



## EVALUATION OF

# UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS

# SUSTAINABILITY



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# FOREWORD

The links between poverty and the environment have been long recognized. The first Human Development Report, published in 1990, demonstrated that poverty often exacerbates environmental degradation and environmental damage reinforces poverty. In the two decades since, UNDP has worked to address the poverty-environment nexus in initiatives at global, regional and national levels. This report, *Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Environmental Management for Poverty Reduction: The Poverty-Environment Nexus*, presents the results of an independent evaluation of that work.

The evaluation is a crucial contribution to UNDP's core mandate – poverty reduction and human development. The Strategic Plan of UNDP for 2008-2013 underlines the fact that preservation of the environment is an essential dimension of human development and wellbeing. It further recognizes that the poorest countries and people are most vulnerable to climate change and other environmental challenges.

The ultimate purpose of this report is to enhance the integration of poverty reduction and environment management into programmes of UNDP and the wider United Nations system. Many relevant initiatives, such as those addressing adaptation to climate change, are still evolving. For that reason, the evaluation aims to guide future work by highlighting both what has worked and what has not.

The evaluation reconfirms the importance of addressing the poverty-environment nexus if the core goals in poverty reduction are to be achieved. But it notes that the policy has yet to be translated into practice systematically. This is partly because UNDP country offices have significant leeway to determine their own programmatic priorities based on demand from national authorities. In some countries, programmes addressing

poverty reduction, environment and other focus areas continue to work in parallel. There are institutional disincentives to integration, including UNDP's organization into separate practice areas and dependence on external funding, which steers programming towards different priorities.

Yet many country offices have established structures and programmes that successfully integrate poverty and environment concerns. One positive example is the joint UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative. It has not only succeeded in integrating programming, it has also proved a successful model for cooperation between United Nations organizations.

As UNDP develops efforts to address the poverty-environment nexus, it needs to overcome focus area 'silos', which prevent cross-practice cooperation, and build staff capacity to work on poverty-environment linkages. The organization as a whole will also need to recognize the centrality of this integration to achieving its mission and the importance of developing relevant monitoring indicators.

I hope this evaluation will help UNDP to support partner countries more systematically and effectively as they move towards more holistic programming and work to integrate environmental management and poverty reduction efforts. As the issues addressed concern many other partners in the UN system, national governments and civil society, I hope that the report will also contribute to further debate and action.



Saraswathi Menon  
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DDC	Drylands Development Centre
DfID	Department of International Development (UK)
EC	European Commission
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTZ	German Society for Technical Cooperation
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (World Bank)
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LULUCF	Land use, land use change and forestry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLF	Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol
MYFF	Multi-Year Funding Framework
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation
PEI	Poverty-Environment Initiative (UNDP – UNEP)
PEP	Poverty-Environment Partnership
SGP	(GEF) Small Grants Programme
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignments from the Core
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP/GEF	The unit in the environment and energy group responsible for
GEF	programme implementation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
WBGU	German Advisory Council on Global Change
WHO	World Health Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

*The Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Environmental Management for Poverty Reduction: The Poverty-Environment Nexus* commenced in May 2009, as part of the UNDP Evaluation Office 2009-2010 programme of work approved by the UNDP Executive Board. The proposition driving this evaluation—that a nexus of issues closely links poverty alleviation and environmental protection—springs from common observations that:

- Development schemes run the risk of sacrificing longer-term environmental sustainability for short-term economic and job creation benefits;
- Over-exploitation of natural resources harms ecosystem health and in time reduces economic output;
- The rural poor disproportionately depend on the availability of natural resources for their subsistence livelihoods;
- Efforts to reduce pollution and conserve natural resources are unlikely to succeed if they unfairly restrict opportunities for local people to work and feed their families; and
- Integrated programmes can improve the livelihoods of the poor while protecting the environment.

These factors underline the reality that the nexus involves impacts in both directions: the effects of poverty reduction on the environment and the effects of protecting the environment on poverty. The evaluation considers the extent to which each set of relations is addressed in UNDP's work.

This evaluation encompasses an analysis of UNDP policies, strategies and programmes at the global, regional and country levels; implementation of related projects; and cooperation with other

United Nations agencies and donors regarding the nexus. The evaluation is both retrospective and prospective, taking stock of the past while looking into the future with respect to the role of UNDP in the field. While the evaluation acknowledges activities on poverty-environment linkages since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, the focus of analysis is limited to the period since 2004.

The evaluation builds from the objectives that UNDP set out in its policy and strategy documents. In the second multi-year funding framework, developed in 2002, the following core goals were established: (i) achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reducing human poverty; (ii) fostering democratic governance; (iii) managing energy and environment for sustainable development; (iv) supporting crisis prevention and recovery; and (v) responding to HIV/AIDS. The current strategic plan (2008-2011, extended to 2013) builds upon the earlier goals and has four focus areas: (i) poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs; (ii) democratic governance; (iii) crisis prevention and recovery; and (iv) environment and sustainable development. It recognizes gender equality and the empowerment of women as a crosscutting issue.

The evaluation assesses the relevance of UNDP's work with respect to national priorities and the UNDP mandate; the effectiveness of achieving development results; the efficiency of institutional and programming arrangements; and the sustainability of resulting benefits. It includes case studies in nine countries (Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Morocco, Paraguay, Rwanda, Trinidad and Tobago, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam) conducted by national and regional consultants under the guidance of the core evaluation team. These case studies were supplemented by telephone interviews in 29 other countries

and extensive interviews at UNDP headquarters and regional service centres and with key partner organizations.

As part of the strategic framework for the poverty-environment nexus, the evaluation considers the many international conventions and multi-lateral agreements developed over more than 40 years. Together these have established a global commitment to sustainable development. So, for example, it builds on the Rio Declaration<sup>1</sup> that "All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world." Also of particular importance to this topic is the Millennium Summit of 2000, which established the time-bound MDGs to be achieved by 2015, including Goal 7, 'Ensure environmental sustainability'.

The evaluation takes special notice of the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) managed in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme. It also gives special attention to UNDP's role as an implementing agency for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the largest funder worldwide of projects to improve the global environment. From 2006 to 2010, UNDP assisted partner governments to secure a total of \$1.146 billion in funding from the GEF, an average of \$286 million per year. This comprises roughly 50 percent of UNDP annual environment and energy expenditures. As part of its GEF implementation responsibilities, UNDP also administers the Small Grants Programme, which focuses on local environmental issues and is especially pertinent to the poverty-environment nexus.

Throughout the three decades of effort to enunciate a set of international norms for sustainable development, UNDP has been a key actor in

the United Nations system. The 1990 Human Development Report elaborated on the concept of sustainable development and the linkages between human development and the protection of natural resources and the physical environment. It further recognized poverty as one of the greatest threats to the environment, stating: "In poor countries, poverty often causes deforestation, desertification, salination, poor sanitation and polluted and unsafe water. And this environmental damage reinforces poverty. Any plans of action for environmental improvement must therefore include programmes to reduce poverty in the developing world."

## FINDINGS

**Within UNDP there is substantial recognition of a poverty-environment 'nexus' and of its importance for countries to achieve sustainable development. However, the articulation of this awareness is uneven and somewhat haphazard throughout the organization.** At the field level, the linkages are generally understood to mean taking account of poverty issues in environmental work. At regional and headquarters levels, the understanding of the nexus is sometimes more sophisticated but is rarely translated into a consistent articulation of principles and practices in strategies or guidance. Where good practice is found and replicated, it more often than not arises from individual 'champions' and country office initiatives rather than a coordinated institutional approach.

**UNDP's focus area structure promotes a 'silo effect' that makes cooperation across sectors difficult.** Since the nexus is not incorporated into UNDP's goals or measures of performance, there is no incentive for staff to take up integrative, cross-sectoral initiatives. Interviews and other evidence from the 38 country offices analysed in this evaluation show that in some country offices there has been very little coordination

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<sup>1</sup> 'Rio Declaration on Environment and Development', United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, June 1992.

between the environment and poverty focus areas (e.g. Botswana, Costa Rica, India, Kenya), while in others they have worked together on an ad hoc basis (Malaysia, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, Viet Nam). In some country offices a close working arrangement can be seen (Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka, Thailand), while in others the country offices have combined their focal-area structures to better address linkages (Cameroon, Senegal), or simply for greater programme management efficiency (Bulgaria, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine).

**UNDP's dependence on external funding, especially for environmental activities, reinforces the institutional focus on area-specific work and makes it more difficult to articulate the connections among UNDP priorities.** Most donors do not provide incentives to address poverty-environment linkages, although many external funding sources for environment programmes tend to be receptive to their inclusion. The GEF has been seen in the past as an impediment to poverty-environment linkages due to its focus exclusively on global environmental benefits. This has been changing in its past two replenishment cycles. Strategic plans now acknowledge the importance of promoting sustainable livelihoods to build local support, and there has been an expansion of programmes (especially small grants and programmes addressing land degradation) that focus on local impacts. There is evidence that UNDP has influenced GEF policy with regard to mainstreaming global environmental and local development benefits, particularly in the biodiversity focal area.

**A systemic impediment to effective integration of poverty and environment in UNDP's work is the absence of monitoring processes and indicators, which affects both the initiation and the design of programmes and projects and the determination of their results.** The lack of indicators to track poverty-environment linkages, either qualitative or quantitative, significantly diminishes attention to the related issues. Reduced ability to monitor progress also

reduces incentives. This applies to both programme and project monitoring, as well as to performance reviews of country offices and staff. The absence of monitoring and evaluation eliminates the potential for sharing and learning from best practices, and there is less information to disseminate about what is being done related to the poverty-environment nexus.

**UNDP's efforts to highlight the importance and potential of poverty-environment linkages have been mixed, with significant achievements but considerable variation in direction and priority.** In many cases UNDP has used the processes of donor coordination and development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to encourage greater attention to poverty-environment linkages. In Mexico, UNDP has convened multi-sector environmental consultative groups and established 'platforms for debate' at local, state and federal levels. In Dominican Republic, UNDP has taken the lead on environmental sustainability aspects of achievement of the MDGs and used this work to foster poverty-environment nexus issues in its interactions with government. In Sri Lanka, UNDP and the government have worked closely under the UNDAF to promote more attention to the nexus. In United Republic of Tanzania, UNDP has led the pilot 'Delivering as One' and UNDAF activities to expand coordination among donors and ministries regarding poverty-environment issues.

