



ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS
EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

REPUBLIC OF THE
CONGO

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ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

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FOREWORD

This is an independent country-level evaluation, conducted by the Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Republic of the Congo. This Assessment of Development Results (ADR) examines the relevance and strategic positioning of UNDP support and its contributions to the country's development from 2004 to 2007. It assesses UNDP interventions under the various thematic areas of the four-year country programme, with the aim of providing forward-looking recommendations meant to assist the UNDP country office and its partners in the formulation of programmes for the next cycle (2009–2013).

The report examines the context in which UNDP operates in the Republic of the Congo, mainly with regard to economic and human development. In addition, it assesses the relevance of UNDP interventions to national priorities, as well as the UNDP role within the national development aid community.

Since 1991, the Republic of the Congo has been engaged in a transition towards multiparty democracy and a market economy. The transition was marred during the nineties by repeated civil conflicts between largely ethnic-based militia groups. The country emerged from the civil wars only in 2000, and has started a reconciliation and rebuilding process that is well advanced but still not completed.

Despite booming income derived from oil extraction and export, the socio-economic situation of the Republic of the Congo remains a serious concern. There is a disconnect between two main economies. One is modern, dynamic, export-oriented and based mainly on the oil and wood industries, while the other is more traditional, based on subsistence agriculture, small businesses and services, and a large civil service sector. The result is a relatively good standing in per

capita GDP, combined with acute poverty and a low human development index, under which the country ranks 139th out of 177.

This evaluation report concludes that UNDP interventions in the Republic of the Congo correspond to expressed national priorities and to the broad corporate parameters of the organization. UNDP has made judicious decisions in selecting its areas of intervention, but it is now time to question the pertinence of continuing post-conflict types of activities beyond the current programme cycle. The evaluation recommends that the next country programme build upon the demonstrated comparative advantages of UNDP in the Republic of the Congo. These include UNDP support for good governance, its pro-poor and community development approach, its regional approach to environmental issues and its strong advocacy capability. UNDP should gradually phase out activities directly related to the post-conflict period. Peace-building should become the underlying theme for most activities, particularly those fostering good governance and poverty reduction, and become the central focus of the programme to ensure lasting stability and sustainable development.

A number of people contributed to the evaluation. I would especially like to thank the evaluation team, composed of Carrol Faubert (Team Leader), Abdenour Benbouali and Hyacinthe Defoundoux-Fila. I would also like to offer my thanks to Rajeev Pillay, General Partner of Abacus International Management, the consulting company contracted to undertake the evaluation, who provided substantive guidance and support to the evaluation team. In the Evaluation Office, I would like to thank Michael Reynolds, the evaluation Task Manager, as well as Kutisha Ebron, Thuy Hang To and Anish Pradhan for their administrative support.

The research and preparation of the evaluation were completed thanks to the collaboration and openness of the staff of the UNDP country office in the Republic of the Congo, led by Resident Representative Aurelien Agbenonci, Violet Kakyomya, Deputy Resident Representative, and Emelyne Mahanda, who acted as the country office focal point for the evaluation in its early stages. I would also like to thank the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, particularly Ade Mamonyane Lekoetje.

This report would not have been possible without the commitment and support of numerous officials from the Government of the Republic of the Congo. In particular, I would like to thank Jean-Baptiste Ondaie, Director General for Planning and Development, who has been the main UNDP counterpart and has provided

valuable insights for the evaluation. The team is also indebted to representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations, donor countries and the United Nations Country Team, including those from international financial institutions, who generously gave their time and frank views.

I hope that the findings and recommendations of this report will assist UNDP in responding to the country's challenges and provide broader lessons that may be of relevance to UNDP and its partners internationally.



Saraswathi Menon
Director, Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB/ADF	African Development Bank/African Development Fund
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAP	Centre for Project Execution and Support (Centre d'exécution et d'appui aux projets)
CIB	Compagnie Industrielle du Bois (private-sector enterprise, wood industry)
CNR	Council for National Resistance (Conseil national de la Résistance)
DEX	Direct execution modality
GDP	Gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCP	Interim Post-Conflict Programme
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEX	National execution modality
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NICT	New information and communication technology
PCAD	Collection of Small Arms for Development Project (Projet de Collecte des Armes pour le Développement)
PRAEBASE	Basic Education Support Programme (Projet d'Appui à l'Éducation de Base)
PRESJAR	Community Action Project for Community Recovery and Social Reintegration of Youth at Risk (Projet d'Action Communautaire pour le Relèvement des Communautés et la Réintégration Sociale des Jeunes à Risque)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SARIS	Société Agricole de Raffinement Industriel du Sucre (private-sector enterprise, sugar industry)
SEP/CNLS	Permanent Executive Secretariat/National Council to Fight AIDS and STDs (Secrétariat Exécutif/Conseil National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les IST)
TRAC	Target for resource assignment from the core
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN DPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNICONGO	Inter-professional Union of the Congo (Union Inter-professionnelle du Congo)
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the contribution of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to development results in the Republic of the Congo from 2004 to 2007. It examines the interventions of UNDP under the various thematic areas of the four-year country programme, with the aim of providing forward-looking recommendations meant to assist the UNDP country office and its partners in the formulation of programmes for the next programming cycle (2009–2013). This evaluation process, known as an Assessment of Development Results, was carried out on behalf of the UNDP Evaluation Office by three independent consultants working with Abacus International Management, L.L.C.

The report examines the context in which UNDP operates in the Republic of the Congo, mainly with regard to economic and human development. In addition, the report assesses the relevance of UNDP interventions to national priorities, as well as the role of UNDP within the national development aid community. UNDP programme components and themes are reviewed in terms of results achieved, effectiveness, sustainability and strategic positioning.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Since 1991, the Republic of the Congo has been engaged in a long transition towards multiparty democracy and a market economy. During the nineties, the transition was marked by repeated civil conflicts among largely ethnic-based militia groups. The country emerged from the civil wars only in 2000, when it started a reconciliation and rebuilding process.

While well advanced, this process has not been completed. Parts of the Pool Department, a south-eastern region hard hit by the latest conflict, remain under the control of militias, although violence has subsided. Under the

constitution adopted in 2002, a second round of elections started in 2007 with parliamentary elections. It should be followed by local elections in 2008 and a second presidential election the following year.

Reconciliation and peace remain fragile. However, it is hoped that the second cycle of elections will mark the definitive end of the transition period and indicate the strengthening of inclusive democracy and peace consolidation. This is conditioned on elections taking place without violence, as well as on the electoral process being perceived as fair and transparent.

The socio-economic situation of the Republic of the Congo remains grim, despite booming income derived from oil extraction and export. There is a disconnect between the two main economies. The first, comprising mainly the oil and wood industries, is modern, dynamic and export-oriented. The second economy is more traditional, based largely on subsistence agriculture, small businesses and services, and a large civil service. The result is a relatively good standing in the GDP per capita classification, under which the Republic of the Congo qualifies as a lower middle-income country, with an average income of US\$1,262. The reality behind the statistic, however, is one of acute poverty and a low human development index: the Republic of the Congo ranks 139th out of 177 countries.

The country is also highly indebted. In March 2006, the Republic of the Congo became eligible for debt relief under the International Monetary Fund Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. As part of related discussions, the government committed to a number of reforms, particularly with regard to improving governance in all spheres of public life. Weaknesses in governance represent one of the major obstacles to development, together with human-capacity deficiencies within

the public administration. Reforms will only be possible with a strong political will and determined action on the part of government, as well as sustained international support.

There are major challenges facing the country in its furtherance of peace consolidation. On the socio-economic side, these include attaining sustainable growth and equitable redistribution of wealth. On the socio-political side, the challenge is to move beyond past conflicts and tensions by completing the transition towards an inclusive democratic system that protects the rights of citizens and ensures human security. Meeting these challenges will require far-reaching reforms promoting responsible and transparent governance, coupled with strong and determined political will on the part of leaders at all levels of authority.

UNDP ROLE

During and immediately after the civil conflicts, UNDP operated on an *ad hoc*, project-by-project basis. In September 2003, the Executive Board approved a four-year programme for the period 2004–2007. The programme was subsequently extended by one year for the purpose of harmonizing programming cycles among several United Nations agencies operating in the country.

The programme adopted in 2003 addressed three major themes: good governance, poverty reduction, and environmental and natural-resource management. In addition, three cross-cutting areas were identified for inclusion in all activities: gender, HIV/AIDS, and new information and communications technologies. The programme set out to:

- Increase the capacity of the principal governance institutions, mainly through support that addresses the needs of parliamentary institutions, local authorities and civil society;
- Strengthen capacity for reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on the part of the government and civil society; and

- Strengthen the capacity of national and sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that meet the needs of the poor.

RELEVANCE OF INTERVENTIONS

The evaluation team found that programmes were generally relevant to the strategies and policies of the government and to UNDP corporate objectives. The programmes addressed needs that are important for sustaining the country's efforts of pursuing and completing the transition towards democracy, a free-market economy and social justice.

Surprisingly, the approved country programme did not address conflict prevention and recovery as a separate category of support. Although a number of activities fell under this programming theme, they were subsumed under the theme of poverty reduction. The programmes would have been more coherent, had conflict prevention and recovery been addressed either directly or through an approach that emphasized peace consolidation in all areas of intervention, particularly in governance.

In this respect, it should be noted that the UNDP country office adopted a new approach in an internal restructuring at the beginning of 2007, when it entrusted a dedicated Governance and Peace Consolidation Unit with management responsibility for governance and post-conflict projects.

In addition, the country office had limited UNDP core resources at its disposal. This made it more difficult to use such resources as seed money to attract contributions for important but under-funded activities, particularly the environment programme. In response, the office developed an aggressive and successful fund mobilization strategy. However, some UNDP partners—among the donors and within the government—consider this emphasis on fund mobilization to be excessive.

The government and aid-community partners recognized a number of UNDP interventions as particularly relevant. Projects and areas of activity that represent comparative advantages and should be built upon in the next programme cycle include:

- **Support to the formulation of key national documents related to poverty reduction.** This included two National Human Development Reports and, in close partnership with The World Bank, the interim and final Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. UNDP also assisted the government in producing the 2004 National MDG Report and the near-final national strategy for achieving them;
- **Support to parliamentary institutions** and the effective advocacy it allowed UNDP to mount among parliamentarians on a number of cross-cutting issues, such as gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment;
- **Effective assistance in the development of legislation on political parties and the role of women in politics.** On the legislative side, support was accompanied by concrete operational programmes to train the cadre of political parties and to help establish networks promoting the role of women in politics;
- **Innovative environmental programme** to support conservation, alternative sources of energy and sanitation in large urban areas;
- **Judicious use of high-visibility initiatives and field offices,** such as the public burning of collected weapons as instruments for signalling a return to normalcy across the country (including in more troubled areas) and, despite several operational weaknesses, the continued presence of the United Nations alongside the population; and
- **Effective advocacy campaign,** which used the media, civil society and key institutions, such as the Parliament, to promote a pro-poor agenda.

OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The UNDP country office has implemented a sound and balanced approach that combines upstream

and downstream interventions. The programme also demonstrated a degree of operational synergy, particularly in support provided to parliamentary institutions, which, in turn, became powerful advocacy vehicles. Similar synergies were also evident in several community development projects and the small arms collection programme, which were conducted in Brazzaville and the Pool Department.

Weaker points include:

- *Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues into programming.* There was a deficiency in the inclusion of cross-cutting themes in the initial design of certain projects, although corrective action was generally taken at a later stage;
- *Unfavourable local perception of UNDP.* Despite important efforts towards improving programme delivery, UNDP is viewed as slow to disburse funds, deficient in reporting quality and heavily bureaucratic in management style; and
- *Lacking clarity of outcomes and indicators.* The definitions of outcomes and their indicators remained weak. Available financial and human resources were not sufficient to undertake the monitoring needed for on-demand programme adjustments or meaningful final evaluations. This weakened the capacity of the office to illustrate results and justify donor trust.

SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

Programme sustainability remains the major weakness of UNDP operations in the Republic of the Congo. Numerous projects achieved generally positive results and produced pre-defined material outputs; however, many such projects also failed to produce the intended outcomes or to develop mechanisms that ensure long-term result viability.

With reference to achieving result sustainability, there is a need for a distinction between upstream and downstream interventions.

In many cases, upstream support provided by UNDP had been successful in putting in place the strategy and policy frameworks or the plans of action required. Since the expected outcomes will materialize over time, upstream projects and programmes are sometimes referred to as ‘dormant successes’.

In contrast, the sustainability of downstream projects often depends on the availability of dedicated national or local budgets, the capacity of managers and beneficiaries to develop independent sources of income, and the capacity to manage projects with the goal of maintaining initial results. Most often, such resources and capacities are absent. Consequently, a number of projects, particularly those dealing with infrastructure rehabilitation, are destined for rapid deterioration due to lack of maintenance or the collapse of local management committees.

UNDP needs to address sustainability through a persistent and structured effort at developing and maintaining realistic and measurable means to foster national ownership. Concrete measures are needed to ensure that the country’s institutions and community groups have both the willingness and the capacity to take over long-term responsibility for programmes. In particular, new initiatives are required to cultivate a higher level of government commitment through increased government cost sharing.

POSITIONING AND COORDINATION

UNDP has made judicious decisions in selecting programme interventions. Now that it is time to move forward and adapt to the changing reality of the country, the continued relevance of post-conflict interventions should increasingly be questioned. New interventions should focus on the major challenges faced by the Republic of the Congo a decade after the end of active conflict. Peace consolidation, mainly through focused governance and community development interventions, represents a key requirement in order for the country to move beyond the post-conflict period and the current stabilization phase.

To accomplish this, UNDP needs to be more forceful in building on its comparative advantages in the areas of community development and governance.

A major effort will be required to develop—and at times, mend—relationships with certain members of the development aid community. Current coordination mechanisms should be examined with a view towards improving efficiency and complementarity. This can take the form of a participative exercise among partners.

The accomplishments of the United Nations (UN) Country Team during the preparation of the next United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) can prove particularly meaningful for UNDP efforts to improve its performance in developing results-based programmes for the next cycle. For monitoring and evaluation in particular, the UNDAF should provide opportunities for a clearer identification of measurable outcomes and indicators, as well as for joint programme evaluations with UN partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Twelve recommendations are derived from the analysis contained in this report. These are:

GENERAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

1. The next Republic of the Congo country programme should build upon demonstrated UNDP comparative advantages. These include UNDP support for good governance, pro-poor and community development approaches, a regional approach to environmental issues and strong advocacy capability. UNDP should gradually phase out post-conflict activities.
2. In order to ensure lasting stability and sustainable development, peace consolidation should become the central focus and underlying theme for most UNDP activities, particularly those in good governance and poverty reduction.
3. UNDP should continue to emphasize the linkages between upstream and downstream

approaches, intervening at both political and operational levels in all programmes.

4. Based on experience in other countries, UNDP should engage the government in negotiations aimed at increasing national cost-sharing contributions to at least equal the resources allocated by UNDP.
5. Particular attention needs to be devoted to fostering national ownership and ensuring sustainability. This could include:
 - Greater attention during the project design phase to incorporating a sustainable exit strategy, based on identifying the national mechanisms expected to take over, defining conditions of an effective management transfer and establishing benchmarks for monitoring relevant preparations and the capacity of the chosen national entity;
 - Intensified efforts in national capacity-building through establishing a comprehensive and structured programme in close coordination with the government and other development actors;
 - Continued gradual and prudent approach to increasing the national execution component of programmes; and
 - A clear demonstration of the political will of national authorities in addition to their commitment to assuming ownership of programmes, in particular through increased cost-sharing as outlined in recommendation four above.
6. In close consultation with all partners, UNDP should start to reflect on ways to improve coordination among development actors. This is of particular importance for good governance initiatives, in view of the UNDP intent to further develop its support to some financial oversight and administrative institutions.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

7. The UNDP country office in the Republic of the Congo should vigorously pursue its efforts to improve programme delivery. In addition, measures of rewarding staff efficiency should be established, and the new Centre for Project Execution and Support¹ should be independently evaluated in 2009, after two full years of operation.
8. The formulation of outcomes, indicators and means of verification should be improved. In possible collaboration with donor-partners, the UNDP country office must ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are devoted to monitoring outcomes as well as outputs. In defining outcomes for the next UNDAF, UNDP should build upon inter-agency work and encourage the development of a system-wide approach to outcome monitoring and evaluation.
9. The country office should engage partners in discussions geared towards improving the performance and efficiency of Project Review Committees and Steering Committees.
10. UNDP offices outside Brazzaville need to develop their services for the benefit of both UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. This should include creating open and inclusive coordination hubs at the local level, promoting cross-fertilization, and undertaking activities such as mapping development and humanitarian actors, which was previously done through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
11. More attention should be given to the mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS considerations into the country programme during its initial design phase.
12. While direct environmental interventions should continue, particularly in subregional contexts, the country office's intent to treat such concerns as cross-cutting should be encouraged.

1 Centre d'exécution et d'appui aux projets.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

With a 2005 GDP per capita of \$1,262,² the Republic of the Congo is classified as a lower middle-income country. However, rampant poverty is the reality behind this relative statistical wealth. In an economy heavily dominated by the extraction and export of crude oil, most human development indicators remain low, although some have improved since the country emerged from the three successive civil wars of the 1990s.

