Task Manager will be designated by the Evaluation Office to provide administrative and substantive technical support to the Evaluation Team and will work particularly closely with the Evaluation Team Leader throughout the evaluation. An Evaluation Associate will be recruited to work in the Evaluation Office to support the Task Manager and Team Leader with background research and analysis as necessary to support the work of the Evaluation Team. An Evaluation Office Programme Associate will be assigned to provide logistical support throughout the evaluation.

In each country designated as a case study, a substantive focal point will be identified in the UNDP country office. That person will, in close collaboration with the Task Manager, coordinate and organize meetings and all activities of the evaluation within the country. Similarly, relevant UNDP bureaux will nominate a focal point who will provide support in coordinating queries and facilitating the collection of information.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

This evaluation and will be undertaken with the close involvement of Evaluation Office Senior Management, comprising the Director and Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office. In view of the complexity and importance of this evaluation, Evaluation Office Senior Management will review progress on a periodic basis as well as each of the key designated outputs and provide regular feedback to the evaluation team.

A team of designated Evaluation Office staff will be set up to ensure that Evaluation Office and UNEG quality standards, pertaining to both the process and the evaluation outputs or milestones, are adhered to.

An external Advisory Panel will be established, consisting of 3 leading authorities in the field of evaluation and local governance. The Advisory Panel will play an important role in providing strategic, methodological and substantive inputs into the evaluation process as well as a peer review for the key outputs including the main report. The panel members will not be part of the Evaluation Team, but will collectively support the Evaluation Office in assuring the quality of the evaluation.

THE EVALUATION TEAM

The Evaluation Team will consist of externally recruited, independent, senior consultants with strong reputations and extensive experience in their fields. The Evaluation Team will consist of a Team Leader and up to three Senior International Consultants and one to two Regional or National Consultants per case study.

- The Team Leader will take a lead role during all phases of the evaluation and coordinate the work of all other team members. He/she will ensure the quality of the evaluation process, outputs, methodology and timely delivery of all products. The Team Leader, in close collaboration with the other Evaluation Team members, leads the conceptualization and designs the evaluation and plays a lead role in shaping the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report.
- Up to three Senior Evaluation Consultants with strong development management, governance and/or evaluation backgrounds will be recruited to participate in the inception workshop, the pilot case study and the main phase of the evaluation. Each Senior Evaluation Consultant will contribute to designing the evaluation, will provide inputs into the inception report, will lead one or more country case studies and be responsible for the preparation of country case study reports, based on a standardized approach and format. Each Senior Evaluation Consultant will, under the overall supervision of the Team Leader, contribute to the preparation of the final report and evaluation brief as necessary.
- One to two Regional or National Consultants will be recruited per case study country and, working closely with the country-office focal point in consultation with the Task Manager and Team Leader, be responsible for the collection of all relevant data and preparation of the case study mission. The National Consultant will contribute substantively to the work of the Senior Evaluation Consultant, providing substantive advice and context in the preparation of the county case studies. Under the supervision of the Senior Evaluation Consultant, the National Consultant will participate in the preparation of the country case study report.

Annex 2

EVALUATION MATRIX

KEY Evaluative Questions by Performance Dimension
Performance Dimension
Relevance and Strategic Positioning
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. In a highly decentralized programming environment, how does UNDP make strategic decisions on where, how and to what extent to engage in strengthening of local governance (local governance)? 2. Is there any evidence of a common approach or philosophy applied by UNDP to local governance? Does the range of programme activities lend itself to the greater substantive development of product lines and substantive approaches for different economic and developmental environments as well as more centralized substantive technical support and backstopping? 3. To what extent do UNDP local governance programmes benefit from and promote national ownership?
Sub Questions
1. What are the factors that have determined UNDP strategic positioning and are there common features within country types? 2. What process is followed in the development of country strategy and what key factors have influenced the selection and prioritization process? 3. What evidence is there that products developed by UNDP have been applied? 4. Are there significant differences in approaches and programmes between the categories of countries identified? 5. To what extent are Government actors and agencies committed to local governance? 6. Is UNDP thematic work in local governance anchored in national objectives and does it contribute to a larger national plan? To what extent is Government commitment reflected in national plans, policies and resource allocations? 7. To what degree is local governance a national priority as well as a UNDP corporate priority? 8. Do the UNDP programmes contribute to addressing key developmental bottlenecks? 9. Do UNDP interventions address national policy as well as downstream programmes?
Sources of Information
Political, social and economic analyses prepared by UNDP, other agencies, think tanks or independent academic sources. UNDP strategy and concept notes. UNDP Country Programme Action Plans/Country Programme Document. Interviews with UNDP senior management Government, political parties, and other stakeholders, programmes and agencies and bilateral institutions and national CSOs. Media analyses.
Method of Assessment
Desk review; meta-evaluation; semi-structured interviews in case studies; survey.