**UNDP's cooperation with other institutions on the poverty-environment nexus varies based on opportunities and on the level of interaction between organizations in a particular context.** Globally, UNDP is a partner to the major multilateral accords and conventions related to development. At the country level, UNDP plays a pivotal role due to its extensive country office presence and its management role of the United Nations resident coordinator system. This enables it to lead donor coordination and promote integrative activities through the UNDAF. Inter-agency rivalry at country level has sometimes inhibited cooperation, except

where co-funding and donor support have been sought, such as for a GEF project where such cooperation is mandatory. One specific partnership that formally integrates the two focus areas has exhibited high potential: the PEI, with UNEP.

**Country studies and interviews have shown that where nexus issues are recognized as critical to achieving sustainable development, there is strong support to address them in programmes and projects.** Positive examples have been seen in GEF-funded projects, notably the Small Grants Programme, as well as recent programmes on climate change adaptation.

**There is evidence that positive results at country level can be replicated.** Favourable outcomes of initial PEI projects in Rwanda and United Republic of Tanzania in 2005 led to a significant scaling up of the programme in 2007. Eighteen countries got involved, including several in Asia and Pacific and two each in Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. A further expansion of the PEI is anticipated.

**Country-specific circumstances regarding the nexus play a major role in how poverty-environment linkages are understood and addressed.** Results vary by country depending on the commitment of the government, degree of cooperation within the government, efficiency of UNDP advocacy and effectiveness of PEI implementation. Where government officials have recognized their country's dependence on natural resource management as a means to reduce poverty, there is good receptivity to the PEI. In five of the seven case study countries where it is operative, UNDP country offices were found to be supportive of the projects. They were using this approach to promote cooperation among practice groups and integrate poverty and environment into their activities as well as into government planning. Significant progress has also been achieved in other countries where country offices have actively promoted taking account of the nexus.

## CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1: Addressing the poverty-environment nexus is essential to achieving the UNDP mission. The linkages between poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and progress on achievement of the MDGs have been well established in analyses by UNDP and other major institutions. Poor people depend disproportionately on access to natural resources for their livelihoods, and development and poverty reduction programmes have significant effects on the environment.**

UNDP has advocated for consideration of the poverty-environment nexus through conferences, publications and statements from successive administrators. UNDP programme reviews have stressed the value of addressing poverty and environment concerns concurrently and pointed out that poverty-environment linkages move in both directions. Greater attention to climate change adaptation in recent years has contributed significantly to raising awareness and understanding about the importance of addressing the nexus coherently, including its relationship to UNDP's work on preventing and recovering from natural disasters.

**Conclusion 2: Strategic planning and advocacy on the poverty-environment nexus are occurring at UNDP, but policy is not yet systematically translated into practice. Conversely, examples of good practice and success at local and regional levels are not being effectively communicated and replicated.**

The current strategic plan makes reference to the centrality of environmental preservation for human development and well-being as well as the vulnerability of the poorest countries and peoples to climate change and other environmental factors. However, the emphasis centres primarily on focus areas and performance objectives, with insufficient attention to cross-area coordination. The absence of operational guidance on poverty-environment

linkages limits the willingness and ability of country offices to work with government partners to expand this cross-area coordination.

It is evident that the UNDP environment and energy units at all levels are increasingly including 'sustainable livelihood' considerations in their environmental work. However, there is less cross-sectoral recognition from the poverty teams. The difference owes to multiple factors, especially the priorities of partner governments and donors. Country offices have considerable latitude to promote cross-sectoral programmes and projects linking environment and poverty priorities. This has resulted in wide variance across countries and focus areas.

Some country offices have effectively used observational results from projects on the ground to demonstrate benefits and build support for poverty-environment linkages. These have raised awareness among government partners about the importance of addressing poverty-environment linkages and demonstrated their critical role in reaching UNDP's goals. This shows how the ability to monitor progress related to nexus issues can significantly improve outcomes.

Safeguard policies and environmental assessment screening mechanisms have been established by other international organizations, especially the international financing institutions, to help ensure that support for economic development does not harm the environment or indigenous peoples. UNDP does not have such mechanisms, but they are now under development. The Bureau for Development Policy has drafted amendments to the UNDP Programme and Operations, Policies and Procedures manual establishing environmental screening procedures for projects, and there are plans to consider new environmental safeguards policies. These mechanisms could enhance cross-sectoral coordination for poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

**Conclusion 3: UNDP's institutional and financing architecture serves as a barrier to integrated approaches. Particular problems are dependence on external financing and concentration of substantive capacity in headquarters focus area teams, not in country offices.**

UNDP's practice architecture and operational structure reinforce separation of focus areas, encourage individualistic approaches to specific topics and discourage cross-sector cooperation. Even the one programme explicitly focused on the nexus, the Poverty-Environment Initiative, is separate from the UNDP structure and operates through a parallel administration.

The financial system is segmented, and UNDP approaches country support differently in the poverty area versus the environment area. Most poverty-related funding goes to policy support at country level and comes from UNDP's core budget. In contrast, most support for the environment and energy area comes through earmarked donor funds and supports specific projects. This dichotomy has major implications for how the two focus areas can enhance cross-sectoral linkages.

UNDP's programmes for climate change adaptation (in development) hold promise for breaking down these institutional silos; the issues overlap with regard to responsibilities in UNDP's poverty reduction, environment and sustainable development, crisis prevention and recovery and democratic governance focus areas.

**Conclusion 4: UNDP efforts to integrate poverty alleviation and environmental protection programmes at country level depend on the interest of countries. All governments are committed to both poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. However, evidence suggests that many partner governments continue to believe there are major trade-offs**

**between these goals. Given the wide variation in poverty and environment challenges faced by countries, UNDP can demonstrate how to minimize such trade-offs.**

The differences between countries regarding reliance on renewable or extractive natural resources, susceptibility to natural disasters, dependence of the poor on the environment and governmental development priorities means that UNDP's approach to the poverty-environment nexus has to be highly adaptable and attuned to country priorities. Furthermore, the opportunities for identifying win-win situations vary considerably depending on the type of environmental issue. For instance, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and provision of clean water provide opportunities for poverty reduction. How seriously a country deals with the nexus depends on the commitment and ability of the country office to address these issues and the technical, administrative and financial support available from the UNDP system. It has been clearly demonstrated that country offices can accomplish better results if they have better guidance, support and sustainable funding to develop capacity and demonstrate positive results nationally and locally.

Country programmes that take account of the links with governance and crisis management help UNDP to achieve its goals more effectively. However, in countries that approach or pass middle-income levels but continue to have a high incidence of poverty and environmental degradation, country offices face reduced budgets that further limit their ability to address the cross-sectoral issues. Where governments do not prioritize addressing the poverty-environment nexus, this has contributed to reduced commitment by country offices to incorporate poverty-environment linkages into their programming. Conversely, where country offices have a strong commitment, they can better demonstrate the benefits of integrating environmental management and poverty reduction.

**Conclusion 5: UNDP is ideally situated to strengthen partnerships within the United Nations system to coordinate action on poverty alleviation and environmental protection.**

Cooperation and partnerships are an intrinsic part of the United Nations system at country level through the UNDAF. UNDP plays a key role in managing the resident coordinator system at country level and has the most extensive network of country offices. With its ubiquitous country presence and mandate to support achievement of the MDGs and meet international environmental convention obligations, UNDP is thrust into a prominent position in terms of building United Nations partnerships. In addition to its formal partnership with UNEP on the PEI and other environmental issues, UNDP cooperates with other agencies in the UN-REDD, climate change adaptation programmes, Drylands Development Centre and local donor coordination mechanisms. These collaborations improve understanding of the nexus issues and contribute to results. Yet there are examples of overlap or working at cross purposes, given the separate programmes and inconsistent cooperation among United Nations agencies and donors regarding poverty-environment linkages.

UNDP can help upgrade coordination among United Nations agencies. The UNDAF process in itself can improve cooperation and coordination among the agencies in support of government priorities. More attention to the poverty-environment nexus in UNDP contributions to UNDAFs can enhance its ability to assist governments address nexus issues and improve the overall effectiveness of the United Nations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1: UNDP should ensure that practices follow principles. In addition to following policy and advocacy, UNDP needs to learn from good practices and replicate successes.**

UNDP should build on its analytical work and successful programmatic experiences to integrate poverty reduction and environmental management in its operations at the country level. UNDP's policy work and advocacy on the poverty-environment nexus should be more systematically incorporated into its programming.

This will also require identifying good practices and lessons from operations at the headquarters, regional and country levels and analysing success factors that can be scaled up and replicated. An important part of this work will be enhancing knowledge management across the various units, regions and country offices to ensure dissemination of good practices and lessons.

**Recommendation 2: The Poverty-Environment Initiative represents good practice and should be scaled up to provide a model of how UNDP does business at the country level. It should also be used as a model for working together with UNEP and other agencies.**

UNDP should formalize the largely successful PEI, scaling it up from a stand-alone programme managed primarily as a part of the environment and sustainable development focus area to a cross-sectoral approach that informs the organization's work across the poverty reduction and environment and sustainable development focus areas, especially at country level. The PEI model should be used to develop effective ways of integrating the concerns of poverty reduction and environmental management in UNDP programming. It should also inform other programmes and initiatives, such as climate change adaptation, that integrate poverty reduction and environmental management.

The PEI approach should also be used as a model for collaboration with other agencies. Lessons from both substantive and organizational cooperation between UNDP and UNEP under the PEI should be analysed and used to inform future collaboration with other members of the United Nations family.

**Recommendation 3: UNDP should provide guidelines and create verifiable indicators to further integrate poverty reduction and environmental protection into other UNDP operations. It must also invest in developing staff capacity.**

UNDP should develop guidelines on how to integrate poverty reduction and environmental management goals into programming at global, regional and country levels. However, such guidelines will only be effective if staff understand the rationale for and importance of such integration and have appropriate incentives to work towards it. Therefore, UNDP must develop the substantive capacities of its staff in the regional bureaux and country offices to analyse poverty-environment linkages and integrate them into programming where appropriate. Furthermore, verifiable indicators should be developed to monitor and evaluate poverty and environment integration in programmes.