In the phase following the return to peace, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concentrated on providing emergency assistance to certain key sectors and was authorized to function on an *ad hoc*, project-by-project basis until 2003. In September 2003, the UNDP Executive Board approved a new four-year country programme (2004–2007). In contrast to the post-conflict recovery approach of the previous phase, the new programme emphasized three central themes: good governance, poverty reduction, and environment and natural resource management. The period covered by the country programme has now been extended to the end of 2008 in order to respond to the objective of harmonizing programming cycles among United Nations (UN) system agencies.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) is an independent evaluation tool used by the UNDP Evaluation Office to assess the UNDP contribution to national development results. The overall goals of an ADR are to:

- Provide an independent assessment of

country-level development results in areas covered by UNDP interventions, assessing both their relevance and effectiveness. UNDP activities are also assessed in light of partnerships with other development actors;

- Contribute to accountability and to learning from experience;
- Provide an analysis of how UNDP positioned itself to add value in response to national needs and priorities, and how it adapted to changes in the national development context; and
- Present key findings and lessons, and provide a set of forward-looking recommendations for future UNDP programmes.

In broad terms, this ADR examines whether UNDP did the right things in the Republic of the Congo and how well it did them. This report addresses:

- Relevance of UNDP programmes and activities, and its capacity to respond to changes in the national environment;
- UNDP effectiveness in achieving stated objectives and intended results;
- Sustainability of the development results to which UNDP contributed; and
- UNDP strategic positioning and comparative advantages.

This evaluation limits itself to the period of 2004–2007. It also examines projects started prior to 2004, when these are relevant to understanding ongoing activities.

² UNDP, *Human Development Report 2007–2008*, New York, 2007.

In addition, the evaluation team did not limit itself to examining the project portfolio and outcomes linked to project activities. It also looked at non-programmatic interventions, such as advocacy, coordination, support for policy development, communications and public information, as well as civil-society relations.

The detailed Terms of Reference for this evaluation, prepared by the Evaluation Office, are attached as Annex I.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

UNDP retained the services of Abacus International Management L.L.C. to carry out this evaluation exercise, with support from the UNDP Evaluation Office and the country office in the Republic of the Congo. The independent evaluation team consisted of three members: two international consultants and one national consultant.³

The methodology used was based on ADR guidelines⁴ and the broader UNDP evaluation policy.⁵ The preparatory phase involved an intensive initial review of documentation, as well as consultations with the UNDP Evaluation Office, the Regional Bureau for Africa and key UNDP departments. In New York, the two international consultants met with representatives of UN system bodies, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The consultants also briefed the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations in New York on the ADR exercise.

The preparatory phase also included a one-week scoping mission to Brazzaville, undertaken by the

team leader and the national consultant. The mission was used to refine the scope of the evaluation, to discuss the structure and rationale of the country programme with UNDP officers, and to identify additional documentation to guide the team. The mission enabled the team to select key projects and activities to be reviewed in more depth based on the relative size of their budgets and relevance to the programme themes. The mission was also used to map UNDP partners for more detailed interviews. All team members followed this preparatory mission with a second round of desk review of documentation.⁶ On the basis of the desk review, notes and questions were shared with the relevant units of the country office in preparation for detailed working sessions during the main mission.

The main two-week mission took place from 27 February to 12 March 2008. The evaluation team had extensive discussions with UNDP senior management, programme units responsible for thematic areas and project staff. The team also met a number of UNDP partners in the government, the UN system, multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society. The team made a point of extending its civil-society contacts beyond the ambit of organizations already associated with UNDP and sought the views of members of associations, NGOs, academic institutions and women's groups, as well as of political leaders from the majority and the opposition. Individual interviews were semi-structured, with each potential respondent having received an information note containing a general list of questions a week before the arrival of the international consultants.⁷

In total, over 80 persons were interviewed during the course of this evaluation, mainly in individual

3 Carrol Faubert was the Senior Consultant and Team Leader. International team members included Abdenour Benbouali, Senior Consultant, and Hyacinthe Defoundoux-Fila, National Consultant.

4 UNDP, 'Guidelines for an Assessment of Development Results', Evaluation Office, New York, December 2007.

5 UNDP, 'The Evaluation Policy of UNDP' (DP/2005/28), Evaluation Office, New York, May 2006.

6 A list of major documents consulted appears as Annex II.

7 See Annex III for a list of persons met and Annex IV for the information note.

meetings. Group meetings were organized for NGOs, in view of the large number of participants. Non-UNDP persons interviewed belonged to one of the four categories identified in Table 1.

Field visits to project sites in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Kinkala⁸ (Pool Department) supplemented the desk review, interviews, and individual and group meetings. Field visits were selected by taking into account the logistical difficulties in the Republic of the Congo, as well as the opportunity to expose evaluation team members to a variety of projects in key thematic areas in the same location. This allowed the evaluation team to visit two of four UNDP offices and

12 project sites, which represented of the major themes of the country programme. On each occasion, a specific effort was made to enter into direct discussions with project beneficiaries, including primary school teachers, members of local community management committees, vocational trainers and their students, and former combatants engaged in a small-scale vegetable gardening project.

This ADR was carried out under stringent time constraints, with a view to presenting a report and recommendations in time to feed into the planning of the 2009–2013 country programme. The duration of the entire process was reduced to

Table 1: Categories of non-UNDP persons interviewed for this ADR

Respondents	Main evaluative questions
Government	Have UNDP interventions appropriately reflected national priorities? Has UNDP demonstrated a capacity to adapt to changes in the national environment? How do you see the role of UNDP as a contributor to national development? What were the most significant and successful UNDP interventions and why? Are there areas where UNDP should intervene further or improve its performance? What arrangements have been made to ensure the sustainability of results achieved with UNDP support? What are the existing coordination mechanisms, and how effective has UNDP been in coordinating with others?
Civil society leaders, politicians, national NGOs	What are your views on progress towards human security and development? Has UNDP effectively contributed to improving the situation in the Republic of the Congo? What was the most significant UNDP contribution? What could have been done better or differently to improve effectiveness and better respond to needs more adequately? Do you participate in consultations organized with the support of UNDP for the development of major national strategy documents or for sectoral programmes? What has been the effectiveness of such consultations? Have you benefited from UNDP-supported training or capacity building? What is the image of UNDP with the general public?
Multilateral and bilateral development partners, including UN agencies and international financial institutions	What are your views on progress towards human development in the Republic of the Congo? What are your views of the UNDP role and performance, including effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and strategic role? What are the major comparative advantages of UNDP in this country? What has been the major 'value added' of UNDP? How could UNDP have been more effective? What coordination mechanisms are in place, and what role does UNDP play in coordination?
Programme beneficiaries	Has your situation improved as a result of the UNDP intervention? Did UNDP support correspond to your needs? Was the support timely and well targeted? What did UNDP do well? What did it do wrong? How do you see the future? Will you be able to continue your activities once direct UNDP support ceases?

8 Kinkala was visited on 2 February 2008, during the scoping mission.

less than three months, approximately half of the average time normally allotted to an ADR exercise. This limitation precluded commissioning additional surveys and research that could have helped fill information gaps.

As the ADR concentrates mainly on intended and unintended outcomes and results, the existence of baseline data is crucial to assessing the situation at the end of the programme. The team found that such data was unavailable for most projects. Although outcome indicators were generally identified in the initial project descriptions, the team noted confusion between outcome indicators and project outputs, as well as the absence of mechanisms to ensure the systematic collection of data related to indicators during the course of a given project.

Where baseline data was not available, the team sought to establish trends at the broader national level over recent years. Where specific data had not been collected to enable the assessment of trends and results, background questions aimed at determining actual results were posed to parties on different sides of the development partnership. The analysis thus made use of the triangulation method, which is based on: stakeholders' perceptions; programme documentation, evaluation reports and other relevant written material; and existing surveys and data.

Finally, in a multiple-actor environment where factors affecting outcomes go far beyond those under UNDP control, evaluating the direct correlation between UNDP activities and development results is nearly impossible. The team endeavoured to establish credible linkages between UNDP activities, programme outputs and national development results. This analysis, supported by documentary evidence whenever possible, was based on prevailing perceptions of the main UNDP contributions among key stakeholders in the Republic of the Congo.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is organized into four chapters. Following the Executive Summary and this introduction, Chapter 2 examines the national development context and the UNDP role in the aid community. Chapter 3 assesses the UNDP contribution to development results in the Republic of the Congo through both programme activities and other interventions. Chapter 4 draws evaluation conclusions and makes recommendations.

While analysis of the various programme interventions is based on an overview of the full portfolio of projects under each major programme theme, details of representative projects are presented in boxes accompanying the text.

Chapter 2

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

This chapter provides an overview of the Republic of the Congo's recent history, its geographical and demographic situation, and its socio-economic environment. The evolution of human development and human security since 2000 is briefly analysed. In addition, this chapter looks at major UNDP partnerships and its role in their coordination.

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

With a land area of 342,000 square kilometres, the Republic of the Congo borders the Central African Republic and Cameroon to the north, the Angolan enclave of Cabinda to the south, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the east and the Republic of Gabon to the west. The coastline on the Atlantic Ocean accounts for 170 kilometres. The climate is equatorial, and the vegetation is mainly savannah and forests, the latter covering about 60 percent of the country. Only 2 percent of the total arable land is under cultivation. The country is rich in mineral resources. Its hydrographic network includes two major basins, the Congo and the Kouilou-Niari.

In 2006, the population of the Republic of the Congo was estimated to be 3.7 million inhabitants. People under 20 years old represented 55 percent of the population, and women represented 52 percent. The urban population was estimated at 60 percent, which is very high compared to the sub-Saharan Africa average of 35 percent. The demographic growth rate stood at just over

2 percent and the population density at 10 persons per square kilometre.⁹

2.2 POLITICAL CONTEXT

Recent history of the Republic of the Congo is characterized by a move from a Marxist one-party state system to liberal multiparty politics. Unfortunately, that transition resulted in three successive civil wars between 1993 and the end of 1999.

2.2.1 SOCIALIST PERIOD

Following the overthrow of the first president elected after independence, the period from 1963 to 1990 was characterized by a one-party state system. It had two phases. During the first phase, 1963–1965, the dominating ideology was more socialist than Marxist. Marxism dominated the second phase, 1968–1990. During the second phase, development strategy focused on the state as the major economic actor with a central planning system.

In 1991, in line with reforms initiated in the Soviet Union and following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the government of President Sassou-Nguesso organized a national conference where political reforms were adopted. A democratic constitution was voted in on 15 March 1992. Pascal Lissouba won the first democratic election, though former allies who joined the opposition to constitute a new parliamentary majority soon contested the results.

⁹ Figures and statistics in this paragraph are drawn mainly from The World Bank Web site, Republic of the Congo – Data Profile, the *Human Development Report 2007–2008* (UNDP 2007) and the 2005 Household Survey in the Republic of the Congo.

2.2.2 CIVIL WARS

This marked the beginning of what the Congolese have called the 'democratic crisis'. The Congo has endured three successive rounds of civil wars (1993, 1997 and 1998–1999). Brazzaville and the southern departments of Pool, Bouenza, Niari and Lékoumou bore the brunt of fighting, violence and destruction. As in most internal conflicts, the civilian population was targeted, most often on a purely ethnic basis. In addition to numerous deaths, the wars also resulted in close to 800,000 persons being internally displaced or becoming refugees outside their country. The conflict cycle left a legacy of increased poverty, social and ethnic tensions, and economic decline. The chaos also gave rise to impunity, aggravating bad governance, corruption and fraud.

President Sassou-Nguesso returned to power in 1997. After several rounds of negotiations, a cease-fire agreement was signed at the end of 1999. It called for the re-establishment of political parties and the demobilization of ex-militia fighters. Although the Council for National Resistance (CNR)¹⁰ of Reverend Ntoumi also signed the cease-fire agreement, his 'Ninja' militia retained control of large parts of the Pool Department and fighting continued, producing additional population displacement.

2.2.3 IMMEDIATE POST-CONFLICT PERIOD: 2000–2002

With the end of the conflict, the government and the international community worked towards restoring national institutions, re-establishing the rule of law, and reconstructing economic and administrative structures through an Interim Post-Conflict Programme (IPCP). In parallel, the government pursued a policy of reconciliation based on three pillars: negotiations with the rebellion, political inclusion and decentralization.

A new constitution was adopted in January 2002. Presidential elections were held in March, followed by legislative elections in May and June of the same year. These improved the environment for reconciliation and dialogue, despite criticism of the fairness of the electoral process. In 2005, exiled leaders began returning to the country and reorganizing their political parties.

2.2.4 TRANSITION AND STABILIZATION: 2003–2007

The first cycle of elections under the new Constitution marked the beginning of a period of transition and stabilisation. In March 2003, another agreement was signed with the CNR of Reverend Ntoumi to define the conditions for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of about 5,000 militia fighters. Although this agreement was not implemented, President Sassou-Nguesso appointed Reverend Ntoumi to the position of Minister in Charge of the Promotion of Peace Values and Rehabilitation in the Aftermath of War¹¹ after further discussions in 2007. By March 2008, Reverend Ntoumi had not yet taken up his new functions, and his return to Brazzaville was still under discussion.

The legislative elections of 2007 marked the beginning of the second electoral cycle. Parties supporting the presidential majority won over 90 percent of National Assembly seats, leaving the opposition holding only 11 seats. Several parties of the majority and some independents later joined the President's party to constitute a new Union for the Presidential Majority,¹² in preparation for a second presidential election scheduled for 2009.

After years of conflict, distrust and suspicion, the country has made significant progress on the path to reconciliation. The situation, however, remains fragile. Factors contributing to this fragility include increasing impoverishment, high

10 Conseil National de la Résistance.

11 Ministre Délégué Chargé de la promotion des valeurs de paix et de la réparation des séquelles de guerre.

12 Rassemblement pour la Majorité Présidentielle.

unemployment, disparities between the poor and the affluent, and continuing political tensions.

2.3 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The Congo experienced a GDP real growth average of 5.8 percent during 2004–2006, slightly higher than the sub-Saharan Africa average. In an economy dominated by the oil industry,¹³ the country benefited from the global soaring of oil prices. The resulting increase in public income enabled the country to show primary-balance surpluses¹⁴ every year, culminating in a projected surplus of some \$1.5 billion in 2007. The government has set aside the surpluses resulting from higher fiscal income from oil in a stabilization fund held at the Bank of Central African States. Observers estimate the value of that account at some \$3.56 billion.

According to widespread consensus, several factors drive economic growth in the Republic of the Congo. These include:

- *Oil production.* Coupled with increasing international prices, there has been a continuing increase of activities in this sector since 2000;
- *Wood industry* is the second main source of income and exports;
- *Sugar production*, although currently limited, has high economic potential and could generate important employment opportunities;
- *Telecommunications* is growing. Two mobile telephone networks have expanded their coverage throughout most of the country, investing some \$10 million in 2004–2005; and
- *Public investments* have been made in large infrastructure projects, such as the Imboulou dam project representing an investment of

some \$330 million over a six-year period (2003–2009).

After a decrease in both 2002 and 2003, non-oil income started rising again, reflecting increased economic activity. However, the increase is insufficient. If calculated using only non-oil income, the primary balance would equal a negative \$702 million in 2007.

This situation is illustrative of one of the many contradictions that characterize the Republic of the Congo. Two parallel economies exist. The first comprises mainly the oil and wood industries. It is modern, dynamic, competitive and export-oriented. The second economy is more traditional and is largely based on subsistence agriculture, small and often informal businesses and a plethoric civil service. There is little interconnection between the two economies, and the wealth of the first has little effect on the economic and human security of the majority of the population.

The Republic of the Congo is also highly indebted.¹⁵ In March 2006, it qualified for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government has yet to complete the reforms it committed to as pre-conditions for debt relief in its discussions with IMF. The agreement included three pillars to allow the country to move towards sustainable growth:

1. A sustainable medium-term fiscal strategy that takes into account the country's limited oil resources;
2. An improvement in the quality of public spending, including an increase in pro-poor spending, and of the transparency and accountability in the budgetary process; and

13 2006 figures from ADB/ADF show that the oil sector accounted for 64 percent of GDP, 85 percent of exports and 71 percent of fiscal revenues. See 'Country Strategy Document based on Results', DSPAR 2008-2012 (ADB/ADF, December 2007).

14 The primary balance is defined as "revenue (excluding grants) minus non-interest current expenditure minus domestically financed capital expenditure and net lending". See 'Country Report no. 06/262' (IMF, July 2006).

15 According to The World Bank's Country Brief (see www.worldbank.org/cg), the external debt corresponds to 806 percent of budgetary income, 338 percent of exports and 235 percent of the GDP.

Table 2. Evolution of select indicators for the period 1998 and 2002–2005

Indicator / year	1998	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average sub-Saharan Africa (2005)
Human Development Index	0.507	0.494	0.512	0.520	0.548	0.493
Life expectancy at birth	48.9	48.3	52	52.3	54.0	49.6
Adult literacy rate (%)	78.4	82.8	82.8	83	84.7	60.3
Children underweight for age (%)	17	25	14	14	15	n/a
Population with access to safe water (%)	34	49	46	58	58	55
Gender-related Development Index	0.499	0.488	0.507	0.519	0.540	n/a
Women in Parliament (% of seats) ¹⁶	n/a	12	12	12	12	n/a
GDP per capita (purchasing power parity US\$)	995	980	965	978	1.262	1.998

Source : UNDP Human Development Reports 2000 and 2004–2007

3. Measures to reduce the cost of doing business, including governance measures aimed at tackling corruption.¹⁷

There is no doubt that the reforms envisaged would go a long way in solving the country's problems and allowing citizens to benefit from growth much more than they have so far.