KEY Evaluative Questions by Performance Dimension
Performance Dimension
Responsiveness
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. Is UNDP programme responsive to changing needs?
Sub Questions
1. What needs have changed over the evaluation period and how did the UNDP programme respond?
2. What evidence is there of UNDP agility/nimbleness?
Sources of Information
Programme documentation. Third party political and economic analyses. Interviews with key Government and UNDP personnel.
Method of Assessment
Desk review. Meta-evaluation. Semi-structured interviews in case studies.

Performance Dimension
Effectiveness
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. To what degree has UNDP succeeded in strengthening local governance?
Sub Questions
1. To what extent did UNDP achieve its stated objectives?
2. What are the major factors that have influenced the achievement?
Sources of Information
Interviews with beneficiaries, partners. Programme monitoring and evaluation data.
Method of Assessment
Desk review; meta-evaluation; semi-structured interviews in case studies.

Performance Dimension
Efficiency
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. Are UNDP local governance programmes efficient?
Sub Questions
1. How efficiently have UNDP internal communications and knowledge management systems on local governance related issues supported programme development and delivery?
2. Did the programme maximize the use of national capacities?
Sources of Information
Programme documentation, programme monitoring data, key partners. Delivery data.
Method of Assessment
Review of aggregate programme data, interviews with partners.

KEY Evaluative Questions by Performance Dimension
Performance Dimension
Sustainability
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. Has UNDP assistance resulted in the establishment of capacity on a sustainable basis?
Sub Questions
1. Are the changes introduced durable and are they likely to endure beyond the duration of UNDP assistance?
2. Is there evidence of greater ownership of local governance initiatives at national and lower levels?
3. What factors undermine the retention of capacity?
4. Has UNDP clearly defined an exit strategy for its activities and has it been implemented/is it implementable?
Sources of Information
Programme documentation. Key partners and stakeholders. Government budget information and national plans.
Method of Assessment
Review of programme documentation, semi-structured interviews in case studies.

Performance Dimension
Gender
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. How has UNDP support for local governance affected the status and role of women in development?
Sub Questions
1. To what extent and in what way have women been empowered as a result of UNDP support for local governance?
2. How and to what degree have local governance programmes affected the socio-economic role and standing of women?
Sources of Information
Programme documentation. Key partners and stakeholders. Service delivery data.
Method of Assessment
Third party evaluations. Semi-structured interviews.

KEY Evaluative Questions by Performance Dimension
Performance Dimension
Intellectual leadership/substantive credibility.
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. Has the UNDP been able to provide credible intellectual and substantive leadership in the area of local governance?
Sub Questions
1. How effective has UNDP advocacy been in generating change in the achievement of MDGs, poverty reduction, social empowerment, gender, equity and the other cross-cutting themes in the context of local governance?
2. How are the substantive products used by stakeholders and counterparts?
3. What is the quality of UNDP substantive programme support capacity and what are its shortcomings?
Sources of Information
Review of issues papers, country assessments, country reviews, national or regional human development reports. Review of MDG documentation. Interviews with United Nations senior management, World Bank, bilateral and other multilateral donors. Interviews with civil society actors and Government.
Method of Assessment
Desk review; semi-structured interviews.