**Recommendation 4: UNDP must overcome the functional silos that prevent cooperation and integration between focus areas. Analysis of poverty and environment priorities should be incorporated into governance and crisis prevention and recovery, as well as gender support activities, and vice versa.**

UNDP should encourage cross-practice cooperation, recognizing that achieving results often requires integration and joint programming between focus areas. The design of country programmes should include a systematic analysis to help identify areas where results will be aided by integrating environmental management with the poverty reduction, democratic governance and crisis prevention and recovery focus areas. This analysis should comprise one aspect of UNDP's proposed environmental assessment screening process, and it can be a useful tool when UNDP develops new environmental and social safeguard policies. Addressing integration should be required in designing programmes where the importance of such linkages has been established.





## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

*Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Environmental Management for Poverty Reduction: The Poverty-Environment Nexus* commenced in May 2009,<sup>2</sup> as part of the UNDP Evaluation Office 2010 programme of work approved by the UNDP Executive Board.

The evaluation emphasizes UNDP's efforts to optimize its contribution to promoting sustainable development<sup>3</sup> and poverty alleviation. It encompasses an analysis of UNDP policies, strategies and programmes at the global, regional and country levels; implementation of related projects; and cooperation with other United Nations agencies and bilateral and multilateral donors regarding the nexus where poverty alleviation and environmental protection meet. The evaluation assesses the results of UNDP work where applicable, but it also takes a forward looking, formative approach.

The United Nations system has been urged to adopt “[a] comprehensive multi-dimensional approach to development” that embraces economic, social, environmental and humanitarian dimensions.<sup>4</sup> This evaluation looks at two critical dimensions of such an approach—poverty alleviation and environmental protection—and their interactions. It recognizes that adaptation to climate change presents a complex, multi-faceted challenge.

In 2008, the Evaluation Office completed an evaluation that assessed UNDP's positioning and contributions to managing environment and energy for sustainable development. One of the report's conclusions was that very limited progress had taken place with respect to mainstreaming environmental issues in the organization at all levels (headquarters, regional service centres and country offices). This evaluation provides an opportunity to follow up and consider whether progress has been made on environmental mainstreaming, specifically as it relates to UNDP's efforts towards poverty alleviation and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The evaluation also addresses the extent to which these nexus issues are integrated into other UNDP activities.

### POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS

The proposition driving this evaluation is that a nexus of issues closely links poverty alleviation and environmental protection. Evidence shows that development schemes often sacrifice longer-term environmental sustainability for short-term economic benefits and job creation,<sup>5</sup> and that over-exploitation of natural resources harms ecosystem health and in time reduces economic output. Environmental protection has a strong poverty dimension, given that the rural poor disproportionately depend on natural resources for their subsistence livelihoods. Public support is

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<sup>2</sup> See the terms of reference for the evaluation in Annex 1.

<sup>3</sup> This evaluation uses the definition of sustainable development from the Brundtland Commission: development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

<sup>4</sup> Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review, Economic and Social Council, Report of the Secretary-General, June 2004.

<sup>5</sup> UNDP does not currently require environmental impact assessments for its projects, although a new safeguards policy is being developed that may require environmental assessments for some projects. Evidence from other international institutions, including the World Bank, suggests that even where countries perform such assessments, the results are often not taken fully into account in development planning.

a critical factor; efforts to reduce pollution and conserve natural resources are unlikely to succeed if they unfairly restrict opportunities for local people to work and feed their families. Taken together, these dynamics suggest that integrated programming is necessary to simultaneously improve livelihoods for the poor and protect the environment.

The evidence also demonstrates that the poverty-environment nexus involves two-way interactions. Efforts to protect ecosystems and address other environmental problems can affect poor people's access to resources, and conversely, reducing poverty can affect the sustainability of environmental systems.<sup>6</sup>

## MANDATE

The objectives for UNDP's work on environmental management and poverty alleviation are elaborated through the Multi-Year Funding Framework 2004-2007 (MYFF II) and the subsequent strategic plan, 2008-2011 (extended until 2013).

MYFF II was developed in 2002. It addresses issues that were highlighted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which took place the same year in Johannesburg. In particular, the strategy stresses UNDP's role in helping countries achieve the MDGs. The following core goals were established in MYFF II:

- Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty;
- Fostering democratic governance;
- Managing energy and environment for sustainable development;

- Supporting crisis prevention and recovery; and
- Responding to HIV/AIDS.

The MYFF II contained six line targets for the energy and environment practice area. All of them referenced sustainable development and were explicitly linked to poverty reduction and MDG achievement. In contrast, none of the eight poverty practice service line targets made any reference to the environment, though half of them can be construed as directly relevant to environmental protection, and despite the environmental targets set out in the MDGs.<sup>7</sup>

The subsequent UNDP strategic plan (2008-2011, extended until 2013) expanded the emphasis on reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs and highlighted environment and poverty linkages. It stated that "...poor people depend disproportionately on the environment for their livelihoods...."<sup>8</sup> The strategic plan draws attention to urgent challenges facing poor communities stemming from climate change and notes that land degradation and loss of biodiversity pose serious challenges to poverty alleviation. The strategy recognizes the importance of integrating poverty and environmental programming:

"The UNDP goal in the area of environment and energy is to strengthen national capacity to manage the environment in a sustainable manner while ensuring adequate protection of the poor."<sup>9</sup>

The strategic plan places importance on developing partnerships with other international agencies for sustainable development support, particularly the United Nations Environment

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<sup>6</sup> It is also clear that efforts to promote growth and reduce poverty outside of ecosystems can harm the environment, and poor management of the environment can harm the urban poor.

<sup>7</sup> These were target 1.2, policies for pro-poor growth; 1.3, local poverty reduction initiatives including access to productive resources; 1.5, private sector development, which is often resource based; and 1.7, civil society empowerment in pro-poor policy reform.

<sup>8</sup> 'UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011', 22 May 2008.

<sup>9</sup> 'UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011', pg. 33.

Programme (UNEP). It also mentions the importance of UNDP participation in the Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) and cooperation with UNEP on the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). But it does not incorporate work on the PEI into UNDP's strategic priorities or work plans.

As in the preceding strategy, the strategic plan 2008-2011 reveals a sharp contrast in response from the different focus areas on how to factor poverty and environment linkages into their programme priorities. The part of the strategy addressing environment and sustainable development emphasizes that improving environmental sustainability helps reduce poverty through improving health and reducing disaster risks. The poverty component, however, is once again devoid of any reference to consideration of environmental issues or consequences in poverty work.

## 1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation is both retrospective and prospective—it takes stock of the past while looking into the future with respect to the UNDP role in the field, especially with regard to the United Nations reform process. The evaluation acknowledges activities on poverty-environment linkages since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Rio Summit). But the focus of analysis is limited to the period since 2004, covering MYFF II and the strategic plan 2008-2011 implementation periods. This narrower time frame conforms to the period after the Johannesburg summit, when the PEP and the UNDP/UNEP PEI were established.

### ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The approach taken in this evaluation builds from standard evaluation criteria:<sup>10</sup> relevance,

effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, organized around the following set of broad evaluation questions:

#### Relevance

- What is the relevance of addressing poverty-environment linkages in UNDP work and activities, in relation to its overall mandate and the needs of programme countries?
  - Is explicitly dealing with these linkages of high importance to achieving UNDP's strategic objectives, including support for MDG achievement?
  - Is the poverty-environment nexus a critical aspect in the global effort to reduce and mitigate the effects of greenhouse gas emissions and assist in adapting to climate change?
  - How does dealing with the nexus relate to UNDP's relationship with other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and other donors?

#### Effectiveness

- Have UNDP efforts to link poverty and environment been 'generally acceptable' and have they achieved results?
  - Do the poverty and environment practice areas at global, regional and country levels focus attention on this nexus of issues?
  - Are poverty and environment-related priorities being factored into UNDP strategies and activities in other practice areas, such as crisis prevention and recovery, and governance?
  - Is UNDP having success in encouraging country government partners to implement policies and programmes that harmonize poverty alleviation and environmental protection priorities?
  - Has UNDP succeeded in establishing successful partnerships with other United Nations and international agencies in support of efforts to more closely link poverty alleviation and environmental protection?
  - What approaches have been most successful, and what improvements should be made to enhance UNDP effectiveness?

<sup>10</sup> See *UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results*.

### Efficiency

- Have the programmes and projects developed to better link poverty and environment issues been carried out efficiently?
  - Has the effort enabled UNDP to respond more efficiently to country requests for assistance on sustainable development issues?
  - Are there internal structural and financial aspects that have a significant bearing on UNDP efforts to improve poverty-environment programme linkages?

### Sustainability

- How well are the results of UNDP's work to more closely link poverty alleviation and environmental protection policies being sustained?
- What are the contributions of UNDP in this regard to the long-term benefits to people's well-being?
- Is there adequate support in UNDP's structure and financial basis to continue addressing the nexus where there is further need and demand?

## 1.3 METHOD

The evaluation involved a variety of data collection methods, including desk reviews, stakeholder interviews and country case studies. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UNDP Evaluation Office guidelines and methods, as well as standard evaluation practices such as the triangulation principle and the validation of facts and findings with relevant stakeholders. It used a relatively large sample of cases, with full case studies in 9 countries, supplemented by telephone interviews in 29 other countries and extensive interviews at UNDP headquarters and regional service centres and with key partner organizations. This approach enabled the team to sample a wide variety of opinions, engage stakeholders in more substantive discussions and probe country-specific issues. It was decided not to use questionnaires due to past experience with limited responses and the difficulty of obtaining clear responses on this conceptual topic without face-to-face interaction.

The team reviewed principal UNDP documents related to the poverty-environment nexus, including policy and strategy reports, country and programme assessments and evaluations, and reports relating to UNDP's contributions to conventions and partnerships. Studies done by other entities relating to the nexus have also been reviewed.<sup>11</sup>

## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

The main criteria for the selection of countries were: regional balance; a mix of country typologies (e.g., large countries, least-developed countries and small island developing states); and over-sampling of countries with ongoing projects developed under the PEI, to more fully consider achievements under this initiative. Full case studies took place in the following countries:

Region	Country
Africa	Mali, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania
Arab States	Morocco
Asia & the Pacific	Bhutan, Viet Nam
Europe & the CIS	Kyrgyzstan
Latin America & the Caribbean	Paraguay, Trinidad & Tobago

Consultants from the respective regions and countries were contracted to conduct the case studies, working from common terms of reference and evaluation questions. In each study the teams carried out key informant interviews, site visits and document reviews. Each country study team produced a country report; these have been reviewed for quality and accuracy and then revised as necessary. The key tasks for the country case studies included:

- A background and portfolio analysis related to the country and UNDP activities over the period covered by the evaluation;

<sup>11</sup> This includes UNEP, IIED, World Bank and GEF.