2.4 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

As discussed in section 2.3, there is a contradiction between the wealth derived from oil extraction and the relatively poor performance of the country in terms of human development. According to the UNDP *Human Development Report 2007–2008*, the Republic of the Congo ranks 139th out of 177 countries. More than 50 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.¹⁸ Social security for the most vulnerable persons remains weak, and basic social infrastructure

and services destroyed by war have not been fully re-established.

Nevertheless, there has been marked progress, evident to the extent of reliability of official data. Table 2 illustrates this by showing the evolution of select human development indicators from 1998 through the end of the civil war cycle and the years 2002 to 2005.

Currently, the situation in the health sector is characterized by the deterioration of services, the increase of communicable diseases, and the excessive concentration of health personnel and services in urban areas.

The education sector has been severely affected by the civil wars and resulting population displacement. Gross primary school enrolment dropped almost by half, to 57 percent in 1999, before beginning to rise again in 2002. It reached 92 percent in 2004 and an almost pre-war level of

16 The parliamentary elections held in 2007 actually resulted in fewer women holding seats.

17 IMF, 'Country Report no. 07/206', June 2007.

18 A figure of 50.1 percent is given in the 2005 nationwide household survey. See National Centre for Statistics and Economic Surveys, 'Enquête Congolaise auprès des Ménages pour l'Évaluation de la Pauvreté (ECOM 2005)', Brazzaville, April 2006.

111 percent in 2005.¹⁹ As in the health sector, there is undue concentration of personnel and services in urban areas. The six grades of a rural primary school are often covered by only two teachers.

Gender equality is enshrined in the 2002 Constitution, and existing legislation for employment, education or politics does not contradict that principle. However, powerful social and traditional forces contribute to negating gender equality. Women represent less than 14 percent of the Council of Ministers. They also hold 15 percent of Senate seats, 9 percent of the National Assembly and less than 9 percent of local councils. The situation is better in the National Economic Council, where women represent 33 percent. Women also have 30 percent of the seats on the National Commission on Human Rights.

Two major factors hamper the efforts of the Congo to ensure that its relative wealth translates into significant improvements of human development indicators: the continued effects of the social tensions, disruptions and destruction caused by the civil wars, and generally weak governance. These points represent important challenges for the future of the country.

2.4.1 MOVING BEYOND THE POST-CONFLICT PERIOD

The wars of 1993, 1997 and 1998–1999 resulted not only in immense human suffering, but also in the destruction of the economic and social infrastructure in the Congolese departments affected by violence. In the most affected areas, the wars led to the destruction of 50 percent of the food production capacity and 90 percent of the livestock. Schooling was interrupted in four regions and in Brazzaville, and 50 percent of national medical facilities were destroyed or looted. The damage inflicted will take years to

repair, and full rehabilitation will depend on complete reconciliation and a more efficient use of national resources.

At the end of the civil wars, there were between 15,000 and 25,000 militia fighters in the Republic of the Congo, and there were an estimated 41,000 serviceable small arms and light weapons.²⁰ The social fabric of the country was also affected, as the militias were largely created along ethnic lines.

In a post-war 12-point platform called ‘New Hope’,²¹ President Sassou-Nguesso stated his determination to build a lasting peace, to organize political life in a stable institutional environment, to promote a dynamic and prosperous economy and to ensure that each Congolese benefits from security, welfare and social justice.

Significant progress has been achieved in the process of reconciliation and reconstruction. Following the adoption of a new constitution in 2002, presidential elections were held, followed by parliamentary elections. A law on political parties has been adopted, and a second round of parliamentary elections was organized in 2007. These elections should be followed by local elections in 2008 and a second presidential election in 2009. Despite claims of irregularities, elections have taken place without violence. Opposition parties—although with only 11 members—are represented in the Parliament. Journalists are allowed some leeway for criticism, and the activities of human rights NGOs are tolerated.

Despite such progress, political reconciliation is not yet complete, as areas of the Pool Department remain under NRC control.

The vast majority of the persons displaced by war have now returned or settled in a new—generally urban—environment. Most of the militias have

¹⁹ The value of gross enrolment ratios can vary from less than 10 percent to more than 100 percent, reaching 130 percent in some countries when there are sizeable under-aged and/or over-aged enrolment.

²⁰ Small Arms Survey, ‘Small Arms Availability, Trade and Impacts in the Republic of Congo’, Special Report, April 2002.

²¹ ‘Nouvelle Espérance’, issued for the presidential election of 2002 by President Sassou-Nguesso.

disbanded, although large quantities of weapons are still held by the remaining active militia or by civilians.²²

After a transition period, beginning immediately following the end of hostilities and ending in 2002, the country entered a phase of stabilization, reconciliation, and re-establishment of institutions and rule of law. For many observers of the Congolese environment, the second cycle of elections now under way should mark the end of the post-conflict phase, provided that such elections are fair, transparent and violence-free. Most emergency-oriented international NGOs have now left the country, as the UN OCHA did in May 2007. The International Committee of the Red Cross has already closed two offices in the Pool Department and will have withdrawn from the last one by the end of March 2008. It will continue to operate from Brazzaville and is confident that the Congolese Red Cross can effectively take over most of its Kinkala-based activities.

2.4.2 IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

Through the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) of 2004, the government acknowledged a number of problems and issues related to governance. These included:

- The crisis of administration, state authority and control;
- Erroneous and inadequate allocation of available human, material and financial resources;
- Worsening corruption and fraud;
- Lack of coordination among the various administrations involved in economic management; and
- Inappropriate contract awarding procedures.²³

This meant that the pro-poor expenditures planned in successive national budgets were often

not used or were simply siphoned away for other purposes. The only budgets that show important overspending have been the political and security allocations.

In an assessment at the end of 2007, the African Development Bank/African Development Fund (ADB/ADF)²⁴ noted some progress towards good governance, particularly concerning transparency in the oil sector. Such observations included the creation of a national commission to fight corruption and fraud, as well as a separate observatory on corruption, the latter with the participation of members of the civil society. The report also noted that although the principle of decentralization had been accepted, the transfer of resources to local administrations had not taken place, except for an *ad hoc* flat transfer of some \$2.3 million to each department. Remaining high priorities include further improvements in governance, capacity building within the civil service, and fostering a stronger political will to reform.

2.5 ACHIEVING PROGRESS ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The scarcity of data renders monitoring indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) difficult. The tracking of indicators made by The World Bank²⁵ indicates that by 2005, most of the indicators related to social and community services had barely reached their pre-war levels of 1990, a sad illustration of the consequences of repeated conflicts of the nineties.

Published in 2004, the latest National MDG Report estimated that the achievement of MDG targets was unlikely for the elimination of gender disparity in secondary education, reversal of the incidence of malaria and other diseases, and significant improvement of the lives of slum

22 Survey undertaken in 2007 by the NGO Small Arms Survey.

23 Republic of the Congo. 'Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) for the Congo', 27 September 2004.

24 ADB/ADF. 'Country Strategy Document Based on Results' (DSPAR 2008-2012), December 2007.

25 As posted on The World Bank Web site; see <http://go.worldbank.org/JE0BPHWUT0>.

dwellers. Only two targets were considered likely to be achieved: achieving universal primary education and dealing comprehensively with the debt problem. Table 3 represents a governmental assessment of the likelihood of reaching, by 2015, the goals presented in the 2004 National MDG Report.

Progress towards attaining the MDGs remains at the heart of the government's strategy for reducing poverty. With support from UNDP, the government is finalizing a national strategy for

the attainment of the MDGs.²⁶ The authors of the latest draft have identified the necessary conditions of success, including the promotion of good governance, a diversification of the national economy, a dynamic policy of employment and training, the allocation of resources to pro-poor activities and their actual disbursement, an equitable repartition of national wealth and, lastly, a strong political will to respect commitments.

Two important features of this draft MDG strategy are that its activities are budgeted and

Table 3. Likelihood of achieving MDG targets (2004 estimates)	
Goals / Targets	Likelihood of achieving
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	Potentially Potentially
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Likely
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	Unlikely
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	Potentially
Goal 5: Improve maternal health Target 6: Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	Potentially
Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Potentially Unlikely
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation Target 11: Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of slum dwellers	Potentially Potentially Unlikely
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development Target 15: Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term	Likely

Source: Government of the Republic of the Congo, National MDG Report, 2004.

26 Republic of the Congo. 'National Plan for attaining MDGs in the Congo' (sixth draft), December 2007.

that it includes a realistic mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of the national plan. The monitoring plan is based on recent surveys constituting a baseline, although incomplete, and on a programme to strengthen the national statistical and monitoring and evaluation capacity.

2.6 UNDP IN THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

The Ministry of Planning,²⁷ the principal national partner of UNDP in the Republic of the Congo, plays a central role in discussions with different members of the international aid community. The Ministry of Planning approves the major agreements and strategy documents governing the activities of UNDP. UNDP cooperates closely with the ministry and provides financial and technical support in order to strengthen ministerial capacity and assist in the elaboration of national strategy documents. UNDP also works closely with several line ministries, particularly the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Close links have been developed with the National Assembly and the Senate and with a number of other national institutions.

The major international development actors present in the Republic of the Congo are the Bretton Woods Institutions, France and the European Union. China has also become an increasingly prominent partner of the country. Major donors to UNDP programmes in 2006 and 2007 include The World Bank (\$4.2 million),²⁸ Japan (\$2.2 million), the European Union (\$2 million), Sweden (\$1 million) and ADB (\$0.1 million). The Government of the Republic of the Congo has contributed \$0.4 million from national resources under a cost-sharing formula during the same two-year period.

Unlike many other countries, the Republic of the Congo does not have an elaborate and compre-

hensive coordination mechanism, which is typically composed of thematic groups and an overseeing body. The likely explanation is that the number of resident bilateral and multilateral agencies is limited, with many countries covering the Congo from another base in the region, and several UN organizations not being represented on a permanent basis. Coordination therefore remains largely *ad hoc* and linked to punctual requirements.

Temporary coordination or consultation mechanisms have been put in place for exercises such as the preparation of the I-PRSP, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the National Human Development Report and the National Plan for the MDGs, as well as for preparations for particular events or meetings. Recently, the European Union and the French Embassy have been jointly convening coordination meetings in preparation for a forthcoming meeting in Accra under the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. In the absence of other initiatives to structure coordination among donors, that particular group is considering pursuing the effort beyond the immediate objective of the Accra meeting.

Relations between UNDP and international donors are often characterized as a collaboration of equal partners in the global development effort and the unequal partnership between a donor and UNDP as fundraiser. Occasionally, temporary tensions resulted from such situations. For example, long and difficult talks with The World Bank took place to re-negotiate an overhead percentage under a school rehabilitation project. Similarly, the European Union was critical of implementation delays and financial reporting for two projects it financed.

Coordination within the UN system is naturally greater than with other partners. The UN Country Team (UNCT) meets regularly and cooperates in the formulation of common assessments and

²⁷ Ministère du Plan et de l'Aménagement du Territoire.

²⁸ Funds contributed to the Government of the Republic of the Congo but managed by UNDP under agreement with The World Bank.

strategy documents. Two types of regular meetings exist. The first concerns general substantive coordination among UNCT members and addresses common concerns, such as administrative and management issues, programme strategies and policies or common communication strategies. The meetings are convened on what appears to be an *ad hoc* basis, and some participants have expressed the wish to have them at fixed intervals. These substantive meetings are supplemented by thematic groups and as well as 'Communities of Practices' that deal with programme sectors and themes. In addition to UNCT members, national counterparts and donors often participate. The second type of UNCT meetings deal with security issues and are used to advise the UN Resident Coordinator in his capacity as designated official responsible for UN security.

The UNCT in the Republic of the Congo consists of eleven members, including the nine UN agencies and programmes with local offices, the IMF and The World Bank. All UNCT meetings are chaired by the UNDP Resident Representative, acting in his capacity as UN Resident Coordinator. In his absence, a representative of one of the participating agencies acts as chair. The Deputy Resident Representative sits for UNDP in these meetings. As UNDP operations in the Republic of the Congo are too small to justify the creation of the post of Country Director, as is now done in some other situations, the roles and responsibilities of UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative are often confused. The UN coordination effort now benefits from the presence of full-time, dedicated staff to assist the UN Resident Coordinator.

UNCT is now engaged in the preparation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period of 2009–2013. Following two UN plans for the period of 2000–2002 and annual Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals through 2006, this will be the first comprehensive UNDAF process developed for the Republic of the Congo since 2000. The last Common Country Assessment

(CCA) prepared by UNCT dates back to 2005. For the ongoing UNDAF process, it was decided to forego the preparation of another CCA, as the recent PRSP, supplemented by complementary analysis, was judged to have provided a sound basis for developing the UN framework.

A review of activities in the immediate post-conflict period resulted in the recommendation for UNDP to strengthen relations with civil society, NGOs and the private sector. The country office has established some successful private-sector partnerships through a project to support the development of strategies for addressing HIV/AIDS in some 30 large manufacturing and business firms. UNDP also signed a framework agreement for a partnership with Total, the largest oil company operating in the Republic of the Congo. The agreement opens the way for partnerships in a number of areas, including HIV/AIDS, the environment, poverty reduction, micro-finance programmes as well as new information and communication technology (NICT). Representatives of the manufacturing and business communities are regularly invited to participate in consultations organized by UNDP.

Relations with NGOs and members of the civil society, on the other hand, were less intense than during the preceding period. During the immediate post-conflict period, UNDP developed operational relationships with several NGOs and local associations for the implementation of emergency recovery projects. In the new programming cycle, more emphasis was gradually put on execution through national institutions, and direct operational relationship with NGOs became an exception to the rule. Nevertheless, UNDP continued to consult with civil society, including some national NGOs, as part of its support for the elaboration of major reports and strategy documents.

Until May 2007, when OCHA withdrew its presence, there existed a humanitarian coordination hub. The hub, located in the premises of UNDP, enabled members of the UN system, donors, NGOs and relevant national institutions

to share information on their respective activities. This avoided unnecessary duplication of effort and allowed newcomers to build upon the experience and knowledge of other organizations. These coordination meetings were highly appreciated, and a number of participants felt they should have been continued after the departure of OCHA. UNDP lost an opportunity to capitalize on that success in 2007 by failing to take over the

coordination meetings (albeit with a different development emphasis).

Among the general public, the UNDP image is relatively positive, benefiting from high-visibility reconciliation and peace-building operations, such as the collection and public burning of weapons. UNDP activities are well covered in the national media.

Chapter 3

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This chapter briefly reviews the relevance of UNDP activities with regard to major national and international objectives, as well as the organization's capacity to adapt to changes in context and the environment. It provides an overall analysis of operational efficiency, followed by a more in-depth review of the four larger thematic areas in which UNDP is active.

3.1 OVERALL ANALYSIS OF UNDP 2004–2007 COUNTRY PROGRAMME

The UNDP country programme is structured around three major themes: good governance, poverty reduction, and environmental and natural-resource management. There are three additional cross-cutting themes, which include gender, HIV/AIDS and NICT. The intent was to build strong synergies between UNDP programme components and components of programmes by other members of the aid community.

In broad terms, the expected results were to:

- Increase the capacity of the principal governance institutions, mainly through support that addresses the needs of parliamentary institutions, local authorities and civil society;
- Improve responsible reporting in public administration;
- Strengthen capacity for reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs on the part of the government and civil society; and
- Strengthen the capacity of national and sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that meet the needs of the poor.

The approved country programme was used as a framework to guide country-office activities. The programme was modified as necessary to avoid duplication with non-UNDP initiatives and respond to funding opportunities or government requests.

It is worth noting that crisis prevention and recovery activities were not presented under a separate theme, but were instead—and surprisingly—included under the theme of poverty reduction. The evaluation team was told that the government wished to clearly mark a passage from a post-conflict situation to a development phase and preferred not to emphasize post-conflict activities. Nevertheless, such activities continued to represent an important part of UNDP work and a large share of its resources. For its own analysis, the evaluation team opted to present post-conflict activities separately.

The initial budget estimates for the four-year programme stood at \$11,035,000. Of this, \$2,535,000 (23 percent) was expected to come from UNDP regular resources. Actual expenditures were more than double that amount, reaching \$22,706,934, of which 20 percent was allocated from regular target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) 1 resources.

3.1.1 PROGRAMME RELEVANCE

UNDP interventions are decided upon in consultation with the government and correspond to national priorities as contained in major national strategy and policy documents. Such documents include the 2002 presidential platform of 'New Hope', the I-PRSP and, in some cases, national sectoral plans, such as the one for the environment. The programme also respects the priorities

defined by the New Partnership for Africa's Development, as well as the global and regional objectives of UNDP.

The consensus among respondents from the government, the aid community and civil society is that UNDP activities correspond to genuine needs in the country. However, not all areas of activity are recognized as being areas of excellence, where the comparative advantages of UNDP are evident. In general, recognized areas of expertise include UNDP interventions in the fields of governance, support to community groups, support to the preparation of national strategy documents and reports, and advocacy for the environment, HIV/AIDS and gender issues.