Performance Dimension
Partnership and Coordination
Overall Evaluative Questions
1. What is the nature of the partnerships established between UNDP and other stakeholders in its support for local governance?
Sub Questions
1. How were UNDP 'comparative advantages' perceived/interpreted and were these reflected in the division of responsibilities?
Sources of Information
Review of project documents, progress reports, Resident Coordinator reports, minutes of coordination meetings, review of substantive documentation. Interviews with all relevant national and international partners. Interview with key counterpart government agencies responsible for coordination.
Method of Assessment
Semi-structured group and individual interviews; survey; desk review.

Annex 3

COUNTRIES REVIEWED

	Countries	Scan Countries	Assessment of Development Results	Outcome Evaluations	In-depth Review	Illustrative Case Studies
Regional Bureau for Africa						
1	Benin		X			
2	Botswana		X			
3	Burkina Faso		X			
4	Cote d'Ivoire	X		X		
5	Comoros	X		X		X
6	Ethiopia	X			X	
7	Mali	X				X
8	Mozambique	X	X	X	X	
9	Sao Tome et Principe	X				
10	Republic of Congo		X			
11	Rwanda		X			
12	Seychelles		X			
13	Sierra Leone	X				X
14	South Africa	X				
15	Uganda		X			
Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific						
16	Afghanistan	X	X	X		
17	Bangladesh	X	X	X	X	
18	Bhutan	X	X	X	X	
19	Cambodia	X	X		X	
20	China		X			
21	India	X		X		
22	Indonesia	X	X	X		
23	Kiribati	X				
24	Lao PDR	X	X			
25	Maldives		X	X		
26	Nepal	X		X	X	
27	Pakistan	X				
28	Philippines	X	X	X		
29	Papua New Guinea	X				X
30	Solomon Islands	X				
31	Sri Lanka	X				
32	Thailand	X				
33	Tuvalu	X				

	Countries	Scan Countries	Assessment of Development Results	Outcome Evaluations	In-depth Review	Illustrative Case Studies
Regional Bureau for Arab States						
34	Algeria	X				
35	Iraq	X				
36	Jordan		X			
37	Morocco	X		X	X	
38	Sudan	X		X		
39	Yemen	X	X	X		
Regional Bureau for Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States						
40	Albania	X				
41	Armenia	X				
42	Bosnia Herzegovina	X	X			
43	Croatia	X				
44	Georgia		X			
45	Kosovo	X				
46	Kyrgyzstan	X		X	X	
47	Macedonia	X		X		
48	Moldova	X		X		
49	Montenegro		X			
50	Serbia	X	X	X		
51	Tajikistan	X	X	X	X	
52	Turkey	X	X	X		
53	Uzbekistan	X	X		X	
54	Ukraine	X	X	X		X
Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean						
55	Argentina		X			
56	Barbados		X			
57	Bolivia	X		X		X
58	Brazil	X				
59	Chile		X			
60	Colombia	X	X	X		
61	Ecuador	X	X	X		
62	El Salvador	X				
63	Guatemala		X			
64	Guyana		X			
65	Honduras	X	X			
66	Jamaica		X			
67	Nicaragua	X	X	X	X	
68	Peru		X			
69	Venezuela	X				
All regions						
	Total	**50**	**38**	**24**	**11**	**6**

Annex 4

PEOPLE CONSULTED

UNDP NEW YORK

Mohammed Al-Sharif, Assistant Resident Representative, Regional Bureau for Arab States

Tuya Altangerel, Policy Specialist, Poverty Reduction Group, Bureau for Development Policy

Fabrizio Andreuzzi, Programme Specialist, Disaster Reduction, Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Niloy Banerjee, Senior Policy Adviser, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy

José M. Bendito, Donor Relations Adviser, Division for Resources Mobilization, Bureau of Partnership

Edwine Carrie, Programme Analyst, Regional Bureau for Arab States

Alessandra Castazza, Policy Specialist, Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy

David Clapp, Programme Adviser, Iraq Trust Fund, Regional Bureau for Arab States

Garry Conille, Chief of Staff, Poverty Reduction Group, Bureau for Development Policy

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Director, Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy

Delfin Ganapin, Global Manager, Energy Group, Bureau for Development Policy

Dafina Gercheva, Capacity Development, Practice Leader, Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

Albana Gjuzi, Programme Specialist, Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States

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