- Substantive analyses of background documentation, plus interviews with key stakeholders and direct observations on a small sample of programme and project sites, to gather evidence needed to respond to the key evaluation questions;
- A case study report in the agreed format and inputs as required for the final evaluation report.

The case studies generated important data and provided a 'real world' context for the conceptual discussion of the poverty-environment nexus. However, the report does not specifically evaluate the poverty-environment activities of individual country offices or nexus-related results of individual projects. An executive summary of each of the case studies is annexed to this report (Annex 3).

### COUNTRY OFFICE INTERVIEWS

In addition to interviews carried out as part of the case studies, management from additional country offices and regional service centres were interviewed, mostly by phone. Senior management (resident representative and/or country director level) were interviewed in the following country offices/regional service centres:

Region	Country Office / Regional Service Centre
<b>Africa</b>	Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania
<b>Arab States</b>	Syrian Arab Rep., Tunisia
<b>Asia &amp; the Pacific</b>	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam
<b>Europe &amp; the CIS</b>	Bulgaria, Slovakia, Ukraine
<b>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</b>	Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Panama

### INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

Interviews were carried out with a wide array of key stakeholders, including personnel from UNDP headquarters and regional service centres; UNEP and PEI management in Nairobi; Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat and GEF Evaluation Office; World Bank; International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Institute for Environment and Development, World Resources Institute and many others. A full list of persons interviewed is annexed to this report (Annex 4).

### 1.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Other than projects developed and carried out within the PEI, few results frameworks or baseline indicators were available to assess efficiencies and effectiveness. Consequently many of the findings are subjective and rely on the views of participants and stakeholders. To overcome this limitation, the evaluation team has made efforts to triangulate the information from various sources, including interviews, document reviews and previous evaluations.

There were quality, comparability and timing challenges in the effort to produce the nine case studies for this evaluation. The desire for nationally driven case studies required contracting and working with 21 national consultants, who were requested to assess country office achievements on a number of conceptual issues that leave considerable room for interpretation. This posed challenges in terms of quality and comparability. Misfortune also played a role in the case study effort, as Haiti had to be replaced at the last minute by Trinidad and Tobago in the aftermath of the earthquake in January 2010.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE

As part of the consultative process for developing this evaluation, an external advisory panel was established. Its role was to review and comment on the evaluation design and the initial

draft evaluation report, and to help the team in maintaining high standards in evaluation procedures. Advisory panel recommendations have been incorporated into this report.

The report has also been subject to the standard quality assurance and review processes for evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office.

## **1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

Chapter 2 describes the evolution of the poverty-environment nexus concept, how it fits into UNDP's overall mission and strategy, and how it is addressed in UNDP's structure and operations, as well as in its partnerships, advocacy work and programmes and projects in countries. Chapter 3 presents findings in response to the evaluation questions, drawn from the interviews, case studies and document review. Chapter 4 presents the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

## CHAPTER 2

# CONTEXT AND UNDP RESPONSE

### 2.1 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

#### FROM STOCKHOLM TO JOHANNESBURG

An extensive body of international conventions and multilateral agreements developed over more than 40 years has established and underscored the global commitment to sustainable development and the widely understood and obvious truth that poverty alleviation and environmental protection are inextricably linked.

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) was the first major United Nations event to raise the issues of protecting the natural and human environment globally and locally and improving the quality of the human environment. The conference led to the creation of UNEP. Soon thereafter a number of developing countries began to express concerns about whether increased focus on the environment might come at the expense of development assistance. The declarations from the conference addressed both issues, but much of the follow-up concentrated on protecting the environment.

In March 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) issued its report, 'Our Common Future', which underscored the connections between environmental degradation and poverty on the one hand, and sound environmental management and sustainable development on the other. The report was instrumental in establishing a conceptual framework for UNCED in June 1992. The Commission produced what

remains the commonly accepted definition of sustainable development. The authors noted that, "A world in which poverty and inequity are endemic will always be prone to ecological and other crises. Sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life".<sup>12</sup>

Agenda 21, the plan of action resulting from UNCED, and a companion document, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, were adopted by more than 178 nations. A majority of nations present also signed one or both of the conventions on climate change and biodiversity. Agenda 21 constitutes a comprehensive plan of action to be undertaken globally, nationally and locally in every area where humans affect the environment. The Rio Declaration states, "All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world."<sup>13</sup>

Several years later, the United Nations General Assembly, in its 'Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21' agreed that poverty eradication should be an overriding theme of sustainable development for the coming years. As noted in section 3.2, "While managing resources sustainably, an environmental policy that focuses mainly on the conservation and protection of resources must take due account of those who

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<sup>12</sup> 'Our Common Future', Chapter 2, Towards Sustainable Development, UN A/42/427, 'Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development'.

<sup>13</sup> 'Rio Declaration on Environment and Development', Principle 5.



depend on the resources for their livelihoods. Otherwise it could have an adverse impact both on poverty and on chances for long-term success in resource and environmental conservation."<sup>14</sup>

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) continued progress on elaborating global sustainable development goals and aspirations. This included the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, finalized in 2004, which stated, "Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries."<sup>15</sup>

### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The Convention on Biodiversity was opened for adoption at UNCED and entered into force in December 1993. Among its provisions is article 6b, which calls for integrating (as far as possible and appropriate) conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-cutting plans, programmes and policies. Ten years later, a Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature. Among the many "obstacles to the implementation of the convention" noted in this plan are socio-economic factors, including poverty, population pressure, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, and the lack of capacities among local communities.

Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which entered into force in March 1994, governments have agreed to:

- Gather and share information on greenhouse gas emissions, national policies and best practices;
- Launch national strategies to address greenhouse gas emissions and adapt

to expected impacts, including provision of financial and technological support to developing countries; and

- Cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change.<sup>16</sup>

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted at the 3rd Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in 1997. This set emissions targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European Community and established an emissions trading regime as a tool for reducing carbon emissions worldwide.

In the early 1990s, it was clear that land degradation in arid and semi-arid regions was intensifying. At the Rio Summit it was agreed that the United Nations would move ahead on a convention to increase concerted global action on this problem. In 1994, the Convention to Combat Desertification was adopted, entering into force in 1996. Participants at the 1997 United Nations Conference on Desertification adopted a Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. General obligations include many measures that can be construed as part of the poverty-environment nexus. For instance, part II, article 4 c) compels Member States to "integrate strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought".

### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Summit, in 2000, committed nations to a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and established a blueprint for action with time-bound targets. The eight MDGs include eradication of poverty and hunger; achievement of universal primary education; promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; reduction of child mortality; improvement in maternal health; combatting of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and providing a global partnership

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<sup>14</sup> 'Agenda 21', section 1, Chapter 3.

<sup>15</sup> 'Johannesburg Plan of Action', Chapter II, 15 December 2004.

<sup>16</sup> <[http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/convention/items/2627.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/items/2627.php)>

for development. While all these goals can be considered relevant to this discussion of a poverty-environment nexus, MDG 7 (environmental sustainability) is especially pertinent.

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 provides a mixed assessment of progress on the MDG targets for environmental sustainability.<sup>17</sup> For example, it notes that global deforestation is slowing, but in many countries rates continue to be high. Global emissions of carbon dioxide have increased by 35 percent over 1990 levels, yet global consumption of ozone-depleting substances has dropped by 98 percent. The 2010 target for a significant reduction in biodiversity loss was missed, and nearly 17,000 species of plants and animals are now known to be threatened with extinction. The 2015 target to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation is on track, thanks especially to major strides in East Asia. The target to significantly improve the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 is proving a major challenge, as the process of improvement is not keeping pace with the rapidly expanding numbers of urban poor. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 828 million urban residents now live in slum conditions, up from 657 million in 1990.

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

The GEF was established during preparations for the Rio Summit. Since its start in 1991 the GEF has developed into the largest funder worldwide of projects to improve the global environment. All told, more than \$8.8 billion has been allocated for GEF projects through 2009, supplemented by nearly \$40 billion in co-financing, for projects in 165 countries. The GEF serves as the financial mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity, UNFCCC, Stockholm Convention on

Persistent Organic Pollutants and Convention to Combat Desertification. The GEF focal areas include biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, sustainable forestry management, ozone layer depletion and persistent organic pollutants. There are also several cross-cutting and corporate programmes.

UNDP was one of the three original implementing agencies for the GEF, together with the World Bank and UNEP. In recent years, the GEF has expanded to 10 implementing agencies. Meanwhile, UNDP has become the lead agency in terms of the number of projects awarded and the portion of funding received during the 4<sup>th</sup> GEF replenishment. In turn, GEF funding constitutes the single largest earmarked source of income for UNDP, contributing approximately \$286 million per year, 50 percent of the UNDP budget for environmental programming and projects.<sup>18</sup> As part of its GEF implementation responsibilities, UNDP administers the Small Grants Programme (SGP) for the GEF, which is implemented in about 100 countries. The small grant effort sponsors local government and civil society activities with grants of up to \$50,000 to tackle local environmental and natural resource protection problems.

GEF support is directed towards covering the incremental costs of country efforts to achieve global environmental benefits. In the past, this has restrained consideration of socio-economic factors and their impact on natural resources at the local level in the preparation of projects. However, over the years, GEF staff have come to appreciate the importance of taking account of local issues. In the most recent GEF replenishment rounds, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, focal area strategic planning has shifted.<sup>19</sup> The GEF has more directly connected environmental management to

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<sup>17</sup> *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010*, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.

<sup>18</sup> In addition, approximately three times that amount in co-financing has been achieved.