Some activities are seen as less successful and not entirely relevant to the UNDP mandate and expertise. In particular, this relates to highly operational downstream projects for the rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged by wars. For example, between 2002 and 2004 the rehabilitation of rural tracks was undertaken with deficient technical backstopping by the United Nations Office for Project Services.

As noted in section 3.1, a structural anomaly in the country programme resulted from the decision to present conflict prevention and recovery activities under the theme of poverty reduction. The programme would have benefited from a clearer presentation that emphasized conflict prevention and recovery as an independent programme component.

3.1.2 IMPLEMENTING LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PREVIOUS CYCLE

The Country Programme document approved by the UNDP Executive Board in September 2003 noted some lessons learned from past operations in the Republic of the Congo and made corresponding recommendations.

1. **Adopting a programme approach enhancing coherence and synergies.** Although a programme approach was adopted in the planning phase, the realities of implementation have

forced the country office to proceed with projects rather than fully integrated programmes. The necessity to divide the programme into projects corresponding to donor funding mechanisms has meant that the programmes became *de facto* umbrella programmes, each covering a portfolio of projects.

The country office considered that the Country Programme Document constituted a framework that had to be responsive to changed circumstances and priorities during implementation. Thus, UNDP had to forego some of the planned activities when funding them proved difficult or when others had previously engaged in the same field. This was the case for planned activities related to marine and coastal environments and for follow-up on the UNDP-supported survey on corruption and fraud. On the other hand, certain activities were incorporated into the programme without being planned from the outset. These included, for example, the rehabilitation of primary schools, undertaken in consideration of the UNDP comparative advantages in community action and at the request of both the government and The World Bank.

UNDP successfully developed synergies between different projects and activities. This was particularly visible in the Pool Department, where a project for youth at risk was used to support disarmament of former combatants and primary-school rehabilitation activities. Another example of synergies, this time at the upstream level, concerned UNDP support to parliamentary institutions. In this case, the access and goodwill generated by the project allowed UNDP to conduct more effective advocacy and enlist the active support of parliament on a number of issues, including gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment.

2. **Strengthening and deepening partnerships with NGOs and associations.** A second lesson called for further development of relationships with NGOs and associations as a proven mechanism of delivering assistance

in areas that remained insecure. As mentioned in section 2.6, relations with NGOs and associations have been less intense during the current programming cycle than in the immediate post-war period, when national implementation capacity was particularly weak. In the new cycle, UNDP has correctly placed more—and continues to gradually increase—emphasis on national execution.

3. **Improving national ownership, ensuring sustainability of the outcomes of projects and actions, and fostering national capacity-building in the area of economic management.** Unfortunately, full national ownership and the resulting sustainability of results remain the weak points of several UNDP activities carried out under the programme. In many cases of both upstream and downstream interventions, the planned outputs were delivered, yet anticipated results could not be achieved due to the national or local authorities' failure to devote the human and financial resources necessary to sustain such results. This important issue is further discussed, and concrete examples are provided in the thematic sections of this ADR.
4. **Deepening and broadening partnerships with the private sector, particularly in the context of fighting poverty and HIV/AIDS, as well as environmental and natural-resource preservation and management.** As discussed in section 2.6, this recommendation has largely been implemented.

3.1.3 FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMME

The UNDP country office has succeeded in redressing its rate of delivery,²⁹ which was particularly low at the beginning of the period under review. For 2004 and 2005, the delivery rate stood at only 66 and 65 percent, respectively. Following stricter controls introduced by the country office management and an increased reliance on an office-based service centre responsible

for procuring goods and services, the rate of delivery increased to 78 percent in 2006 and 87 percent in 2007. According to the 2007 performance ranking by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, the Republic of the Congo's country office achieved second place among 44 countries, due in part to the improvement in programme delivery.

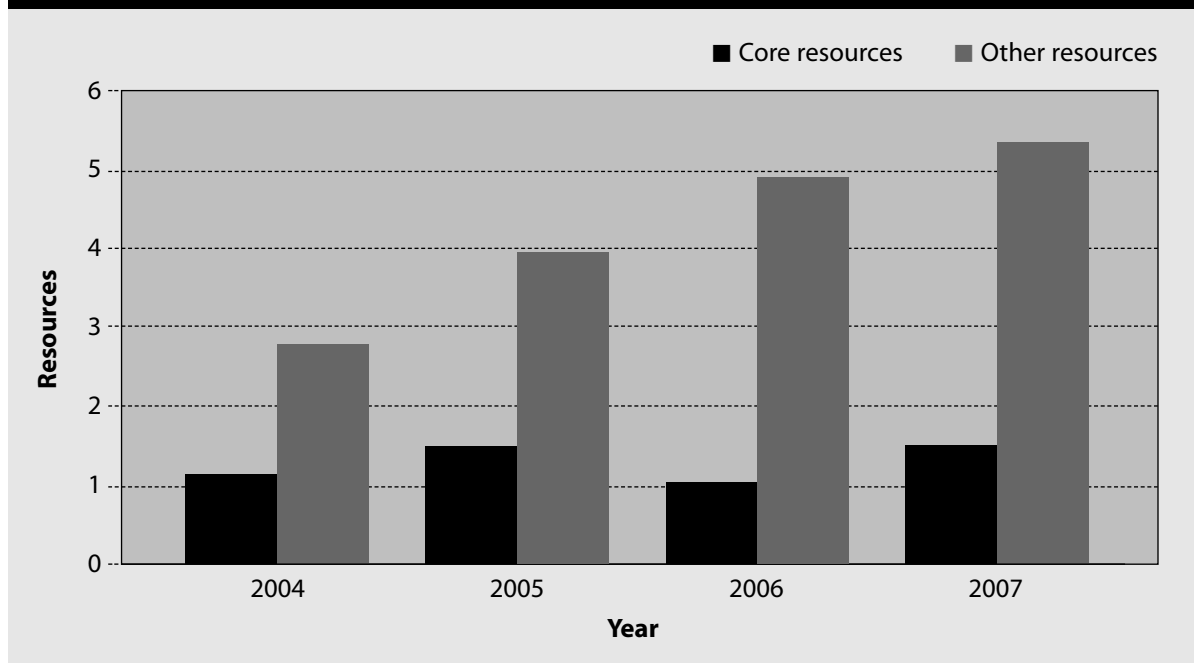
Programme funding demonstrates a heavy reliance on non-core resources and, therefore, a reliance on additional fundraising on the part of the UNDP country office. Figure 1 indicates the respective proportions of core and non-core resources expended for each of the four years under review. There are two notable observations. First, UNDP has been increasingly successful in mobilizing and using additional non-core resources, though often at the expense of other management duties. Second, UNDP core resource allocations remained relatively low during the programme period. This phenomenon is due to the methodology applied in allocating TRAC resources to different country programmes.

Two factors constitute the principal basis for allocations: the classification of a country on the basis of the gross national income per capita and the size of its population. Oil revenues place the Republic of the Congo in the lower middle-income group. It also does not fall into the category of least developed countries, and its population is relatively small. No special consideration appears to have been given to the structural problems of the country's economy and its poor human-development ranking. This combination of factors has resulted in core (TRAC 1) resources expenditure representing a yearly average of \$1,141,000, which equals only some 20 percent of total UNDP programme expenditure.

This has proven to be limiting in many ways. First, UNDP was restrained in using core resources as seed money to launch new activities

²⁹ Expenditure as a percentage of approved budgets. Source: UNDP country office in Brazzaville based on the UNDP ATLAS accounting system.

Figure 1. Annual expenditure 2004–2007 by core and non-core resources



and attract additional funding. Second, the country office had to develop an aggressive fundraising strategy that, at times, soured relations with donors. Some of them felt UNDP engaged in activities simply because of funding opportunities; others thought that by engaging with some parts of the government, UNDP was competing for funding.

The current programme cycle marked the beginning of a shift in project execution modalities, in line with a gradual passage from a post-conflict situation into a stabilization period. The previous period had been characterized by cooperation with some international and local NGOs for the implementation of projects, as well as by the extensive use of the direct execution modality (DEX). Progress in moving towards the national execution modality (NEX) has been modest, with less than 30 percent of expenditures occurring under NEX during 2004–2007.

In 2006, the country office commissioned an evaluation of the NEX through both government institutions and national NGOs. The evaluation

concluded that a comprehensive programme for strengthening national capacity was essential for achieving the objective of moving towards increased national execution. In June 2006, the government also requested that UNDP manage on its behalf some of the funds provided under NEX. This request concerned mainly procurement activities and was made in order to improve the rate of delivery for NEX projects, which had previously been alarmingly low. Under some projects, a hybrid NEX/DEX formula emerged; it now needs to be accompanied by a strong capacity-building approach and concrete governmental measures in order to streamline its disbursement mechanisms and render them more transparent. In the meantime, the passage to a pure NEX modality must remain gradual and prudent.

3.1.4 CONSULTATION MECHANISMS

A number of mechanisms have been put in place to ensure the widest possible participation in the formulation and management of programmes and projects. Local project review committees assess and approve UNDP interventions prior to their inception. During the course of implemen-

tation, programmes and projects have also been monitored and overseen by steering committees that were expected to meet regularly. Both types of committees enjoy large participation that includes not only the immediate government and donor partners, but also civil society organizations and individual experts.

Some committee members felt that their consultations were merely symbolic, as meetings occurred at the end of the planning process, mostly after the project design had been approved by a donor. With few exceptions, such as the governance programme, steering committees met irregularly, and some had not met at all. It would appear that difficulty arose from the designation of chairs at the ministerial level, which placed additional demands on the schedules of people who are already extremely busy. One minister mentioned to the evaluation team that she had asked a senior civil servant to chair steering committees and report to her. This might provide the formula to increase the effectiveness of such committees.

3.1.5 INTERNAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The country office implemented two initiatives to improve programme management. The first concerned the establishment of outlying offices in four parts of the Republic of the Congo outside Brazzaville. The offices in Kinkala, Pool Department, and in Pointe-Noire, Kouilou Department, have been designated as UN offices. In fact, they are staffed and maintained by UNDP alone and provide *ad hoc* services to visiting personnel from other agencies. The other two offices, Dolisie in Niari Department and Owando in the Cuvette Department house UNDP project staff. The location of the four offices demonstrates the balanced UNDP approach to addressing the needs of people in all parts of the country.

UNDP made a bold gesture by opening the Kinkala office in the troubled Pool Department.

It constituted a powerful signal of the return to peace, normalcy and reconciliation. This positive public-relations effect could have been amplified, had senior office personnel been present on a more regular basis or had other UNDP staff been more mobile in the whole Department. However, UN security rules continue to limit access to a number of districts in the Pool Department, though such rules are considered excessively prudent among some locally active non-UN organizations. They should also be allowed to benefit from the services of UNDP field offices, which should endeavour to play an increased role in providing a forum for coordination among development and humanitarian actors in their regions.

As part of the 2007 restructuring, country office senior management decided to create a Centre for Project Execution and Support (CEDAP).³⁰ It was launched in September 2007, following the finalization of a business plan and the recruitment of a manager and an assistant. CEDAP is a merger of two former entities: the DEX Unit and the Service Centre. Its main objective was to boost the delivery of UNDP programmes. Its services included support to UNDP projects by procuring goods and services, support to government partners requesting services within CEDAP capabilities, and management and assumption of full responsibility for procurement-only UNDP projects executed under DEX.

The Centre is experiencing increasing demand among government institutions wishing to outsource their procurement activities, even in cases where such activities are not financed through UNDP. This interesting development underscores the unit's excellent performance. However, it would be prudent not to overstrain the capacity of CEDAP. While this service has already demonstrated its capacity to accelerate procurement and reduce costs, a full evaluation of its activities should take place in late 2009, after two full years of operation.

30 Centre d'exécution et d'appui aux projets.

Despite a significant improvement in the rate of programme delivery in 2006–2007, the efficiency of UNDP financial management continues to suffer from negative perceptions among its partners, particularly with regard to disbursement speed. One partner complained about the lack of quality and delayed delivery of financial reports on the use of contributions to UNDP. This should send a clear signal that UNDP needs to energetically pursue efforts to streamline procedures, avoid over-centralization and better reward superior staff performance.

3.1.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

During the period of 2004–2007, the UNDP country office undertook four formal evaluations: evaluation of the community action project, evaluation of the HIV/AIDS prevention project, a mid-term evaluation of the youth at risk project, and an unfinished final evaluation of the first phase of the weapons collection project.³¹ As previously mentioned, an evaluation of NEX was conducted in 2006 and, in the beginning of 2008, an outcome evaluation of the environment and energy programme was underway and close to completion. In total, this effort fell only slightly short of the objectives of the original evaluation plan.

The evaluation team found that outcomes of programmes and projects were often merely outputs. In addition, outcome indicators were at times defined in a purely qualitative way, making monitoring and assessment more subjective than factual. No human or financial resources were allocated to the systematic production of baseline data or to monitoring indicators throughout the life of each project. This proved to be another weakness, which rendered the evaluation of outcomes extremely difficult. According to information given to the evaluation team, this can be explained by the fact that many donors did not wish to accommodate costs that, in their view, are administrative in nature. However, the

importance of being able to properly illustrate the results of programme interventions, UNDP should insist that donors accept and cover realistic monitoring costs—or, alternatively, use its own allocated regular resources for the purpose.

The draft UNDAF document for 2009–2013 goes a long way to defining measurable outcome indicators for each of the programme components, as well as potential sources of information to monitor these indicators. In designing its next country programme for the Republic of the Congo, UNDP should draw extensively on this excellent inter-agency work and align its own outcomes and indicators on those of the UNDAF. It would then be conceivable to go a step further in inter-agency cooperation and undertake joint multi-agency programme evaluations. Such evaluations should be external, independent and could be funded through the funds for coordination at the disposal of the Resident Coordinator.

3.2 IMPROVING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Table 4 details the major components of the democratic governance programme and the underlying areas of activity. The intended outcomes of the programme, as defined in the country programme document of 2003, were:

- Increased efficiency and representativeness of Parliament in discharging its legislative and governmental oversight duties;
- Ratification, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Involvement of local authorities and community members in planning and managing development and public service activities; and
- Enhanced efficiency, responsibility and transparency in public administration.

³¹ The country office rejected the draft report on the weapons collection project, on the grounds that it did not fully respect the Terms of Reference and was generally biased.

Table 4: Governance Programme 2004-2007: components and activities			
Component / activity	Execution	Duration	Budget US\$
Component 1: Democratic Governance			
Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions	NEX ³²	2001-2006	300,000
Support to the new democratic institutions	NEX	2004-2007	
Strengthening Civil Society Organizations and promotion of human rights	NEX	2004-2007	
Strengthening the capacity of political parties and support for their legal framework	DEX/NEX	2005-2007	
Component 2: Administrative Governance			
Support fight against corruption and strengthen capacity in transparency and ethics	AGEX (shifted to DEX)	2003-2007	
Improvement of public administration performance	NEX	Starting in 2008	
Strengthening consultation and coordination at the ministerial level	Not started		
Component 3: Local Governance			
Support to the decentralization process	DEX	Ongoing	3.7 million ³³
Support to local development	NEX	Ongoing	
Component 4: Economic Governance			
Strengthening national capacities in financial and economic management	NEX	Ongoing but limited	
Support to private sector development	Left to The World Bank, IMF and ADB		
Component 5: Support preparation of national framework for good governance			
	Not started		

Source: UNDP Republic of the Congo country office.

The overall objective of the programme was to strengthen the democratic process and the rule of law for sustainable human development.

Good governance is at the centre of the strategy formulated by the government, with strong

encouragement and support of the international community, for achieving sustainable growth while improving the livelihood of populations. It is also a pre-condition for successfully completing the political, economic and social transition started in 1991. Almost all members of the

32 Shifted to NEX/DEX.

33 A single umbrella project has been created to cover most of the activities related to governance.

international aid community are involved in helping the government improve governance, and UNDP is part of a common effort that could benefit from increased coordination.

No significant changes were required to the initial programme, as governance remained an overwhelming priority throughout the period and is still one today. The only changes occurred when planned UNDP interventions were superseded by programmes of international financial institutions as part of wider discussions on economic and administrative governance. This concerned support to private-sector development and the follow-up to the survey on fraud and corruption. During the course of implementation, additional intended outcomes were identified, corresponding to new operational opportunities, particularly regarding support for legislation on political parties and the role of women in politics.

Although some activities had to be initiated prior to the 2005 launch of the larger umbrella project, particular efforts were made in this area of intervention to ensure that a comprehensive and coherent programme was developed. The programme was divided into different projects for execution and financing purposes. Some activities, such as support to parliamentary institutions and support to the cooperation framework and NEX, were continued from the previous phase and received additional resources under the new programme cycle.

The projects were submitted to a local project review committee.³⁴ In the case of the governance programme, oversight by the steering committee was quite satisfactory. The acting director of the national management unit prepared a progress report for the period of 2005–2006. *Ad hoc* progress reports were also prepared for some sub-components, such as the initiative for the organization of Department Parliamentary Conferences or for the promotion of women in politics. The French Parliament and

the Inter-Parliamentary Union conducted a joint evaluation of the effectiveness of support to parliamentary institutions.