<sup>19</sup> GEF is replenished every four years. The 4<sup>th</sup> replenishment covers the period 2006-2010 and the 5<sup>th</sup> replenishment the period 2010-2014.

local development issues, and it now welcomes project proposals that include local issues, which are often related to reducing poverty while protecting the environment. The emphasis of the biodiversity focal area has been shifting from protected areas to mainstreaming biodiversity into development issues.<sup>20</sup> Of particular note, land degradation has been added to GEF focal areas and is clearly directed towards improving livelihoods in communities in order to restore and protect the environment in the area.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 UNDP RESPONSE

Throughout the three decades of effort to enunciate a set of international norms for sustainable development, UNDP has been a key actor in the United Nations system. The 1990 Human Development Report elaborated on the concept of sustainable development and the linkages between human development and the protection of natural resources and the physical environment. It further recognized poverty as one of the greatest threats to the environment, noting that: "In poor countries, poverty often causes deforestation, desertification, salination, poor sanitation and polluted and unsafe water. And this environmental damage reinforces poverty. ... Any plans of action for environmental improvement must therefore include programmes to reduce poverty in the developing world." UNDP's support for sustainable development emphasizes the importance of protecting the environmental base necessary for poverty alleviation over the longer term.

UNDP continues to produce annual global human development reports and encourages country teams to support the production of country-specific human development reports to

identify critical issues needing attention in their work on poverty. UNDP is taking more account of environmental factors in the reports, and recent reports have addressed the effects of water scarcity (2006) and climate change (2007).

The most direct manifestation of the UNDP programmatic approach to the poverty-environment nexus is the PEI, managed in partnership with UNEP.<sup>22</sup> The partnership was formulated from two parallel initiatives launched in the late 1990s (UNDP) and in early 2000 (UNEP), with support from major European donors. The joint programme was endorsed at the Johannesburg Summit, and the UNDP-UNEP partnership was formalized and launched at the World Summit in 2005. According to a report on the PEI, it "challenges two common assumptions, or myths: that environmental improvements cannot be undertaken in poverty-stricken areas; and that poverty and environment are inextricably linked in a 'downward spiral'. Although these assumptions are sometimes borne out by reality, well-planned actions and improved governance can break this negative cycle, as experience from around the world has shown. 'Win-win' options exist for creating more robust livelihoods and healthier environments."<sup>23</sup>

The PEI functions as a quasi-separate unit between UNDP and UNEP. Its projects are implemented through UNDP country offices, since UNEP does not have country-level presence. Most PEI projects are promoted by staff associated with the PEI who are located in UNDP and UNEP regional offices. They usually work with staff from the environment and energy group and include poverty experts in some cases. Projects are initiated jointly with government and country teams supported by PEI staff. Initial

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<sup>20</sup> See GEF 5 Biodiversity Objective 2: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors.

<sup>21</sup> See GEF 5 Land Degradation Objective 1: Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services to sustaining the livelihoods of local communities.

<sup>22</sup> See <[www.unpei.org](http://www.unpei.org)>.

<sup>23</sup> 'Attacking Poverty While Improving the Environment: Towards Win-Win Policy Options', PEI, p. 1, 1998.

PEI pilots were undertaken in Africa in Kenya, Rwanda and United Republic of Tanzania, followed by Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique and Uganda. Increased funding enabled the programme to be scaled up significantly in 2007 to cover more African countries and several in Asia and Pacific. There are now projects in 18 countries, including Europe, Central Asia and Latin America,<sup>24</sup> with a target of 40 countries. The PEI is largely a separate, discretionary programme that country offices can request.

UNDP also implements many other projects that can address the poverty-environment nexus. However, they are not formally designated as nexus related, so the evaluation considers them only broadly and provides some specific examples. The majority of UNDP projects that take account of the nexus are funded by the GEF, including SGP projects. Other nexus-related projects are supported by the Drylands Development Centre (DDC), UN-REDD<sup>25</sup> and the recently established climate change adaptation funds from Japan and Spain. In a number of countries, bilateral donors support UNDP implementation of projects addressing nexus issues. Some governments also route funding through UNDP to tackle poverty-environment issues.

Discussions with the GEF and other donors and review of country studies and interviews have provided a general view of how projects take account of the nexus. The performance report on UNDP's GEF biodiversity portfolio for 2008-2009<sup>26</sup> addressed which projects took account of poverty issues. It found that about 90 percent of the projects took MDG 1 into account and 80 percent included MDG 3. UNDP is now

taking more account of poverty-environment linkages in its GEF performance reports and progress reports. The GEF also is beginning to address this relationship in its overall reporting. However, these results are not yet comprehensive enough to provide a quantitative basis for evaluation.

Other sources of external funding are becoming available for UNDP activities related to the poverty-environment nexus. Funds to address climate change adaptation have been created. More country offices are seeking climate change adaptation funding (beyond the climate change adaptation funds), but it is too early in the programme cycle to judge the results. These funds are aimed both at protecting environmental sustainability to assure livelihoods and at protecting poor people from the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

As a result of these significant sources of external funding for environmental issues, UNDP has increased its capacity to address poverty-environment nexus issues, especially in the environment and energy group, where poverty links can be included in many programmes and are actively supported in some. Staff have realized that assuring local livelihoods is critical to protecting the environment, both locally and globally.

On the other hand, the Poverty Group does not receive nearly as much external funding, and most of it emphasizes work related to the MDGs, with a concentration on promoting economic growth. This places less focus on environmental issues beyond the availability of clean water.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam.

<sup>25</sup> 'The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries'.

<sup>26</sup> UNDP Environment and Energy Group, 'GEF Biodiversity Portfolio, Annual Global Performance Report 2008-2009', 2009.

<sup>27</sup> The case studies show that in Kyrgyzstan, only 1 of 5 projects focused on the nexus was concentrated primarily on poverty. In Mali, 4 of 18 have a primary focus on poverty, taking environmental factors into account. In Viet Nam, only 1 of 17 was poverty focused. In Morocco, the figure was 1 in 3. This reflects the lesser attention to the nexus link in poverty projects.

Due to the complexity of the issues relating to poverty-environment linkages and the need to make connections across traditional focal areas, moving from strategic intent to programme implementation can be difficult. As noted in the 2005 UNDP report 'Sustaining the Environment to Fight Poverty and Achieve the MDGs': "The world's poor depend critically on fertile soil, clean water and healthy ecosystems for their livelihoods and well-being. This reliance creates complex, dynamic interactions between environmental conditions, people's access to and control over environmental resources, and poverty. Understanding the nature of these relationships is a prerequisite for enduring success in the fight against poverty. Yet, the central importance of environment for poverty reduction, and the economic case for pro-poor investment in environmental assets, remains dishearteningly unfamiliar to many. As a result, the environmental concerns of the poor all too often are marginalized within the context of national development planning and efforts to reach the MDGs."

While strategic plans and new programmes and partnerships point to recognition of the importance of mainstreaming environmental priorities, it is necessary also to consider how UNDP has used its own core financing. An important turning point was the 2000 decision by the UNDP Executive Board to discontinue consideration of environment as a core priority. Although reinstated as a priority in 2002, environment never regained its status as a core priority supported by core funds, partly due to its access to external funding from GEF and others. The decision is linked to an overall decline in core funding, but also to the way that Member States have articulated their priorities for UNDP, and perhaps reflecting the fact that other United Nations agencies are also active in this sphere, UNEP in particular.<sup>28</sup>

Within the United Nations system, the United Nations Development Group, with strong support from the UNDP environment and energy group, recently issued guidelines titled 'Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Country Analysis and UNDAF'. These are meant to help United Nations country teams to integrate environment and poverty in development programmes. The guidelines emphasize the importance of addressing the nexus to achieve the MDGs, which remain the main priority in UNDP's strategy.

The guidelines point out that, "[s]ustaining the provision of ecosystem services, like the provision of food, water, fuel, and climate regulation, generates sustainable economic and social benefits. These are essential for the fulfilment of human rights and the achievement of national development priorities, especially MDG 8. Integrating environmental concerns, as determined by multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and national legal frameworks, in a human rights-based approach will help governments to recognize their obligations to the environment and the causal links between the environment and human rights."<sup>29</sup>

UNDP was also a founding member of a more loosely structured partnership, the PEP, with other agencies and civil society. UNDP participated in preparing a keynote paper on poverty-environment linkages for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Other authors were the UK Department for International Development, European Community and World Bank. The PEP has subsequently continued as a forum for development of global policy on sustainable development, helping to raise funds for PEI.

UNDP and its PEP partners have advocated stronger links between environmental

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> 'Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Country Analysis and the UNDAF', UNDP, 2009.

management and poverty reduction, jointly producing a number of documents on topics related to the poverty-environment linkage for the 2005 World Summit.<sup>30</sup> In a joint message to the Summit, PEP pointed out:

- Greatly expanded public and private investment in the productivity of environmental assets can generate strong returns for poverty reduction and is needed to create opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty.
- Strong local institutions are vital to improving environmental management for poverty reduction and should be a strategic focus of capacity development efforts.
- Integrated approaches are needed to put pro-poor investments in the productivity of environmental assets at the heart of national development and poverty reduction strategies and sectoral planning at national, sub-national and local levels.
- Pro-poor changes in environmental governance—such as strengthening of property and resource rights to communally held land—will be needed to empower the poor and enable them to invest in, and reap the benefits of, improved management of environmental assets.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> 'Investing in Environmental Wealth for Poverty Reduction'; 'Assessing Environment's Contribution for Poverty Reduction'; 'Sustaining the Environment to Fight Poverty and Achieve the MDGs' and 'Economic Case and Priorities for Action', all by PEP partners UNDP, UNEP, IIED, IUCN, and WRI, 2005.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP, UNEP, IIED, IUCN and WRI, 'Sustaining the Environment to Fight Poverty and Achieve the MDGs – The economic case and priorities for action – A message to the 2005 World Summit', prepared on behalf of the Poverty-Environment Partnership, 2005.



## CHAPTER 3

# FINDINGS

### 3.1 UNDERSTANDING POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES IN UNDP

For over a decade international development agencies, including UNDP, have consistently highlighted the importance of what has become known as the ‘poverty-environment nexus’, a set of mutually reinforcing links between poverty and environmental damage.<sup>32</sup> The current view, emphasized in UNDP’s PEI programme,<sup>33</sup> is that poverty reduction and environmental protection are complementary, not competing, goals. This subsection evaluates the extent and diversity of awareness of poverty-environment issues in UNDP, the guidance given for country work and the varying interpretations of the nexus at the field level.

UNDP has performed substantial analysis of the nexus and is highly aware of its importance for sustainable development. However, the articulation of this awareness throughout the organization is somewhat haphazard and partial.