3.2.1 REVIEW OF RESULTS

Strengthening democratic governance

A number of activities were undertaken to foster democratic governance. Two activities selected as representative of interventions under this programme component are analyzed in more detail in boxes one and two.

Human rights were another area of significant activity. With the involvement of government representatives, CSOs, minority groups (Pygmies) and UN system representatives, UNDP conducted public awareness campaigns, trained police officers on the rights of citizens and organized the celebration of the International Day for Human Rights. UNDP also supported NGOs in establishing several legal clinics in response to the acute need of a population without easy or free access to justice. However, as these clinics rely largely on volunteer services, the absence of regular and independent public or private income for operating costs and essential permanent staff renders their long-term sustainability questionable.

Another meaningful UNDP contribution was the support given to formulating legislation on political parties, as it provided a much-needed legal framework for multiparty democracy. UNDP combined such support with a programme for training political parties, which included training for opposition parties. Training took place mainly in a South-South framework. The project helped establish a consultative framework, as well as behavioural norms for interactions among parties, associations and the government.

The planned support to new democratic institutions, such as the Human Rights Commission and the Higher Council for Freedom in Communications, could not be implemented due to lack of funding.

34 Comités Locaux D'évaluation des Projets.

Strengthening administrative governance

Under this component, UNDP intended to support the fight against corruption and fraud, contribute to improving public administration performance and support enhanced consultation and coordination at the ministerial level. Only the first activity could be started during the 2004–2007 period. The planned activity of improving public administration performance was delayed until 2008 due to lack of funding, and more recently, due to a misunderstanding in which the counterpart ministry was expecting only the provision of equipment, while UNDP was considering institutional, rather than only material, support. In addition to the anti-fraud project (see Box 3), UNDP provided institutional support to the Official Journal, which electronically records all official documents.

Strengthening local governance

UNDP backed governmental decentralization efforts, mainly through institutional support to the technical committee for the evaluation of decentralization, which included representatives from all ministries. A training programme based on a needs assessment of locally elected officials was being finalized in March 2008. The positive role played by UNDP in the organization of Departmental Parliamentarian Conferences (see Box 1) led to the decision of the Ministry in charge of decentralization to request the office's assistance in that sector. The Conferences also convinced the government to allocate resources to local authorities. In 2008, support to local development programmes will start in two regions on a pilot basis.

Box 1. Strengthening Parliament

The programme organized workshops and study tours for the staff supporting the secretariats of both the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as for parliamentarians. Training for parliamentarians was aimed at improving their knowledge on organization, processes, parliamentary diplomacy and budgetary issues.

The programme helped create the Centre of Information and Legislative Research of the Parliament by providing equipment, computers and documentation. Unfortunately, access to the Internet never materialized, as the Parliament Secretariat failed to earmark resources to finance the service.

Computers were also provided to the Finance Committee and the Brazzaville office of the Central African Network of Women Parliamentarians. The programme supported some initiatives to open the dialogue between the Parliament and civil society and to improve the image of the Republic of the Congo in the international parliamentary arena.

Major results of the programme included:

■ **Successful advocacy leading to policy formulation.**

UNDP made extensive use of the parliamentarian platform to advocate and raise awareness of a number of cross-cutting issues, such as HIV/AIDS, the environment, climate change, poverty alleviation, gender and new information technologies. The Parliament adopted official statements on most of these subjects.

■ **Promoting decentralization through organizing Departmental Parliamentarian Conferences.**

These gatherings aimed to initiate a dialogue, outside the capital city, between locally elected representatives and national parliamentarians, in order to discuss global issues, identify local needs and pave the way for decentralizing the political and administrative systems. Six conferences were organized from 2003 to 2006, but none were held in 2007 due to a lack of funds. The Parliament did not take over this initiative though its own financial resources.

■ **Successful introduction of gender considerations in programme execution.**

UNDP provided training to

women parliamentarians and supported the formation of the Central African Network of Women Parliamentarians.

The numerous achievements of this programme highlight it as one area of excellence for UNDP in the Republic of the Congo. The programme delivered the planned outputs; however, the anticipated results did not fully materialize. For constitutional and political considerations outside the programme's influence, parliamentary capacity to submit legislation proposals and exercise its legislative and governmental oversight functions remained weak. National ownership exists, but the sustainability of results is most often not guaranteed in the absence of budgetary allocations to pursue activities.

The strengthening of parliamentary institutions is not limited to building technical and administrative capacity. The process also requires strong national political will and support. The results of the programme should be examined from a longer-term perspective, and UNDP should continue its support, while insisting on concrete measures to ensure national ownership.

Strengthening economic governance

UNDP has only just begun activities related to economic governance. These remain limited to training initiatives for members of the Economic and Finances Commission of the National Assembly and the Senate.

3.2.2 MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS, COORDINATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

UNDP participates in consultations and coordination on governance issues through a Thematic Group and a National Community on Best Practices. For the preparation of the I-PRSP, the final PRSP and its supplementary documents, as well as for the ongoing preparation of the UNDAF, coordination with donors and the UN system was strong. The European Union, France and The World Bank are involved in support to many oversight and control institutions, including the General Inspectorate, the local equivalent of a general accounts office,³⁵ Economic and Financial Commissions and the National Commission against Corruption and Fraud. UNDP is or plans to be involved in

programmes with some of the same institutions and would also benefit from increased coordination with other actors.

Donor interest in strengthening parliamentary institutions facilitated the mobilization of resources. For other programmes, the UNDP country office used some of its regular resources and appealed for additional UNDP resources from the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund. Major donor partners in the area of governance included Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands through the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, the African Capacity Building Initiative and the ADB. UNDP also worked with international NGOs, such as the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

UNDP succeeded in raising awareness and enlisting the active support of the Parliament on a number of issues. UNDP was also able to provide advice through the use of South-South

Box 2. Promoting women in politics

The Centre for the Promotion of Women in Politics, an NGO receiving technical and financial support from UNDP, trained women on various topics. These included advocacy for political change, leadership and management, entry of young women in politics, access to decision-making institutions, women and democracy, and best practices in governance. These training sessions targeted individuals and representatives of associations. Most were held outside the major cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.

This project also developed a manual for women considering running for public office and helped women develop a

subregional network to exchange experiences in accessing political positions.

The Centre is recognized as a successful institution for its intellectual capacity and its active advocacy programme for promoting women in politics.

Such efforts, combined with strong advocacy with the Parliament, led to the revision of the electoral law to introduce a quota of 15 percent women candidates for parliamentary elections and 20 percent for local elections. The number of women parliamentarians, unfortunately, did not increase with 2007 elections (of a total of 137 seats, 12 seats in 2002 and

only nine in 2007). In anticipation of upcoming local elections, the electoral law is under revision to avoid positioning women only in unfavourable places on electoral lists.

In all political parties, there is still resistance to women's entry into politics, under the pretext that there are not enough qualified women.

This programme illustrates what one could term a 'dormant success'. Despite the absence of immediate results in the representation of women, conditions for a real success in the future exist. The programme is on the right track and requires sustained UNDP attention.

35 Cour des Comptes.

Box 3. Support to anti-fraud and anti-corruption initiatives

The programme began in 2003 with a survey that produced a comprehensive and clear picture of the extent of fraud and corruption in the country. As a result, a National Plan against fraud and corruption was prepared and approved by the government in 2004. This was supplemented by an operational plan, and a National Commission against fraud, misappropriation and corruption was also established in 2004. In addition, the Republic of the Congo ratified the UN and African Union Conventions against corruption in 2005 and 2006, respectively.

The IMF and The World Bank took over this area of intervention from UNDP, as it related to one of the major conditions for the eligibility of the Republic of the Congo under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative. A new National Council and a National Observatory against corruption have been established. The discussions related to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative also meant that a new survey on corruption and fraud had to be undertaken and the National Plan of Action revised.

The results of UNDP interventions have been limited, although the findings of the UNDP-sponsored survey have

been used as important inputs and statistical base for the recently launched National Human Development Report on the theme of governance.

Similar to the strengthening of parliamentary institutions, combating fraud and corruption is not only a technical and administrative operation. It should also be accompanied by strong national political will and support. UNDP opened the door to others, and its involvement in this area remains valid for the future—particularly for the provision of training to members of the new National Council and Observatory.

expertise, national and international NGOs and eminent personalities.

3.2.3 MAIN FINDINGS

The UNDP democratic governance programme was relevant in the context of a country intent on completing its transition to a multiparty democracy after widespread internal conflicts. The programme was comprehensive and touched upon several aspects of governance. It was conceived to address highly sensitive issues, while also looking downstream to address social needs at the same time. The selection of DEX or NEX modalities was appropriate and reflected the comparative advantage of having UNDP directly involved in critical and sensitive areas, such as surveys on corruption and support to political parties. The change in the programme largely reflected the transfer of some interventions to the Bretton Woods Institutions or project cancellations for a lack of funds.

The programme was designed to balance upstream and downstream activities for almost all interventions. This was particularly useful for gaining goodwill through a combination of

support at the level of strategic and policy development, combined with concrete material assistance in the same sector. For example, UNDP support to formulating legislation on the participation of women in politics was accompanied by support to an NGO actively promoting that goal.

The most effective interventions were in the area of support to parliamentary institutions, political parties and the promotion of women in politics. The organization of decentralized Department Parliamentary Conferences constituted a particularly innovative approach that should be evaluated further. Most of the achievements, however, must be seen as dormant successes in the absence of the necessary national political will to follow-up such initiatives by devoting human and financial resources.

Such political will, combined with the allocation of national resources, is often absent in governance programmes, as well as other areas of intervention, resulting in the abandonment of promising initiatives. This was the case of Departmental Parliamentarian Conferences,

discontinued in 2007, and the still-lacking Internet connectivity in the documentation centre created for parliamentarians. In contrast, the Centre for the Promotion Women in Politics is likely to become a self-sustained NGO through direct support from its members and elected women. UNDP will need to provide additional support to some of these activities in order to consolidate achievements, but should do it on the basis of government partners making an unambiguous and concrete commitment to assume full national ownership going forward.

For each of the activities falling under a broader component, outcomes with indicators were formulated, and outputs and annual targets were identified. Linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes were clear. Unfortunately, indicators and related baseline data were most often defined in a qualitative way, making measurement difficult and subjective.

3.3 POVERTY REDUCTION

The country programme approved in 2003 defined the goal of UNDP poverty reduction activities as “furthering governmental efforts in the formulation and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy.” The intended outcome was a “strengthened capacity for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs on the part of the government and civil society.”

As previously mentioned, the initial programme merged activities related to conflict prevention and recovery into the poverty reduction area. Most of these programmes are now considered part of a peace consolidation approach and are under the management of the UNDP local Governance Unit. For the purpose of this review, activities conducted under different themes are presented separately. Table 5 details poverty reduction activities.

The PRSP and the MDG strategy are important governmental priorities, both as part of the

country’s development policy and ongoing discussions with international financial institutions regarding economic restructuring and debt-relief programmes. Similarly, and despite operational difficulties encountered, the two community development programmes have been timely interventions in the aftermath of disruptive internal conflicts. These programmes were in line with two major thematic areas of the I-PRSP: the consolidation of peace and security, and rural development.

Except for the Support to PRSP and MDG Strategy programme, which focused on elaborating poverty reduction strategy documents, all activities were financed under the DEX modality. The Community Action project and the Emergency Programme for Rehabilitation and Support to Communities³⁶ were initiated soon after the end of the civil wars, and, in view of the severe disruptions caused by armed conflict, the prevailing opinion was that NEX would have been premature and unrealistic. In addition, the two projects heavily relied on implementation through NGOs, local associations and community groups.

3.3.1 REVIEW OF RESULTS

The main UNDP poverty reduction effort at the national level has been in supporting the preparation of the PRSP and the National MDG Strategy. UNDP provided financial support, equipment and technical assistance. The country office financed some of the thematic studies required to prepare the final documents and provided support for the distribution of the Information Bulletin of the National Committee on the Reduction of Poverty. UNDP was also instrumental in organizing consultations in all regions of the country, ensuring that strategy documents benefited from the widest possible participation.

UNDP supported the preparation of the 2004 National MDG Report and is currently helping finalize a National MDG Strategy. The second

36 *Projet d’Urgence de Relance et d’Appui aux Communautés.*

Table 5. Projects related to poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs, 2004–2007

Project	Execution	Duration	Budget (US\$)
Community Action	DEX	2000-2007	2.4 million
Emergency Programme for Rehabilitation and Support to Communities	DEX	2003-2007	4.6 million
Support for the Reintegration of Vulnerable Groups	DEX	2007-2011	153,632 (2007)
Support to Poverty Reduction (PRSP and MDG strategy)	NEX	2005-2007	0.8 million

Source: UNDP Republic of the Congo country office.

National Human Development Report, launched in March 2008, also benefited from UNDP support and inputs. Through the support from UNDP and other actors, the government is now equipped with tools needed to guide the implementation of poverty reduction programmes. The actual results of these actions will take time to assess and will largely depend on the sustained political will of the government to implement strategies and policies, as well as the government's continued cooperation with the international community to put in place the reforms needed to support the strategies.

The Community Action project, started in 2000, addressed the needs of communities' victims of the civil wars in the four worst hit rural departments of Pool, Niari, Bouenza and Lékoumou, as well as four neighbouring departments. It was conceived as part of the UN humanitarian and reconstruction effort in the aftermath of civil wars, and it was more akin to an emergency response than a development programme. The project set out to repair dispensaries and classrooms, rehabilitate wells and other social infrastructure, and work towards the reintegration of former combatants and war-affected communities. Local partner NGOs and associations were chosen hastily, and their performance was often sub-standard. Security restrictions and logistical difficulties made monitoring erratic at times.

Nevertheless, the project shows positive results, mainly on two accounts. First, the number of

indirect beneficiaries of rehabilitated social infrastructure is estimated at approximately 800,000. Close to 180,000 persons benefited from improved health faculties, and nearly 30,000 children benefited from rehabilitated schools. In addition, UNDP conducted rigorous information and training campaigns on peace, reconciliation and human rights. Second, the project emphasized a community-based approach with local project selection committees to review and approve proposals for rehabilitation and community participation in the implementation of activities. That community approach helped reduce local tensions and contributed to reconciliation and the consolidation of peace.

The Emergency Recovery and Community Support project was a component of a much larger programme, financed under a \$41 million credit and a grant from The World Bank/International Development Agency. The component entrusted to UNDP aimed to (i) strengthen the capacity of local NGOs and associations for the formulation of development projects and their monitoring and evaluation; (ii) promote partnerships at the local level between authorities and the population through the creation of consultative mechanisms on local development; and (iii) create employment through the implementation of small projects. Partners in the programme, in addition to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Agency, were the Ministry of Finance and the Agency for

Box 4. Support the socio-economic reintegration of underprivileged groups

The recently started Support to the Socio-economic Reintegration of Underprivileged Groups project illustrates the services now offered by UNDP through the CEDAP service centre.

In July 2006, the Ministry of Social Services, Solidarity, Humanitarian Affairs and Family* turned to UNDP for management assistance for a programme financed through a \$22.1 million grant from the African Development Fund, a contribution of \$6.6 million by the Government of the Republic of the Congo and \$100,000 by UNDP. Under the partnership agreement between the Ministry and UNDP, the country office is designated as responsible for procuring all goods and services under the

programme. During 2007, the first year of operation, UNDP procured \$153,632 in goods and services.

Established in 2007, the CEDAP has already shown positive results in accelerating delivery and reducing costs of UNDP-managed projects. The partnership agreement for the reintegration project is illustrative of a new area of intervention for the CEDAP. It is the first time that such a large and exclusively-procurement government programme was entrusted to the unit. At the beginning of 2008, discussions were underway with other ministries that were potentially interested in using the same services.

The advantages for ministries include speed and lower cost of procurement, compared to a heavier and less reliable governmental procurement and disbursement mechanism. There is, however, a twofold risk. First, should demand exceed capacity, the CEDAP could become over-extended, thereby losing some of its comparative advantages. Second, the approach needs to be balanced by stronger national capacity development and support to procedural and management reforms, so that CEDAP is not perceived as a simple substitute for management deficiencies in the civil service.

* Maintenant, Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux.

Technical Cooperation and Development, an NGO responsible for the implementation of most of the approved projects. The Government of Italy and two members of the private sector also contributed to the UNDP-managed component. The Government of the Republic of the Congo participated with a contribution of \$200,000.

The programme covered all regions of the country, except the cities of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. It contributed to improving socio-economic infrastructure through 37 separate projects. The agricultural production and fishery sectors implemented 153 projects, and 190 local development committees were put in place. There are no evaluations available of the impact of the programme.

3.3.2 ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

UNDP support to the development of national strategic documents allowed the country office to develop consultative groups on various themes. Such groups were useful instruments for an advocacy role on a number of issues related to good governance, the role of women, and the

need to mainstream HIV/AIDS or environmental considerations into all sectors.

The usefulness of UNDP support in this field is broadly recognized within the aid community and in the civil society. According to a prominent member of a large industrial union, the consultations organized under the auspices of UNDP provided unique opportunities for people from different horizons to exchange views and establish useful contacts, going far beyond the immediate purpose of the meeting. It should be noted that UNDP and The World Bank worked very closely on preparing the PRSP, co-chairing the donor consultative group in the process.