At the field level, the linkages are generally understood to mean taking account of poverty issues in environmental work.<sup>34</sup> At regional and headquarters levels, understanding of the nexus is

sometimes more sophisticated but is rarely translated into a consistent articulation of principles and practices. Where good practice is found, it arises from individual ‘champions’ and country office initiatives rather than a coordinated institutional approach. Greater attention to climate change issues is slowly improving some aspects of the understanding and response to the issues, but it may be drawing attention away from other environmental issues that are equally important. Country-specific circumstances regarding the nexus play a major role in how poverty-environment linkages are understood and addressed.

#### STRATEGIC AND POLICY GUIDANCE FOR THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS

The MYFF II focused primarily on achieving the MDGs and other objectives stemming from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Highest priority was given to poverty reduction and democratic governance, followed by energy and environment, and crisis prevention and recovery. Cross-sectoral linkages, such as those between poverty and environment, were not included; nor were the means for cross-practice cooperation. Four of the eight poverty targets mention issues related to environment, but not the linkages.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, all six targets

<sup>32</sup> S. Dasgupta, et al., 2005, ‘Where is the poverty-environment nexus? Evidence from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam’, *World Development* 33 (4): 617–638; A. Ekbohm and J. Bojö, 1999, ‘Poverty and environment. Evidence of links and integration in the country assistance strategy process’, World Bank Africa Region Discussion Paper No. 4, Washington, D.C.

<sup>33</sup> UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, 2009, *Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning: A Handbook for Practitioners*, UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Facility, Nairobi, <[www.unpei.org/PDF/PEI-full-handbook.pdf](http://www.unpei.org/PDF/PEI-full-handbook.pdf)>.

<sup>34</sup> The imperative to take on environmental concerns in poverty work is rarely grasped. Articulation of environmental issues with other practice areas such as governance, crisis management or gender is also rare, although the implications of climate change, and the need to develop adaptive strategies, is changing this, especially in relation to disaster risk reduction policy support to countries.

<sup>35</sup> These were: 1.2, policies for pro-poor growth; 1.3, local poverty reduction initiatives including access to productive resources; 1.5, private sector development, which is often resource based; and 1.7, civil society empowerment in pro-poor policy reform.



for environment and energy explicitly noted links to poverty reduction.

The strategic plan for 2008-2013 maintains the earlier priorities. It states that "...poor people depend disproportionately on the environment for their livelihoods..." It emphasizes that climate change poses urgent environmental challenges for the poor, and land degradation and other biodiversity issues pose serious challenges to reducing poverty. But it does not address the need for poverty reduction to address environmental sustainability. The links between poverty and environment are mainly in the section on environment and energy,<sup>36</sup> which notes, for example, the positive effects of environmental management on health.

The strategy's targets for environment and energy include mainstreaming environment into development planning; catalysing environmental finance; expanding access to environmental services for the poor; and promoting climate change adaptation. In contrast, targets for the poverty area make no mention of links to the environment. The importance of integrating poverty reduction into environmental activities is mentioned repeatedly, but the reciprocal integration of environment into poverty reduction activities is not.

Other UNDP documents demonstrate a similar one-way understanding of the nexus. 'Beyond the Midpoint on MDGs' (2010), produced by the Bureau for Development Policy, makes no mention of poverty-environment linkages in its review. Environmental sustainability goals in MDG 7 are mentioned only in the context of the poor being more adversely affected by environmental disasters and degradation; the report is more focused on the 'development environment' and 'enabling environment' than natural environment issues. Country reviews in the report are

silent on poverty-environment linkages, even in countries where this evaluation found activities and even enthusiasm for the central role of such linkages in their programmes (e.g. India, Kyrgyzstan, Syrian Arab Republic and United Republic of Tanzania). Other policy documents, notably those on poverty (e.g. 'Rethinking Poverty'<sup>37</sup>), typically include simplistic statements to the effect that the poor are disproportionately affected by environmental disasters, but rarely do they include discussion of the means to address such issues or the incorporation of environmental factors in poverty indicators.

### **AWARENESS OF THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS AT COUNTRY LEVEL**

The differences in awareness and understanding of the nexus are considerable across regions and between countries. This evaluation identified a number of negative perceptions about its importance, revealing a lack of understanding and appreciation of the benefits that may accrue with a more positive view. Misunderstandings of the nexus were recorded in 17 of 29 interviews with country offices, although in all but two cases (both in Latin America) positive views were also noted. In Asia and the Pacific and in much of Africa, where large numbers of poor people depend directly on natural resources for their livelihoods, understanding is often good. Understanding is weaker in Latin American countries that tend to favour poverty reduction over environment. The same is found in some countries in Europe, the CIS, North Africa and West Asia that favour environmental protection over poverty reduction. Even where understanding is good, it is often limited to just one or two UNDP country office staff. Acceptance of the potential benefits and appreciation of the nexus is always problematic where countries themselves deny the need for investments in environment or poverty reduction. Under these circumstances, some UNDP

<sup>36</sup> The order of environment and energy was shifted from the MYFF 2004-2007.

<sup>37</sup> 'Rethinking Poverty, Report on the World Social Situation 2010', UNDP Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009.

country offices struggle to promote the importance of poverty-environment linkages, while others have not found ways to integrate them into programmes.

The differential understanding of the poverty-environment nexus may itself be explained by (1) lack of clarity in UNDP's own strategies in different parts of the organization; (2) the difficulty of the nexus concept itself; (3) circumstances specific to individual countries and regions; and (4) the difficulties expressed by UNDP staff in applying nexus concepts in core activities. In countries where PEI is operational, understanding of nexus concepts may be enhanced through projects that cooperate across sectors (e.g. United Republic of Tanzania) or neglected because responsibility is perceived to be assigned to PEI and its partners, thus relieving others to focus primarily on sectoral concerns (e.g. Mali). Some of the barriers to understanding the nexus were identified in this evaluation (Box 1).

The evaluation noted a number of country-specific examples reflecting understanding of the nexus and its importance. Central American and Caribbean countries generally exhibit a higher level of concern about poverty-environment linkages, which they attribute to repeated and severe natural disasters.<sup>38</sup> In Mexico, for example, the government has had a long-standing commitment to improving the incomes of people living in environmentally vulnerable areas.

Central Asian countries have a legacy of linkages between poverty and environmental degradation and a substantial commitment to dealing with them. In Sri Lanka, the government and the UNDP country office have actively collaborated to address the nexus, especially since the country's economic growth depends on maintaining its renewable environmental resources. Efforts have increased now that internal conflict has ended. In Indonesia, the UNDP country office was able to persuade the government to take

#### **Box 1: Barriers to understanding the poverty-environment nexus concept**

##### **Strategic barriers**

- UNDP strategies and policies do not provide a conceptual framework or model on how to include the poverty-environment nexus in policy advice or programmes.

##### **Communication and practical barriers**

- Communication of the understanding from headquarters and regional levels to country level is haphazard and often reliant on particular individuals ('champions') or particular circumstances, such as the insistence of another donor.
- There is substantial difficulty in translating the nexus concept into practical action.
- Some staff in UNDP country offices are genuinely not convinced that the poverty-environment nexus is necessary or workable.
- Hard data on the benefits of the approach are not available; there is no accessible counter-factual evidence.

##### **Country-specific circumstances**

- Some middle-income countries deny the existence of poverty or the need to address it.
- Some middle-income countries do not prioritize environmental protection and hence do not accept the importance of jointly treating environment and poverty.
- Economic growth and environmental protection are seen as competitive, requiring trade-offs, making poverty-environment linkages difficult to establish.

*Source: In-person and telephone interviews*

<sup>38</sup> The recent disaster in Haiti has drawn more attention to the reliance of the poor on the environment.

account of environmental protection in its poverty reduction activities, given the fragility of much of the country's environment. Several countries in Africa also recognize the dependence of the poor on the environment and the need to take account of the nexus, leading to cooperation between the government and UNDP (e.g. Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania).

In 20 of 29 country interviews and all country case studies, the emerging climate change agenda and disasters attributed to climate change were viewed as having increased recognition of the nexus and highlighted its relationship to other areas, especially crisis management, for both UNDP and partner governments. Countries emphasized that climate change concerns have also increased government commitment to dealing with these issues.

There were concerns expressed by several UNDP country office staff that greater attention to climate change could reduce attention to other nexus factors, such as land degradation, pollution and water depletion stemming from expansion of high-input agriculture. Interviews in Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Morocco, Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia pointed out that scarcity of water and access to water resources are the most pressing national environmental issues. Some are concerned that focusing too much attention on climate change may reduce funding for other pressing environmental priorities. UNDP's involvement in international programmes such as UN-REDD and the Coral Triangle Initiative funded by GEF has helped raise awareness and understanding of the nexus, especially in the countries where these initiatives are in process.

### **3.2 INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ARRANGEMENTS**

UNDP's institutional structures are both hierarchical and sectoral. Country offices carry out UNDP programmes based on technical guidance from the Bureau for Development Policy and administrative guidance from the regional

bureaux. This sub-section considers how much UNDP structure and institutional arrangements—including funding, incentives and monitoring—affect its treatment of a cross-sectoral topic such as the linkages between poverty and environment.

The UNDP focus area structure promotes a 'silo effect' that discourages cooperation across sectors. Since the nexus is not incorporated into UNDP goals or measures of performance, staff have no incentive to take up integrative, cross-sectoral initiatives. Dependence on external funding, especially for the environment, reinforces the institutional focus on working within practice areas and diverts attention from UNDP priorities to those of donors. Most external funding sources do not provide incentives to address poverty-environment linkages, although external funders for environment programmes tend to be receptive to initiatives taken by programme units that proactively pursue such integration. Clear indicators, progress monitoring and evaluation of poverty environment linkages are lacking.

#### **ROLE OF UNDP'S REGIONAL BUREAUX AND COUNTRY OFFICES IN THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS**

Regional bureaux are focused on the management aspects of country office activity. They are responsible for selecting senior international staff for country offices and distributing Target for Resource Assignments from the Core (TRAC) funding. These allocations significantly affect the size and capacity of country offices and the direction of their programmes, including their scope for addressing nexus issues.