3.3.3 EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The poverty reduction programme, developed by the UNDP country office to support the formulation of major strategic documents while also engaging in activities such as community development, is an illustration of the sensible approach of combining up- and downstream interventions.

However, for the two projects related to community development, too little attention was

paid to sustainability during the design and implementation phases. For reasons related to security and transport difficulties, monitoring has been generally insufficient. Furthermore, no mechanisms appear to have existed to monitor the continued sustainability over the medium term, either for the maintenance of rehabilitated infrastructure or the continued viability of small income-generating projects for individuals or groups.

Throughout the implementation of the more operational projects, UNDP has developed partnerships with several local NGOs and committees. However, there is no evidence that UNDP has capitalized on this advantage by pursuing cooperation in the framework of other activities and programmes. Finally, the projects were planned and implemented during the immediate post-conflict phase under a sense of emergency. While quite appropriate at the time, the projects' structures were not completely in line with a development approach.

3.4 CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, several activities from 2004–2007 were inherited from the previous period. UNDP continued to assist

ex-combatants and victims of violent conflict and addressed the rehabilitation of infrastructure damaged by war. Given the specificity of such projects and the relative size of their budgets, the evaluation team chose to present them separately in this report (see Table 6).

Of all interventions, the only activity specifically mentioned in the approved 2004–2007 country programme is Collection of Small Arms for Development (PCAD),³⁷ with an outcome indicator of “improved public security.” Outcomes were defined under the individual projects, but too often in terms of what are really outputs.

The main characteristics of the UNDP post-conflict portfolio include:

- Projects are implemented under the direct execution modality (with the exception of the project to assist the integrated management of natural disasters);
- Projects are highly operational and demand a higher level of field presence than is normal for UNDP interventions;
- The total project value exceeds \$18 million, with a much larger average per-project allocation than in other country programme themes; and

Table 6. Projects related to conflict prevention and recovery, 2004–2007

Project	Execution	Duration	Budget (US\$ millions)
Collection of Small Arms for Development (PCAD I)	DEX	2004-2007	2.7
Collection of Small Arms for Development (PCAD II)	DEX	2007-2008	2.1
Rehabilitation of Rural Tracks	DEX/AGEX	2002-2004	3.1
Community Action for the Rehabilitation of Communities and Reintegration of Youth at Risk (PRESJAR)	NEX	2005-2007	3.8
Rehabilitation of Primary Schools (PRAEBASE)	DEX	2005-2008	8.7
Integrated Management of Natural Disasters and Risk	NEX	2006-2007	0.5

Source: UNDP Republic of the Congo country office.

37 Projet de Collecte des Armes pour le Développement.

- Significant synergies have been developed between different projects, particularly among PCAD I, the Basic Education Support Programme (PRAEBASE),³⁸ and the Community Action Project for Community Recovery and Social Reintegration of Youth at Risk (PRESJAR).³⁹

Two projects are closely related to larger programmes financed by The World Bank. PCAD I, financed entirely by the European Union, is the UNDP-run disarmament programme. It is complementary to the government-led demobilization and reintegration programme financed by The World Bank-operated regional Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Demobilization and Reintegration. For its part, PRAEBASE is one of four components in a \$20 million World Bank programme for support to primary education. All other components of PRAEBASE are implemented through the relevant Congolese line ministry.

Using the DEX modality for the portions of these programmes under UNDP responsibility has resulted in minor tensions, as some members of national institutions felt strongly that funds should have been channelled through them. One senior civil servant even expressed surprise that UNDP appeared to be competing with the government for resources.

Most of the projects that belong to this category have been planned and are being executed in an 'emergency mood', characteristic of post-conflict situations. Insufficient attention has been devoted to technical backstopping and to the initial mainstreaming of cross-cutting themes during planning. Important gender and HIV/AIDS considerations were introduced only later, during the course of implementation. As an example, the manual for PRAEBASE implementation had to be revised to ensure that

schools would be equipped with separate latrines for girls and boys.

In these projects, there is often confusion between outcomes and outputs. In PRAEBASE, for example, the outcome is defined as rehabilitated schools and the formation and training of a number of local community management committees. It is only at the level of The World Bank-sponsored programme that genuine, measurable outcomes are formulated. The UNDP project could have adopted the general outcomes, but could also have defined new ones, particularly in terms of the sustainability of the community management committees.

3.4.1 REVIEW OF RESULTS

Although conflict prevention projects did not form a part of an integrated programme, they have certain anticipated results in common.

The first is the restoration of a secure environment, particularly as related to Collection of Small Arms for Development. The general security situation in the country has vastly improved since 2000, to the extent that the government is now present and active in all but one small part of the country. The continued presence of illegal weapons,⁴⁰ not only with former members of the militia but also with other civilians, still poses a threat to security and stability. Some government officials think that the issue is now that of general public order rather than that of acute post-conflict emergency. This may be an indication that future emphasis of UNDP interventions should be more upstream. For instance, assisting the authorities in the development of legislation on arms possession and improving the management of national arms depots are two activities envisaged by UNDP for the next programme cycle.

38 Projet d'Appui à l'Éducation de Base.

39 Projet d'Action Communautaire pour le Relèvement des Communautés et la Réintégration Sociale des Jeunes à Risque.

40 The NGO Small Arms Survey, in a survey dated December 2007, estimated the number of small arms in circulation at some 34,000. Most of these arms are no longer possessed by the remaining militia groups.

The second expected result is the restoration of a favourable economic environment in areas devastated by war. Despite difficulties and the increasing gap between the poor and the rich, there are signs that economic activity is picking up in many areas of the Republic of the Congo. Unfortunately, this affects mostly urban areas, while the benefits of increased economic opportunities are substantially less in regions that remain under the control of militias. However, steps are being taken to improve access into and from certain areas. The rehabilitation of National Road One between Brazzaville and Kinkala is already changing prospects in the Pool Department.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which UNDP interventions influenced these achievements. Too many actors and factors are at play to isolate one particular initiative as dispositive. It appears that the major contribution of UNDP in restoring security and economic activity is more one of impact on mindframes and attitudes than actual measurable results.

There is no doubt that some successes were achieved. Arms have been collected, although the numbers collected were much fewer than planned. Some former combatants succeeded in establishing viable income-generating ventures. Schools have been rebuilt, and children are back in the classrooms, despite the continuing difficulties facing the primary education system. When asked to identify the single most significant UNDP contribution to the Republic of the Congo in recent years, a group of NGOs concluded that the much-publicized public ceremonies of burning collected weapons had the most profound effect on the minds of people and constituted a strong signal of return to normalcy.

However, many projects were plagued by serious operational flaws. The rural tracks rehabilitation project, operated by the United Nations Office for Project Services, is an almost textbook-like example of a failure. The project rehabilitated two of three roads, but fell short of completing the third by three kilometres, making it totally unserviceable. Furthermore, the two rehabilitated

roads, along with most of the national network, have not been maintained and have since fallen into disrepair. Two years after the formal end of the project, the donor and UNDP are still in disagreement regarding eligible expenditures and reporting.

The support given to building national capacity for the management of natural disasters is the only programme implemented under the NEX modality. While successful in establishing a national structure, the programme needs to be revisited in order to ensure that the results have not been affected by a recent change in ministerial responsibility for that portfolio.

The PRESJAR project, started in 2004, moved away from addressing only the needs of ex-combatants to also include youth at risk. It remains, however, very much linked to the conflict, as the rationale for inclusion of other young people is to prevent them from taking up arms. The aim of the project was to reinforce the integration of displaced rural communities, particularly youth and women. A mid-term evaluation highlighted high levels of participation by the local authorities and population, as well as the positive synergies developed between PRESJAR and other projects. It also noted, however, that the free distribution of materials, equipment and start-up funds could reduce the sense of ownership on the part of beneficiaries, consequently reducing the project's sustainability.

3.4.2 MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS, COORDINATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The projects benefited from generally active steering committees and a well-structured community approach. Coordination aspects were of crucial importance for the primary education project that forms part of a larger programme, and for the small arms collection that runs parallel to a larger project supporting the national demobilization and reintegration programme for former combatants.

With regard to the primary school project, coordination has been efficient. However, it was

markedly less successful for PCAD I. Despite the co-location of PCAD project management with the High Commissioner for ex-Combatants, the commonality of purpose and the synergies between the two related activities could have been improved.

For some of the activities reviewed, the country office benefited from allocations from the UNDP central Conflict Prevention and Recovery Trust Fund. Most of the resources, however, have been mobilized through the efforts of the country office. UNDP benefited from its previous experience in the Republic of the Congo and

elsewhere in the areas of disarmament, reintegration and community development approaches. However, operational and managerial issues have generated occasional tensions with two important partners and donors, The World Bank and the European Union. At issue with the former was the increase, during the course of the project, in the overhead percentage charged by UNDP against The World Bank contribution under PRAEBASE. The latter friction concerned serious misunderstandings between the European Union and UNDP regarding the management of the projects for the rehabilitation of rural tracks and PCAD I.

Box 5. Collecting small arms for development (PCAD I and II)

The PCAD programme is a follow-up to a joint UNDP/ International Organization for Migrations project conducted during 2000–2002.

Under the PCAD I project (2004–2007), UNDP defined the following objectives:

- The collection of 10,000 small arms voluntarily surrendered in exchange for a kit chosen by the beneficiary from a menu of options;
- A component aimed at promoting economic and development activities as an alternative to a livelihood based on violence; and
- A component aimed at reinforcing the capacity of the High Commissioner for the Reintegration of Former Combatants, the national institution in charge of implementing the national plan for demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration.

The second and third objectives were never implemented, essentially due to the absence of financing. As a result, the project concentrated its activities only on the collection of weapons and the provision of goods in compensation.

The intention was for the office of the national High Commissioner to give priority to ex-combatants having surrendered their weapons for the benefits of reintegration assistance.

Unfortunately, disarmament occurred before most of such assistance was available, resulting in a high degree of frustration for the former combatants. Similarly, the small arms collection went ahead without the counterpart goods being available in UNDP stores, thus generating further frustrations. UNDP partly compensated by using the resources of the PRESJAR project to provide reintegration assistance to some beneficiaries and establish its presence in the Pool Department.

The geographical coverage of the project was gradually reduced to only two areas. Furthermore, due to political considerations that prevented the development of operations in the Pool Department during negotiations between the government and the CNR, collections took place only in Brazzaville.

By the end of the project, the activities in Brazzaville had resulted in the collection of:

- 1,308 weapons, falling far short of the target but partly compensated by;
- 626,533 bullets and other ammunition; and
- 2,383 grenades and other explosives.

The project fell short of expectations regarding the number of weapons collected and suffered from operational malfunctioning. Nevertheless, it had a significant impact on the people by giving a clear signal of a return to normalcy, and by contributing to re-establishing a peace and reconciliation climate.

UNDP has used some of the lessons learned through the PCAD I project in planning and implementing its successor, PCAD II. The synchronization between weapon collection and the distribution of material compensation is now assured, at least for the first 1,200 beneficiaries. The project had started its first collection campaign at the beginning of 2008 in some neighbourhoods of Brazzaville. By March 2008, approximately 10 small arms were collected every day.

3.4.3 MAIN FINDINGS

UNDP interventions corresponded to expressed national priorities, the broad corporate parameters of the organization, and genuine needs felt by the Congolese population at large. Education, livelihoods and the restoration of a secure environment remain high priorities for all Congolese people. However, questions remain as to whether or not UNDP should engage in activities such as the rehabilitation of roads or the rebuilding of schools where the experience of the organization and its comparative advantages are limited. On the other hand, UNDP has a recognized expertise in the area of small weapons and disarmament, but usually links those activities more forcefully with reintegration and community development.

An additional and related question is the long-term prudence of continuing programmes directly linked to the conflict. The wars that ravaged large parts of the country have now been over for nearly 10 years. Relative security has returned to most previously troubled areas, leaving only parts of the Pool Department under the control of a faction that has not yet accepted participation in the emerging democratic process. Most observers recognize that the situation in the Republic of the Congo is no longer one of post-conflict, typically characterized by the need to engage in emergency programmes mainly benefiting former combatants and their victims. Still, the majority also recognizes that the state of affairs remains fragile, and that upcoming local and presidential elections of 2008 and 2009, respectively, will be critical benchmarks in the return to normalcy. UNDP should develop clear exit strategies from the remaining activities of a post-conflict nature early in the next programming cycle.

Most conflict recovery projects only partly relied on a government structure for long-term sustainability. Small arms collection and accompanying integration activities, school rehabilitation and future maintenance, and group integration measures promoted under PRESJAR all rely mainly on committees arising from their own communities or on individual entrepreneurs.

The means to verify the long-term viability of small businesses or individual income-generating activities are almost non-existent. The vast majority of local management committees, put in place for primary-school development and maintenance under PRAEBASE, have not succeeded in securing independent sources of income that would enable them to effectively help their primary school. As such, the absence of a realistic exit and sustainability strategy creates a strong risk of jeopardizing the benefits of programmes. Such considerations should become an important feature in future planning.

Despite numerous operational problems, linked mainly to the technical nature of some projects and the difficulties of operating in areas where access was limited for security or logistical reasons, UNDP projects have contributed to the return of security and to the fostering of reconciliation. These interventions have benefited from the recognized competence of UNDP in disarmament programmes linked to community development and from the expertise gained by the organization through integrated community programmes. However, many activities suffered from poor technical backstopping, weak management and a light field presence. There are encouraging signs that UNDP has been addressing these weaknesses since the beginning of 2007.

3.5 ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The larger umbrella project for environment and energy was approved in 2005. With a budget of nearly \$7.7 million, it constitutes a comprehensive picture of activities undertaken by UNDP in this area, as it incorporates all projects started earlier, as well as pipeline projects. Various project components and activities are detailed in Table 7.

Although the specific outcome identified in the initial 2004–2007 country programme mentioned both environment and energy, activities listed in the initial programme omitted energy. In its

Table 7. Environment and energy programme 2004–2007: components and activities

Activity	Execution modality	Progress	Budget (US\$)
Component 1: Preparation of referential framework and capacity building			
Support for the preparation of government communication on climate change	NEX	Approved 2006; ongoing	\$420,000
Support for the preparation of national strategy and action plan on biodiversity and capacity building	NEX	Approved 2004; completed	\$188,600
Support for the preparation of national strategy and action plan for protection of soils	NEX	Approved	\$10,000
Support to national self-evaluation of environmental capacity	NEX	Approved 2004; started 2006	\$230,000
Control of refrigerants	NEX	Approved 2006; ongoing	\$118,070
Component 2: Protection of forest ecosystem / observatory on climate change			
Agro-forestry community development programme	DEX or AGEX	Pipeline	
Conservation of cross-boundary biodiversity (Cameroon, Gabon, Congo)	DEX	Project approved and just started	(\$44 million approved)
Establishment of an observatory and network on climate change	DEX	Pipeline	
Component 3: Promotion and production of renewable energy			
Distribution of improved cooking stoves	DEX	Pipeline	
Building of micro-dams	DEX	First phase completed; second phase being finalized	(Second phase, \$21 million under discussion)
Production of renewable energy through solar kits	DEX	Cancelled	
Component 4: Reduction of marine and coastal pollution risks			
Measurement of impact of pollution on resources and health	DEX	Pipeline	\$5 million
Study of water ecosystems biodiversity	DEX	Pipeline	
Establishment of a map database	DEX	Pipeline	
Preparation of a long-term policy and strategy to protect marine and coastal ecosystems	DEX	Pipeline	
Component 5: Urban environment and living standards			
Evaluation of urban pollution	NEX	Ended in 2007	\$90,000
Capacity-building for urban waste management	NEX		
Support to eliminate river pollution and land erosion	NEX		

Source: UNDP Republic of the Congo country office.

comprehensive programme of 2005, the country office corrected the omission and introduced an energy component. This also corresponded to an emerging government priority for the develop-

ment of renewable energy. In contrast, the planned environmental education and awareness activity was dropped from the 2005 programme and remains a pending proposal.

The anticipated outcome of the environment and energy programme was defined as “a strengthened capacity of national and sectoral authorities to plan and implement integrated approaches to environmental management and energy development that meet the needs of the poor.”

The programme developed by UNDP corresponds to national priorities as defined in:

- I-PRSP and the final PRSP;
- 1994 National Action Plan for Environment;
- 1995 National Action Plan for Forests;
- Relevant international conventions, sub-regional agreements and the New Partnership for Africa's Development; and
- UN strategies as contained in the UNCT CCA, the draft UNDAF and UNDP corporate and regional strategies.

It should also be noted that the Congolese population at large is becoming increasingly concerned about environmental issues and the need for alternative sources of energy. Together with the Amazonian region, the 200 million hectares of forests in central Africa constitute the ‘lung of the world’ and its biodiversity needs to be protected.

The programme was strengthened through systematic advocacy efforts. Advocacy through parliamentarians and public awareness-raising were particularly successful. The UNDP programme manager effectively provided advice to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and helped prepare official position papers.

The original programme document had defined clear outcomes with qualitative indicators for each component and sub-component. A qualitative baseline, a list of outputs and annual targets were also included. Due to the qualitative nature of outcomes and indicators, measuring results is time-consuming and subjective.

The linkages among activities, outputs and outcomes were clear. Activities and outputs were monitored through annual reports. The programme was initially conceived of as an

integrated undertaking. However, due to the need for fundraising in the absence of sufficient UNDP regular resources, it became *de facto* divided into several projects. The projects on biodiversity and climate change were audited in 2005, and all other projects were audited in July 2007, as part of the country office audit. It should be noted that in 2008, the environment programme launched an outcome evaluation by external consultants.

The steering committee established to oversee the programme never met. The minister designated as chairperson had other responsibilities, and was unable to organize, attend or chair the committee's sessions. A special counterpart unit, envisaged to provide the structured national support to the programme, was never staffed: the National Director was left alone to oversee activities with assistance, expertise and funding only from the external UNDP/Global Environment Facility. Despite its formal commitment to the programme, the government provided cost-sharing funds only for the micro-dams project.

3.5.1 REVIEW OF RESULTS

As Table 7 demonstrates, many of the activities planned under the environment and energy programme are still in the planning stage, awaiting funding and final approval. Component 1, preparation of referential framework and capacity building, has already started and is reviewed in more detail in Box 6.

Most of the activities under component 5, urban environment and living standards, have been completed, except for the waste management programme where, despite a successful pilot phase and good prospects for financing, the local authorities of Brazzaville were reluctant to accept the plan for unknown reasons.

The pilot phase of the waste management programme was successful in training young unemployed people, providing them with equipment and organizing them in groups to collect garbage and improve the drainage system in some critical neighbourhoods of Brazzaville. The execution of the programme was delayed by lack of funds, but the delivery rate was high.

Sites for the micro-dams initiative have now been selected, and the African Development Bank is expected to decide on final approval of the programme soon.

3.5.2 MAJOR PARTNERSHIPS, COORDINATION AND RESOURCES MOBILIZATION

Some donors and parts of the private sector are hesitant to fund environmental activities. In their opinions, the country has sufficient financial resources and should show its commitment to the environment more concretely. However, some members of the private sector now appear more open to funding projects. UNDP has signed a framework cooperation agreement with Total, the largest oil sector operator in the country, and is in discussions with other large firms.

With limited human resources to manage the environment and energy portfolio, UNDP has had to emphasize resource mobilization over

coordination. However, initiatives such as the creation of a community of practices on environment should be commended.

UNDP successfully mobilized important financial resources, mostly from the Global Environment Facility. This in turn increased the interest of the African Development Bank for funding large projects, and allowed UNDP to prepare the ground for exploring financing partnerships with private sector enterprises such as Total, CIB⁴¹ and SARIS.⁴² UNDP also balanced its interventions between up- and downstream initiatives, a strategy that proved useful for resource mobilization.

3.5.3 MAIN FINDINGS

The programme was relevant to national goals, international conventions and UN objectives. It was also well focussed on minimizing potential negative impacts on the environment from the

Box 6. Preparation of referential frameworks and capacity building

Under this programme component, UNDP provided support for the achievement of the following results:

- The production of a first report on climate change that was submitted to the parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. A second report is currently being prepared;
- A national strategy and action plan for biodiversity, to be reviewed by the Council of Ministers and Parliament for final approval;
- A national strategy and action plan for the protection of soils. The follow-up pilot project is now frozen due to political considerations in the selection of the two proposed sites, which in turn has complicated the mobilization of external resources;

- A comparative assessment of carbon dioxide emissions in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, which highlighted the responsibility of the energy and transport sectors in urban pollution; and
- A project for the recuperation and recycling of refrigerants implemented in both Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.

The reports and national plans under this programme were prepared through a participatory approach involving national representatives and consultants. UNDP also promoted the establishment of a 'community of practices' on environment and energy, which helped increase awareness and develop several other environmental study reports.

The expected outcome of national institutions having the capacity to formulate and implement policies and strategies related to the environment was not fully achieved. National strategies have been developed, as well as plans of action, but there is not yet a fully dedicated national agency in charge of environment. The Ministry of Tourism and Environment currently covers the environmental theme, but it lacks the human and financial resources necessary for the task and suffers from a high turnover rate at senior level. The Government is sensitive to environmental issues, but not committed to the point of transforming this awareness into appropriate human and financial resources and the establishment of a dedicated national structure.

41 Compagnie Industrielle du Bois, wood industry.

42 Société Agricole de Raffinage Industriel du Sucre, sugar industry.

exploitation of forestry and the extraction of oil. It was important to re-introduce energy concerns in the programme, including the promotion of renewable energies. The programme is internally coherent, but because it was managed as a portfolio of projects in order to mobilize funds from different donors, it did not fully align with the typical UNDP integrated programming approach.

Capacity-building through networking and consultative processes was the salient point of the programme and can be considered an effective way of ensuring a measure of sustainability. However, due to weak financial government support and high turnover of senior officials in the field of environment, sustainability of the national management capacity and the strengthening of the ministry in charge of environment initiatives were not ensured.

Mobilizing NGOs in support of environmental projects, raising awareness among parliamentarians, the private sector and local communities, and involving national researchers and academics strengthened national ownership.

The mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, such as gender, was envisaged mainly through a planned project for improved cooking stoves. Unfortunately, that activity had to be abandoned for lack of funding. The combination of up- and downstream interventions provided two levels of entry that were useful in building a positive image of UNDP with the population, government counterparts and parliamentarians.

By their nature, interventions in the fields of environment and energy have important regional and subregional linkages. The programme has effectively integrated a subregional approach and has built bridges with initiatives requiring coordination among countries from the subregion. The technical and financial support from the Regional Centre in Dakar was highly

effective. The country office also intends to promote the streamlining of environmental concerns in all development interventions.

The lack of UNDP core funds resulted in stretching already-limited UNDP capacity in different directions: resource mobilization, partner consultation, and advisory and advocacy services. Consequently, there was little time for UNDP to coordinate with donors.

3.6 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The country programme adopted three cross-cutting themes: gender, HIV/AIDS and NICT. All UNDP programme activities were intended to reflect and include these themes.

Although the mainstreaming of cross-cutting themes was initially weak in some projects, efforts were made to re-introduce gender and HIV/AIDS considerations during the course of implementation. In addition, the country office developed a strong advocacy strategy on both issues.

For the theme of HIV/AIDS, UNDP provided support to the formulation of a National Strategic Framework. It also conducted a number of capacity-building and support activities in favour of the Permanent Executive Secretariat/National Council to Fight AIDS and STDs (SEP/CNLS),⁴³ in addition to providing training to teachers and religious leaders. In cooperation with UNICONGO,⁴⁴ UNDP helped some 30 private-sector operators develop a strategy to address HIV/AIDS on work sites. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria provided a large grant to SEP/CNLS, mainly due to the support provided by UNDP country office.

UNDP interventions related to gender took the form of advocacy and support to women in politics described in Box 2 in section 3.2, covering good governance programmes.

43 Secrétariat Exécutif Permanent/Conseil National de Lutte contre le SIDA et les IST.

44 UNICONGO is the private sector Inter-professional Union of the Congo, grouping manufacturers and national and international industrial firms operating in the country.

Two major activities were undertaken relating to NICT. The first consisted of support given to the formulation of a national strategy on NICT. The second represented direct interventions to help two national institutions, the Parliament and the Ministry of Finance. UNDP helped create an information and research centre for parliamentarians. Unfortunately, the centre is not yet operational due to lack of

funding for an Internet connection. UNDP also assisted the Ministry of Finance with the creation of a Web site designed to facilitate citizen access to information on government projects and programmes. Despite the Web site's creation, the Ministry did not activate the service. In the absence of national follow-up, the two interventions have failed to produce the expected results.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reviews the main conclusions of this evaluation, addressing the relevance of UNDP interventions during 2004–2007, their effectiveness in contributing to development results, the sustainability of these results and the strategic positioning of the UNDP country office. It also provides recommendations on possible future directions.

4.1 THE RELEVANCE OF UNDP INTERVENTIONS

The areas of interventions in which UNDP engaged correspond to expressed national priorities, the broad corporate parameters of the organization, and to the genuine needs felt by the Congolese population at large. UNDP interventions address problems perceived by the Congolese as crucial to their well-being and development. Most of these interventions are aligned with areas where UNDP has recognized competence and expertise, including promotion of good governance, development of pro-poor strategies, support to national environmental policies and plans, and disarmament through community action. However, some activities, such as infrastructure-rehabilitation projects, are less in line with UNDP competencies.

The country programme continued to feature a number of activities that were either a continuation of the previous cycle's post-conflict projects or were targeted to beneficiaries defined in relation to a conflict that ended almost 10 years ago. The generalized poverty affecting the whole population and the difficult economic conditions, particularly

in rural areas, justifies an approach that moves from targeting ex-combatants to a more generalized, pro-poor and community-based approach.

However, the programme should continue to address issues related to peace consolidation⁴⁵ through more upstream interventions aimed at improving governance, developing poverty reduction actions that address whole communities, and fostering public security. The latter would benefit from a focus on developing legislation on firearms and the management of national arms depots. In the phase that should follow the second cycle of elections, UNDP should concentrate on peace consolidation initiatives in areas of recognized UNDP competence.

The regular resources allocated by UNDP to the Republic of the Congo are relatively meagre when compared to the vast needs of the population, the majority of which lives below the poverty line. This has forced the country office to develop an aggressive fundraising strategy that diverted staff away from important tasks and, at times, created misunderstanding and annoyance with partners. It has also reduced the capacity of the office to use regular resources as seed money for larger projects, with a view towards attracting both donor funding and national cost-sharing contributions.

The special circumstances of the Republic of the Congo, specifically its low human development index despite the technical classification as a lower middle-income country, should prompt the

⁴⁵ The three areas of peace consolidation as used in this report reflect the conclusions of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development meeting in Addis Ababa on 16–17 February 2006.

country office, with support from UNDP headquarters, to develop new funding strategies. During the process of finalizing this report, the evaluation team was informed that UNDP had already negotiated increased cost-sharing agreements with countries facing similar situations.⁴⁶ The formula could be explored for the Republic of the Congo. At a minimum, this would require that the government, through cost-sharing from national resources, matches UNDP inputs from regular resources.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP INTERVENTIONS

UNDP programmes in the Republic of the Congo have combined up- and downstream activities. Upstream, UNDP has been instrumental in developing a number of national strategy documents and plans of action, as well as legislation on a number of issues crucial for the promotion of democratic institutions, improvement of governance, protection of the environment, gender equity, HIV/AIDS, pro-poor policy formulation and the attainment of the MDGs. This has been accompanied by a very visible and effective advocacy effort, which has been one of the main strengths of UNDP in the Republic of the Congo.

Downstream interventions have been essential for UNDP to gain the credibility and access needed to effectively engage in advocacy on several politically sensitive issues. This combination of two levels of entry has been commendable and productive.

UNDP has also succeeded in developing important synergies between some projects and activities, particularly in its support of former combatants and its advocacy with parliamentary institutions.

One of the important aspects of UNDP action in the country has been the development of a field presence outside the capital. The choice of

locations has been sensible and the intention of making at least some of these offices UN hubs was laudable. Unfortunately, the reality fell short of expectations as, in terms of management and organization, the offices remained more UNDP than UN offices. The offices did provide useful services to visiting members of the UN team, but neglected the necessary linkages with other organizations, including NGOs. Despite some management weaknesses and a too-sporadic presence of senior staff, the office in Kinkala, in the department of Pool, became an important symbol of return to normalcy in that troubled region.

Cross-cutting themes of gender and HIV/AIDS were not always taken into account at the initial planning phase, but were re-introduced during the course of implementation. Additional attention will be needed during the project design phase in order to ensure more systematic mainstreaming. The intention of the country office to more systematically include the environment as an underlying concern in the design of development projects should be encouraged.

In general, the definition of outcomes and their indicators remains weak. More importantly, however, even when valid indicators exist, the country office and project management staff do not have the human or financial resources needed to ensure proper monitoring. This makes proactive programme management more difficult in the absence of measurable indicators of progress and effect. It similarly complicates the final evaluation of programmes. Commendable work has been done for the development of outcomes, indicators and means of verification in preparation for the UNDAF of 2009–2013. This represents an opportunity for UNDP to improve its own performance and develop a joint UN approach to some monitoring and evaluation functions.

4.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

The sustainability of results achieved with UNDP support remains problematic. For upstream

⁴⁶ The examples of Botswana and Gabon were cited.

interventions where the output was defined as the development of a national strategy or workplan, it often happened that the outputs were successfully produced but did not yield the anticipated effects. This evaluation has used the phrase 'dormant success' to describe this gap between successful outputs and the absence of effective results. It is hoped that the expected results will materialize, if future authorities exercise the necessary political will and allocate appropriate human and financial resources.

Such an end result is often the same for downstream projects, in which sustainability depends upon local communities and their management committees pursuing these activities with their own resources after the UNDP-supported initial phase. The situation is considered a little better for income-generating assistance to individuals or small groups, although the longer term monitoring of initial successes is weak or absent.

The consequences of lacking sustainability include a gradual loss of the benefits of the project, lack of subsequent implementation of the developed strategies and sectoral policies, and the complete abandonment of management structures and instruments. It also means that effective UNDP exit strategies cannot be implemented.

The primary condition for sustainability remains the presence of the political will of authorities to address structural and procedural issues related to the efficient allocation and utilization of public resources. In the programme design phase, UNDP could have given more attention to developing a more comprehensive exit strategy. Such a strategy could include designating an entity to take over the activity, the conditions to make this transition effective, and benchmarks to monitor the commitment and capacity necessary to assume full ownership of the programmes by national and local institutions or by relevant community organizations.

Despite having the resources at their disposal, local authorities appear to have been hesitant to financially participate in projects on a cost-sharing

basis. UNDP would need to initiate discussions on this important issue with the government, possibly on the basis of the formula mentioned in section 4.1. A cost-sharing approach should become the rule rather than the exception.

Human resource weaknesses within the civil service remain a factor impeding both efficient national participation in programme activities and full national ownership. A number of capacity-building initiatives have been implemented under various projects. The effort, however, could have been more systematic and structured. It would be useful for UNDP to link to existing initiatives, so as to promote a concerted and coordinated capacity-building effort between donors and the government.

4.4 UNDP STRATEGIC POSITIONING

UNDP has made judicious decisions in the selection of its intervention areas. At this juncture, it is appropriate to question the continued pertinence of continuing post-conflict activities beyond the current programme cycle. UNDP should now build on its comparative advantages in the areas of good governance, the development of pro-poor strategies, community development programmes, the regional approach for environment and its strong advocacy services.

UNDP has developed good relations with some civil society organizations and private sector actors. A more structured partnership with NGOs is needed. A number of consultative mechanisms with wide participation exist, but they can be rendered more effective and meaningful. Coordination, on the other hand, is relatively weak and initiatives are required to reflect on the issue with donors, the UN system, larger NGOs and the government.

The relations between UNDP and the multilateral and bilateral development community have been excessively based on financial partnerships. UNDP needs to reassert its intellectual leadership in areas of its competence by capitalizing on its good work organizing thematic and consultative groups for the preparation of major strategy papers.

UNDP participation in UN inter-agency coordination has been effective, despite the remaining—and unavoidable—ambiguity resulting from the dual roles of UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative.

Overall, UNDP enjoys a favourable image in the Republic of the Congo and has developed excellent relations with its government counterparts. The media coverage of UNDP activities is intense and productive.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Twelve recommendations are derived from the analysis contained in this report. These are:

GENERAL AND STRATEGIC ISSUES

1. The next Republic of the Congo country programme should build upon demonstrated UNDP comparative advantages. These include UNDP support for good governance, pro-poor and community development approaches, a regional approach to environmental issues and strong advocacy capability. UNDP should gradually phase out post-conflict activities.
2. In order to ensure lasting stability and sustainable development, peace consolidation should become the central focus and underlying theme for most UNDP activities, particularly those in good governance and poverty reduction.
3. UNDP should continue to emphasize the linkages between upstream and downstream approaches, intervening at both political and operational levels in all programmes.
4. Based on experience in other countries, UNDP should engage the government in negotiations aimed at increasing national cost-sharing contributions to at least equal the resources allocated by UNDP.
5. Particular attention needs to be devoted to fostering national ownership and ensuring sustainability. This could include:

- Greater attention during the project design phase to incorporating a sustainable exit strategy, based on identifying the national mechanisms expected to take over, defining conditions of an effective management transfer and establishing benchmarks for monitoring relevant preparations and the capacity of the chosen national entity;
 - Intensified efforts in national capacity-building through establishing a comprehensive and structured programme in close coordination with the government and other development actors;
 - Continued gradual and prudent approach to increasing the national execution component of programmes; and
 - A clear demonstration of the political will of national authorities in addition to their commitment to assuming ownership of programmes, in particular through increased cost-sharing as outlined in recommendation four above.
6. In close consultation with all partners, UNDP should start to reflect on ways to improve coordination among development actors. This is of particular importance for good governance initiatives, in view of the UNDP intent to further develop its support to some financial oversight and administrative institutions.

OPERATIONAL ISSUES

7. The UNDP country office in the Republic of the Congo should vigorously pursue its efforts to improve programme delivery. In addition, measures of rewarding staff efficiency should be established, and the new CEDAP should be independently evaluated in 2009, after two full years of operation.
8. The formulation of outcomes, indicators and means of verification should be improved. In possible collaboration with donor-partners, the UNDP country office must ensure that sufficient financial and human resources are

devoted to monitoring outcomes as well as outputs. In defining outcomes for the next UNDAF, UNDP should build upon inter-agency work and encourage the development of a system-wide approach to outcome monitoring and evaluation.