At the country level, the processes for addressing poverty-environment linkage issues vary considerably. How well the poverty reduction and environment and energy practice areas work together depends largely on local management. In some countries, there is little or no cooperation between them (e.g. Botswana, Costa Rica, India, Kenya); in others they work together when needed (e.g. Malaysia, Mozambique, Papua

New Guinea, Viet Nam); in still others they work closely (e.g. Bangladesh, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka, Thailand). A few country offices have largely disbanded their sectoral structures, combining practice areas, sometimes explicitly. In some cases this has been done to better address nexus issues (e.g. Cameroon, Senegal), while in others it is simply for more efficient project management (e.g. Bulgaria, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine). In a number of countries the heads of practice areas hold regular meetings to discuss programmes, review projects and identify cross-sector links needing attention (e.g. Kyrgyzstan, which established a joint poverty-environment team to implement the PEI). Often cooperation at country level occurs informally: in corridors, at tea breaks, due to personal friendship and for other reasons such as donor insistence. Country offices interviewed found the support received from regional service centres concerning the nexus ranged from moderate to very good, although experience varied considerably by region.

At regional service centres, this evaluation found better and more consistent cooperation between practice areas. Some centres address nexus issues in their training programmes for country office staff (e.g. Bangkok) and in their technical support to country offices (e.g. Bratislava). However, since regional centres respond to country offices and requests tend to be specific to practice areas, advice and support are predominantly requested either for poverty or for environment. In two regions, this is exacerbated by physical separation. At the time of writing, the Asia and Pacific regional service centre had the environment and energy unit located in Bangkok and the poverty unit in Colombo, making communication and coordination problematic.<sup>39</sup> In South Africa, the environment and energy unit is located with the country office in Pretoria, while the rest of the regional service centre is in Johannesburg. Furthermore, in the Arab States the regional technical adviser for the environment finance

group is based in the Bratislava Regional Service Centre, rather than in Cairo where the poverty team is located.

As an example of good practice, the environment and energy unit in Bangkok is widely respected for its competence in and support for poverty linkages in its environmental work. This is partly due to its shared location with the UNEP regional office and partly because of good cooperation between offices. The Bratislava regional service centre holds regular coordination meetings of practice area heads to discuss project ideas and identify cross-sectoral issues. The dominant factor in both instances is centre leadership, not institutional policy.

The policy bureaux also provide guidance along practice lines. The Bureau for Development Policy, environment and energy group, has supported the inclusion of poverty issues in environmental work, produced documentation that supports closer attention to the nexus issues and been active in promoting integration. While recognizing the importance of linkages, the poverty group has taken a somewhat limited view of 'environment' to include water availability, pollution reduction and food production. Recently, the two groups have not described processes for addressing the nexus or engaged in cross-sector cooperation. They respond to specific requests, but the country offices feel they have not consistently provided adequate programmatic support.

#### **SOURCES OF FUNDING TO SUPPORT WORK ON THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS**

The environment area is the largest recipient of funding external to UNDP. It comes primarily from the GEF, as well as the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol and bilateral donors for work on phase-out of ozone-depleting substances and, increasingly, climate change adaptation funds. GEF financing has become essential in at least 15 of the 29 country offices interviewed, to pay for professional staff and

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<sup>39</sup> This situation has been remedied only very recently; the Colombo regional centre for poverty was moved to Bangkok.

maintain a substantial portfolio of activity. The poverty area receives much less external funding; it is primarily MDG-based and more dependent on TRAC funding. Typically, a country office receives 70-90 percent of its environment portfolio funding and 20-50 percent of its poverty funding from external sources. This reliance on external funding for UNDP's environmental work has had consequences for the type of environmental issues considered and the extent to which poverty-environment linkages are addressed.<sup>40</sup>

Initiatives centrally involved with poverty-environment issues (PEI, DDC, SGP) receive funding almost wholly from external sources. Similarly, new initiatives in, for example, climate change adaptation, UN-REDD and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) approaches, for all of which UNDP is ideally suited, are externally funded. Pump-priming activities in these topics are undertaken largely by UNDP staff who are themselves externally funded. GEF finance obtained through

management overheads of UNDP-GEF projects is the most common source of support for new areas of activity related to the nexus.

UNDP was one of the original three implementing agencies of the GEF, and in 2006 it overtook the World Bank to become the largest implementing agent for GEF funding. UNDP has achieved this expansion of global funding in support of the major environmental conventions due to several factors, particularly its close connections with country partners, enabling it to link global environmental issues with local and domestic concerns, including poverty.<sup>41</sup> By virtue of being the single largest source of funding for the environment, the GEF has therefore become the single most important potential funding source for establishing poverty-environment linkages. While not the only source, the GEF now supports a significant number of major project investments rated as 'good' in tackling poverty-environment linkages in the country case studies of this evaluation (see Box 2).

#### **Box 2: Significant investments in Africa for poverty-environment linkages and the source of funds**

**Mali: Programme for the Capacity Building of the Communities and the Country in Terms of Environmental and Natural Resource Management.** The objective is to decentralize technical capabilities for natural resource management to local communities. Funding from UNDP, government of Mali and DDC Arid Zone Centre: \$1,350,000.

**Morocco: The Southern Oasis Development Programme 2007-2011.** The main objective is to control desertification and poverty by safeguarding oases through restoration and maintenance of ecosystem services provided by oases. Funding from a large consortium of donors: \$18,100,000.

**Rwanda: Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness Systems and Support for Integrated Watershed Management in Flood Prone Areas.** The objective is to reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems and associated crest watersheds, and the people that derive their livelihoods from them, to increased floods and droughts due to climate change. Funding from the GEF: \$3,486,000.

**United Republic of Tanzania: Making REDD Work for Communities' Livelihood and Forest Conservation in Tanzania.** Launched in November 2009 with support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a partnership project between the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group and the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network. Funding: \$100,000,000 for five years.

*Source: Country case studies*

<sup>40</sup> See Evaluation Office 2008, 'Evaluation of the Role and Contribution of UNDP in Environment and Energy', UNDP, New York: "Conclusion 4. Imbalances in priority setting and programming arising from the substantial reliance of UNDP on GEF funding have received insufficient attention."

<sup>41</sup> See GEF Evaluation Office 2010, 'Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF: Progress towards impact (OPS4)', <[www.thegef.org/gef/node/1558](http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/1558)>.

The reliance on GEF funding has led to a number of unintended consequences. The GEF is not mandated to tackle poverty;<sup>42</sup> as an issue of national concern, it is to be addressed by governments and aid donors. Therefore, there is no need for a UNDP-GEF project to mention poverty in order to obtain funding. To meet the GEF Secretariat's requirements for project development and funding, UNDP has a separate GEF unit and specialist regional advisers to assist country offices. The unit is relatively autonomous in UNDP, although efforts continue to integrate project support advisers into the regional service centres.<sup>43</sup> Although the UNDP-GEF advisers

understand the importance of taking poverty issues into account, this management structure for GEF-funded projects inevitably isolates most of the environment work from other UNDP operations, skews UNDP's own priorities and reinforces the separation between practice areas. The example of a country profile of project funding and nexus issues in Box 3 is typical: only 6 of 36 projects, all in the energy and environment group, have explicit poverty-environment linkages. Of concern are the five projects in the poverty reduction area identified in this evaluation as having environmental dimensions that should have been addressed.

**Box 3: Analysis of the inclusion of poverty-environment linkage issues – Trinidad & Tobago**

**UNDP projects 2004-2010, including projects in the pipeline**

Category	Ranking				Totals		
	A #	B #	C #	D #	Number and percent of projects		Funding
Poverty reduction	-	-	5	-	5	14%	67%
Environment and energy	6	8	3	-	17	47%	8%
Democratic governance	-	2	2	8	12	33%	24%
Private sector (Corporate social responsibility)	-	-	2	-	2	6%	1%
<b>Total</b>	6	10	12	8	36	100%	100%

**Poverty-Environment Nexus Ranking Criteria**

A = P-E linkages clearly identified and included in mandate, objectives and/or outputs.

B = Some P-E linkages identified and included but not highlighted.

C = P-E linkages not explicitly identified but deemed important by evaluators.

D = P-E nexus issues not relevant in terms of objectives, subject matter or outputs.

PE = poverty-environment

Source: Country case studies

<sup>42</sup> The GEF increasingly acknowledges the role of human development in its overall objective of achieving global environmental benefits. See, for example, 'The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs', GEF Evaluation Office, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Since 2005, the environment and energy practice in Bratislava has been functioning as an integrated practice combining UNDP/GEF units and the regional environment and energy programme. This regional practice is fully integrated within the regional service centre. This integration has been fully achieved in the Bangkok regional environment and energy practice, and it is advancing in Panama.

The one area of UNDP's externally funded operations that does tackle poverty-environment issues centrally is the GEF SGP,<sup>44</sup> which GEF has assigned UNDP to manage. In all country case studies and most country interviews, the SGP was praised for its capability to handle local issues of livelihoods, poverty and well-being in concert with global issues of climate change, biodiversity, international waters, forest and land degradation, and chemical pollution. Designed to be more locally focused, SGP projects always combine local development and environmental issues, which contributes to building more local support and demonstrating the positive benefits of addressing the nexus.

As concerns about climate change increase, a number of large funds to support adaptation have been established. UNDP has been selected to participate in or administer some of these funds, and countries are increasingly seeking such funding through UNDP. These funds recognize poverty-environment linkages more explicitly than the GEF but still are channelled largely through the environment and energy units. Country offices well recognize environment and poverty connections related to climate change, which is leading to more cooperation between the poverty and environment practice area teams as well as the crisis prevention and recovery units.<sup>45</sup> A critical factor in addressing poverty-environment linkages is the opportunity to obtain additional funding, not to address fundamental UNDP policy issues on the nexus. However, the country studies and interviews have demonstrated that recognition of the importance of addressing the nexus can help champions drive incorporation of nexus issues into projects funded externally, including the GEF.

The only explicit UNDP poverty-environment nexus activity is the PEI, which maintains its status as a programme, albeit with the descriptor 'initiative'. As a programme activity and a joint initiative of UNEP and UNDP, the PEI has to seek its funding largely from external sources, though some country offices have used TRAC funds for part of PEI projects.<sup>46</sup> The PEI's existence is precarious, both in its institutional position and in its funding. PEI projects tend to be initiated by PEI staff in the regional service centres rather than by country offices. Because of the limited funding available and absence of priority for the PEI in the UNDP strategy, the projects are typically funded initially for several years, with no assurance of longer-term funding. The PEI depends largely on country-level advocacy for poverty-environment issues.