9. The country office should engage partners in discussions geared towards improving the performance and efficiency of Project Review Committees and Steering Committees.
10. UNDP offices outside Brazzaville need to develop their services for the benefit of both UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. This should include creating open and inclusive coordination hubs at the local level, promoting cross-fertilization, and undertaking activities such as mapping development and humanitarian actors, which was previously done through the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
11. More attention should be given to the mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS considerations into the country programme during its initial design phase.
12. While direct environmental interventions should continue, particularly in subregional contexts, the country office's intent to treat such concerns as cross-cutting should be encouraged.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

1. BACKGROUND

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) regularly conducts a number of country evaluations, referred to as Assessments of Development Results (ADRs), in order to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to development results at the country level. Conducted in selected countries, ADRs focus on outcomes, critically examine achievements and constraints in the UNDP thematic areas of focus, draw lessons learned and provide recommendations for the future. The ADRs also provide considered analysis for enhancing performance and strategically positioning UNDP support within national development priorities and UNDP corporate policy directions.

The overall goals of the ADR are to:

- Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;
- Serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions at the country level;
- Generate lessons from experience in order to inform current and future programming at the country and corporate levels; and
- Provide stakeholders in the programme country with an objective assessment of the results (specific outcomes) achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key actors during a given multi-year period.

An ADR is planned for the Republic of the Congo between the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008. It will cover the period from 2004–2007, as well as some previous years.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The purposes of the evaluation are to assess UNDP contributions to development results and its strategic positioning in the Republic of the Congo, draw lessons learned and outline options for improvements. The ADR will:

- Provide an independent country-level assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the development results achieved through UNDP support and in partnership with other development actors during the last five to seven years, with particular emphasis on the UNDP country programme;
- Contribute to accountability and to learning from experience, taking into account self-evaluations (project and outcome evaluations) and the role of development partners;
- Provide an analysis of how UNDP has positioned itself to add value in response to national needs and changes in the national development context; and
- Present key findings, draw key lessons, and provide a set of clear and forward-looking options for management to make adjustments in the current strategy and the next country programme.

3. RATIONALE FOR THE EVALUATION

The UNDP programme in the Republic of the Congo has been selected for an ADR. There were numerous reasons for selection. The completion of the 2004–2007 Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) presents an opportunity to evaluate the achievements and results over the past programme cycle and before. The findings will be used as inputs to the

2008–2011 country programme within the context of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The challenges that the Republic of the Congo faced during the years under the CCF can be summarized as the process of re-establishing political, economic and environmental security. Assessing UNDP contribution to the process can yield lessons for the organization. In addition, the country office acknowledged the need for and the timeliness of the evaluation.

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The ADR will review the UNDP experience in the Republic of the Congo and its contribution to overcoming social, economic and political challenges. The thematic focus of the evaluation will be the UNDP Country Cooperation Framework (2004–2007), as well as some of the previous UNDP assistance organized on an *ad hoc* basis. In the latter category, various UNDP projects focused on gradually re-establishing security, restoring basic social services, the recovery and/or creation of income-generating activities, and other activities in the areas of human rights, democratic governance and public affairs.

The 2004–2007 CCF was formulated based on the Interim PRSP and the government development strategy, *Nouvelle Esperance* (New Hope). It incorporates concerns related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The priorities stressed in the country programme refer to:

- Governance, which included building parliamentary capacity, support for anti-fraud and corruption measures, support for local governance by building the capacities of local communities, and support for the elaboration of governmental development strategies;
- Poverty reduction, such as UNDP assistance targeted at the promotion of youth employment and the reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Environmental and natural-resource manage-

ment, which included information, education and awareness-raising; fighting marine coastal pollution; urban environment and improvement of living standards; protecting the forest eco-system; and international waters, climate change and biodiversity; and

- Cross-cutting themes, such as HIV/AIDS, gender and development of new information and communications technologies.

The evaluation will undertake a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio and activities during the specified period. The process will assess key results, specifically outcomes—anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative—and will cover UNDP assistance funded by both core and non-core resources. Specifically, the ADR will address the:

- a) **Relevance of UNDP programmes:** How relevant are UNDP programmes to the country needs in the context of post-conflict recovery? Did changes in the UNDP approach reflect key national priorities? In sum, did UNDP apply the right development strategy within the specific political, economic and social context of the Republic of the Congo?
- b) **Effectiveness:** Did the UNDP programme accomplish its intended objectives and planned results? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the programme? What unexpected results did it yield? Should it continue in the same direction, or should its main tenets be reviewed for the new cycle?
- c) **Sustainability:** Are development results, achieved through UNDP contribution, sustainable? Do they ensure sustainability with a focus on national ownership, an enabling policy environment, capacity development, gender equality, human rights or other key drivers that UNDP considers in assessing development effectiveness?

In addition, the evaluation will analyse the strategic positioning of UNDP, in order to:

- Ascertain the relationship of UNDP support to national needs, development goals and priorities, including its relevance and linkages to the goal of poverty reduction and attaining other Millennium Development Goals;
- Assess how UNDP anticipated and responded to significant changes in the national development context, particularly those affecting poverty reduction and governance reform for sustainable development;
- Review the synergies and alignment of UNDP support with other initiatives and partners—including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the Global Cooperation Framework and the Regional Cooperation Framework—and assess how effectively UNDP has coordinated its work with other development partners; and
- Consider the influence of systemic issues, such as the policy and administrative constraints affecting the programme, on both the donor and the programme country sides, as well as how the development results achieved and the partnerships established have contributed to ensure the UNDP relevance and strategic position.

5. METHODOLOGY

The assessment will use a multiple method approach that includes desk reviews, workshops and meetings, and group and individual interviews at headquarter and field levels. The appropriate methodology will be refined during the scoping mission and after further discussions between the team of evaluators and various stakeholders.

The evaluation team will examine, when appropriate, overall programming frameworks—e.g., United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Common Country Assessment, Country Cooperation Framework—to provide an overall picture of the country context. The team will also consider select project and programme support documents, as well as any country-level monitoring and evaluation reports.

Statistical data will be assessed where useful. The evaluation team will validate its findings using triangulation of perceptions, documents and data.

The Evaluation Office envisages a strong participatory approach involving concerned stakeholders. The identification of the stakeholders, including government representatives of ministries, agencies, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries will take place. The team will visit significant project and field sites as required.

The ADR will follow the guidelines developed by the Evaluation Office in 2006. According to these guidelines, the process can be divided in three multi-step phases.

PHASE 1: PREPARATORY PHASE

- **Desk review:** Carried out by the Evaluation Office in close consultation with the evaluation Team Leader, the country office and the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), the review will be based on the key questions for the evaluation, developed by the evaluation Task Manager and Team Leader in consultation with RBA.
- **Scoping mission:** The evaluation team will conduct a brief mission to the country to define scope, identify stakeholders, collect additional data and complete the evaluability assessment.
- **Inception report:** The report will include the final evaluation design and plan, background of the evaluation, key evaluation questions, detailed methodology, information sources and instruments, the plan for data collection, the design for data analysis, and the format for reporting.

PHASE 2: CONDUCTING THE ADR AND DRAFTING EVALUATION REPORT

- **ADR mission of data collection and validation:** The main mission of two weeks will be conducted by the independent evaluation team, led by the Team Leader.

- **Analysis and reporting:** The information collected will be analysed in the draft ADR report by the evaluation team within three weeks of the team departing from the country. The draft will be subject to factual corrections by key clients and to a technical review by the Evaluation Office. The Team Leader, in close cooperation with the Task Manager, shall finalize the ADR report based on these final reviews.

PHASE 3: FOLLOW-UP

- **Stakeholder meeting:** A meeting with the key national stakeholders will be organized to present the results of the evaluation. Comments will be incorporated into the final evaluation report by the Team Leader.
- **Management response:** The preparation of the management response and the tracking of its implementation will be undertaken internally by UNDP.
- **Learning events:** The dissemination of the report's findings shall serve the purpose of organizational learning, as part of the overall Evaluation Office dissemination and outreach strategy.

6. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The expected outputs are:

- An inception report (maximum 20 pages); and
- A comprehensive final ADR report on the Republic of the Congo (maximum 50 pages plus annexes).

The final report of the ADR to be produced by the evaluation team should contain, at the minimum:

- Executive summary of conclusions and recommendations;
- Background, with analysis of country context;
- Assessment of strategic positioning and programme relevance;

- Review of programme performance;
- Lessons learned and good practices;
- Findings and recommendations; and
- Annexes (e.g., Terms of Reference, persons met, documentation reviewed, statistics).

7. EVALUATION TEAM

An international consultancy firm will undertake the assessment and will designate an evaluation team. The team will comprise three consultants, one of whom will be the team leader, a team specialist with specific skills in topical areas relevant to the evaluation, and a national consultant with extensive knowledge of the country situation. The team leader must have a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice and in the evaluation of complex programmes in the field. The team members should have in-depth knowledge of developments in Africa and preferably be fluent in French.

The composition of the evaluation team shall reflect the independence and the substantive results-focus of the evaluation. The Evaluation Office will select the international evaluation consultancy firm.

8. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

EO will manage the evaluation, ensure coordination and liaison with RBA and other concerned units at headquarter level. The Task Manager will manage the evaluation process, in close consultation with RBA and the UNDP Brazzaville office management.

The country office will take a lead role in organizing dialogue and stakeholder meetings on the findings and recommendations. The office will act as a liaison between key local partners and the evaluation team, ensure the team's access to all available materials and provide support to logistics and planning.

The Evaluation Office will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ADR. These will

include costs related to participation of the Team Leader, international and national consultants, as well as the preliminary research and the issuance of the final ADR report. The country will contribute in-kind support. The Evaluation Office will also cover costs of any stakeholder workshops as part of the evaluation.

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are as follows:

- Desk review and analysis of documentation: January 2008
- Inception meetings in New York: 21–25 January 2008
- Scoping mission to the Republic of the Congo: 28 January – 4 February 2008
- Main ADR mission to the Republic of the Congo: 28 February – 12 March 2008
- Submission of final draft report: 25 March 2008
- Submission of final report: 22 April 2008

Annex II

KEY DOCUMENTS REVIEWED*

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Annex III

PEOPLE CONSULTED

GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Germain Bemba-Bantsimba, Inspector
of Municipal Services, Township of
Pointe-Noire

Benjamin Boumakany, General Secretary of
the Government

Jean Marie Bossina, Third Secretary, Permanent
Mission of the Republic of the Congo to
the United Nations, New York

Chantal Maryse Itoua-Apoyolo, First
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the
Republic of the Congo to the United
Nations, New York

Jocelyne Milandou, Vice President, Cour des
Comptes et de Discipline Budgétaire
(equiv. General Accountant Office)

Pierre Ngollo, First Secretary, Bureau of the
National Assembly

Alphonse Nzoungou, President,
National Commission of the
Fight against Corruption

Jean-Christoffe Okandza, Chief of Staff,
Ministry of Planning

Emmanuel Okandze, Administrative Counsellor,
Bureau of the National Assembly

Luc Joseph Okio, Minister Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of the Republic of the
Congo to the United Nations, New York

M. Oko-Olingoba, Chief of Staff, Bureau
of the National Assembly

Mwaziby Olingoba, Commissioner for the
Economic Reintegration of Former
Combatants, HCREC

Jean-Baptiste Ondaye, Director General,
Ministry of Planning

Gilbert Pana, Director, Government Publication
and Documentation

Emilienne Raoul, Minister of Health, Social
Affairs and Family

Col. Michel Sangha, Prefect, Pool Department
Etari Wa Dzon, Planning and Development
Department, Ministry of Planning

CIVIL SOCIETY

Lilian Barros, Coordinator, Comptoir Juridique
Junior (legal aid NGO)

Yvonne Bantsimba, Manager, Kinsoudi Primary
School, Brazzaville

M. Bitsangou, Deputy-Treasurer, Local
Community Management Group, Kinsoudi
Primary School, Brazzaville

El Hadj Djibril Bopaka, Union Nationale des
Opérateurs Economiques Congolais
(Employers Union)

Serge Bouiti-Viaudio, Coordinator, Human
Development Programme, TOTAL-Congo

Scholastique Dianzinga, Centre de Promotion
de la Femme en Politique (NGO for the
promotion of women in politics)

Father Christian de la Breteche, President,
Forum of Junior Enterprises (NGO)

Hervé Diata, Dean, Faculty of Economic
Sciences, Marien Ngouabi University

Georgette Ingani, Regional Director,
Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et
l'Assainissement (water and sanitation NGO)

Florent Kihoulou, General Secretary,
Fondation Niosi

Marie-Françoise Kimbadi, Director (Group B),
Kinsoudi Primary School, Brazzaville

Tsaty Mabiala, General Secretary, Union Pan-
Afracaine pour le Développement Social
(political party)

Célestine Matsima, Director (Group A)
Kinsoudi Primary School, Brazzaville

Florent Mboundou, Executive Director,
Association Congolaise du Bien-Etre
Familial (family welfare NGO)

Loamba Moke, General Secretary, Association pour la Défense des Droits Humains et de l'Univers Carcéral (human rights and prisons NGO)

Jules Arsène Myningou, Chief, Environment Department, TOTAL-Congo

Octave Gildas Ndalla-Bikoumou, Micro-finance Expert, Forum of Junior Enterprises (NGO)

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Annex IV

INFORMATION NOTE*

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has requested that Abacus International Management L.L.C. provide a team of independent consultants to evaluate the contribution of UNDP to development results in the Republic of the Congo. This exercise will primarily concern the period of 2004 to 2007. It will endeavour to analyse the projects and activities of UNDP and to compare the results of these actions to those that were anticipated when the currently ending programme cycle was adopted. The evaluation will take place between January and April 2008. The evaluation team is entirely independent from UNDP. It is composed of Abdenour Benbouali, Hyacinthe Defoundoux-Fila and Carrol Faubert, who will act as Team Leader.

For its research work, the evaluation team will visit the Republic of the Congo between 24 February and 10 March. It will meet, individually or in groups, with the principal partners of UNDP in the government, as well as with donors, international agencies and organizations, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society representatives. The evaluation team will also meet persons and groups who are not directly engaged in a partnership with UNDP, but who can contribute to the understanding of actions in favour of development, reconciliation and reconstruction.

The evaluation will analyse the major themes of the 2004–2007 programme, which support:

- Good governance;
- Poverty reduction;
- The preservation of the environment and the management of natural resources;

- Prevention and reconstruction in a post-conflict situation; and
- The cross-cutting themes of gender, HIV/AIDS and new information and communications technologies.

The team will also be concerned with non-budgetary activities and those implemented with small budgets, including advocacy, the development of partnerships, the development of national capacities, etc.

With regard to activities and programmes, the analysis carried out by the evaluation will address the relevance of strategic and programmatic choices of UNDP, the efficiency of intervention, the sustainability of results achieved, the national ownership, the strategic positioning of UNDP and its comparative advantages.

The following list represents some of the principal questions, to which the evaluation team will try to find answers. These questions will constitute the thread of discussion the team will have with you and other persons consulted.

1. What have been the main UNDP contributions to development in the Republic of the Congo? What could it have done differently to improve these contributions? Has UNDP made the right strategic choices?
2. Has UNDP been able to correctly analyse an evolving situation and to anticipate and adapt its interventions, programmes and projects to the environment in which it operates?
3. Have UNDP programmes correctly reflected national priorities? Do programmes fit in

* Unofficial translation from an original in French.

harmoniously with the efforts of other components of the international community in the Republic of the Congo?

4. Have the results achieved, positive or negative, in the areas of UNDP intervention been due to the efforts and activities of UNDP or to external factors?
5. Are these results of a permanent nature? Can they be sustained?
6. Do you see UNDP as a reliable and useful partner? How could it improve its relations with you and, generally, its image as an efficient partner for the development of the Republic of the Congo?
7. According to you, what determines the strategic and programmatic choices of UNDP? What are the external factors influencing UNDP choices?
8. Is UNDP perceived as an important agent of change in the areas of governance, poverty reduction, environment protection, reconciliation and reconstruction, the promotion of gender equality and the fight against HIV/AIDS?
9. Does the entire UNDP programme and its various projects, particularly in the areas of governance and poverty reduction, convincingly incorporate the stated priority of the promotion of women?
10. Does UNDP play an important part in the coordination between the different actors supporting development in the Congo? According to you, what is the UNDP “value added” in the development aid set up in the Republic of the Congo?
11. What do you think of UNDP interventions in advocacy activities, coordination, the development of partnerships and capacity building? Do you think that the actions and interventions of UNDP have an effect on sectoral and national policies?
12. Do the UNDP interventions contribute efficiently to supporting national efforts for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals?

Should you wish to send the evaluation team written comments prior to its arrival, you may do so by sending an e-mail directly to the Team Leader, or to the officer responsible for this evaluation in the UNDP Evaluation Office in New York. We would also be grateful if you could identify any documentation that could be useful to the evaluation team and, if the documents exist in electronic form, send them to the addresses above or provide a copy at the time of meeting with the team. The evaluation team will need documents, statistics and precise facts.

The evaluation team,
Brazzaville, February 2008