#### **INCENTIVES TO SUPPORT WORK ON THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS**

UNDP is seeking to improve its impact and results through a results-based management system. Achievement of results is important in staff performance evaluations and in career progression.

This evaluation found no significant incentives to include poverty-environment linkages in programming, project design or capacity development. Indeed, the evaluation found a number of disincentives (some of which are identified in Box 1), most of which relate to the demand for staff time and resources to address nexus issues in hard-pressed country offices. The nexus is perceived to require more local initiatives and efforts for little or no reward within the institutional structure of UNDP. In seven of the

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<sup>44</sup> Established in 1992, SGP channels financial and technical support directly to NGOs and community-based groups for activities that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods. See <[www.sgp.undp.org/index.cfm](http://www.sgp.undp.org/index.cfm)>.

<sup>45</sup> Some country offices have structured their staff into clusters that combine different practice areas.

<sup>46</sup> PEI is funded by the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom as well as the European Commission.

country interviews, staffing and resource barriers to addressing poverty-environment linkages were mentioned without prompting.

The inclusion of indicators is one option for evaluating poverty-environment linkages and rewarding performance. Many separate poverty and environment indicators are used routinely in monitoring and evaluation, but very few specifically address the linkages and interactions between poverty and the environment. The PEI project has itself addressed this challenge (Box 4). Other organizations are experimenting with indicator sets that concurrently assess an

environmental attribute, such as land cover, with a measure of poverty status.<sup>47</sup> This evaluation found two country offices where representatives of all focus clusters reviewed projects to determine cross-sectoral linkages and how to handle them. This was, however, at the design stage, not the evaluation stage. The fact remains that UNDP has not devoted resources to developing indicators for the nexus, and staff feel no imperative to invent more hurdles to the evaluation of project performance. Hence, there is little incentive to include, monitor and evaluate the role and benefits of including poverty-environment linkages in projects.

#### **Box 4: Indicators for including environment in poverty reduction strategies in Africa**

##### **Findings on poverty and environment indicators from the UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative, 2008:**

- Poverty reduction strategies cannot be successfully achieved without taking into account the environment.
- Human development can be promoted with moderate increases in countries' ecological footprint.
- General indicators on human well-being and environment do not focus on the links between poverty and environment.
- The existing poverty and environment indicators can only partially solve the problems of 'integration' between their different dimensions and 'reference' about the choice of variables that involve evaluative considerations.
- The measurement of poverty and environment links involves: (i) conceptualization of phenomena, (ii) identification of data, (iii) development of indicators and (iv) elaboration of an index or composite indicators.
- Indicators should be arranged hierarchically to tell a coherent story.

##### **The report recommends the use of adjustment factors and regression analysis to develop poverty and environment indicators. A new methodology should enable the development of indicators that are:**

- Relational: they have at least two dimensions, one for poverty and one for the environment;
- Objective: they represent factual and concrete processes, avoiding subjective views;
- Multidimensional.

<sup>47</sup> The Convention to Combat Desertification is at an advanced stage of developing impact indicators for country reporting to the Convention. These combine one biophysical attribute (land cover) and one human development attribute (poverty status). UNEP is involved in this effort, but UNDP is not. See <[www.unccd.int/science/menu.php?newch=141](http://www.unccd.int/science/menu.php?newch=141)>.



### 3.3 ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

UNDP sees itself as a global advocate for the importance of poverty-environment linkages. This role, however, has varied over time, across its range of operations and in how it is accomplished. The 1992 Earth Summit brought into the public domain the concept of sustainable development and the interconnections between environment and poverty.<sup>48</sup> UNDP was prominent in the negotiations and in formulating the concept that became known as the poverty-environment nexus. UNDP is also a major provider of capacity development, which gives it an opportunity to advocate for the nexus. This sub-section evaluates how far UNDP has gone in its advocacy role and in promoting the poverty-environment nexus concept among its partners.

The UNDP role in highlighting the importance and potential of poverty-environment linkages has had its strengths, but it has varied considerably in direction and priority. The nexus is rarely, if ever, prioritized. In countries, advocacy is often affected by UNDP's expectation of how the government may react. UNDP has a patchy record in using capacity development to promote the links between poverty and environment. UNDP has opportunistically used the climate change agenda for advocacy, demonstrating that it could become a good advocate through appropriate capacity development and targeted advice.

#### UNDP ADVOCACY OF POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES

UNDP remains a prominent international institution advocating for protection of the environment as one of the strategies to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods. It

does this primarily as a means to aid its core mandate of promoting sustainable development.

Advocacy takes place in a number of ways.<sup>49</sup> The most enduring has been UNDP's work in drafting conventions and developing partnerships.<sup>50</sup> UNDP played a formative role not only in the original formulation of 'sustainable development' as a guiding concept but also as one of the three original implementing agencies of the GEF. That role continues with more consensus as the understanding of poverty-environment linkages grows internationally.

This evaluation has identified many cases in which UNDP has used donor coordination processes or its role in formulating UNDAFs to encourage greater attention to poverty-environment linkages. While many efforts have been directed at specific environmental or poverty issues (for example, clean water supply or ecosystem protection), UNDP has used its broader understanding and country-level experience to introduce more attention to poverty-environment linkages per se, thereby helping to improve implementation of programmes, such as LULUCF and UN-REDD. These activities have helped to disseminate information about the linkages more broadly and build stronger support for addressing the nexus internationally. Examples include the PEP and the DDC, both of which have raised funds to support projects that address poverty-environment issues in developing countries, and the Equator Initiative, a partnership that promotes local initiatives to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, which has created incentives for others to carry out such projects.

However, with the exception of the PEP and spin-offs such as the PEI, UNDP advocacy

<sup>48</sup> See the 1992 Human Development Report, 'Global Dimensions of Human Development', <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1992>>.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, the Human Development Reports of 2007/8, *Fighting Climate Change: Human solidarity in a divided world* and 2006, *Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis*.

<sup>50</sup> Partnerships and conventions include the Poverty-Environment Partnership, DDC, Convention on Biological Diversity, UN-REDD, the Equator Initiative.

has not made the linkages between poverty and environment a high priority in its strategy or activities. In the GEF-financed global conventions and agreements, the poverty-environment linkage has only slowly become accepted as one of a number of strategic ways to deliver global environmental benefits. Similarly, in the Commission on Sustainable Development, linked poverty-environment issues are thematic topics rather than core conceptual principles. Indeed, UNDP's advocacy role has been described as 'softly-softly',<sup>51</sup> pointing out to its partners that a primary way of promoting environmental protection is by taking account of the living conditions of poor people and ensuring improvement of their livelihoods. The extent and effectiveness of this advocacy has been found to vary considerably.

UNDP has been timely in establishing its advocacy role with regard to climate change adaptation. In particular, it has been the most prominent agency to identify the suite of issues involved in adapting to climate change and in helping to develop the fast-evolving agendas in UN-REDD, for example. UNDP has been a particularly effective advocate in developing countries, assisting with a range of tasks such as formulating policies and developing projects to expand the climate change adaptation agenda and tap new funding opportunities. This evaluation found a number of cases in which UNDP has taken a lead role on behalf of its country client because of its better understanding of the issues and opportunities in addressing climate change.

UNDP exercises its advocacy role in different ways according to country conditions. Country offices tend to be more proactive in advocating attention to poverty-environment linkages in most countries of Africa and Asia, where the dependence of poor people on the environment

is clear, as are the threats from environmental degradation and disasters. This applies particularly with governments that have a clear commitment to the nexus (e.g. United Republic of Tanzania). The degree of advocacy in Europe and the CIS, the Arab States and Latin America has been more mixed, partly arising from government resistance to addressing the nexus issues and partly because of different views among ministries. In a few cases (e.g. India, Indonesia, Malaysia), environmental protection has been explicitly promoted by country offices as a means of achieving sustainable livelihoods. In other cases (e.g. Cameroon, Sri Lanka), advocacy has been extended to local governments, communities and the private sector.

### **CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT REGARDING POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT LINKAGES**

One of the primary ways in which UNDP advocates for poverty-environment linkages is through its capacity development activities. This work is increasingly being carried out with local government partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This brings consideration of poverty-environment issues more directly to communities. The PEI has produced handbooks and guidelines to inform decision makers about the importance of taking the nexus into account and to provide guidance on how to do it.<sup>52</sup> Workshops, seminars and other trainings have touched on the nexus, but addressing the linkage has not been a primary subject in these activities.

Capacity development is often targeted at particular agencies, such as ministries of planning, in order to encourage incorporation of the nexus into national planning. However, handling of nexus issues in plans such as PRSPs has been found inadequate.<sup>53</sup> In an effort to build

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<sup>51</sup> By a senior UNDP regional service centre staff member who prefers not to be quoted.

<sup>52</sup> UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative 2009, 'Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning: A Handbook for Practitioners', United Nations office at Nairobi, 118 pp.

<sup>53</sup> Jan Bojö and Rama Chandra Reddy, 'Status and Evolution of Environmental Priorities in the Poverty Reduction Strategies', November 2003, World Bank; and Gonzalo Griebenow and Sunanda Kishore, 'Mainstreaming Environment and Climate Change in the Implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies', June 2009, World Bank.

capacity, country offices have therefore initiated programmes to build skills to implement PEI projects in key ministries. These efforts are aimed both at raising awareness of nexus issues and increasing capacity to deal with them. To date, 18 countries have PEI projects, and further expansion is anticipated.

Building nexus considerations into development plans rather than sectoral plans has been an aim of some country offices. In a few cases (e.g. Cameroon, Senegal), capacity development on nexus issues has taken place as part of general advisory activities. Where sectoral plans only take up poverty-environment linkages, the result has been less effective (e.g. Malaysia). Very few countries have yet included nexus issues in budget allocations or implementation or monitoring.

### **3.4 COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

The mandate to address the poverty-environment nexus is not limited to UNDP. Several United Nations agencies claim some capability and capacity to handle the nexus, particularly UNEP but also FAO, UNESCO and United Nations University. However, UNDP is the only United Nations agency of these that is widely represented at country level, making it the most likely candidate to lead national poverty-environment partnerships of agencies and donors and to coordinate their inputs with client governments. This sub-section considers how well UNDP undertakes coordination and partnerships, with whom and with what result.

UNDP cooperation with other institutions on poverty-environment linkages varies according to institutional level, country circumstance and opportunities. Globally, UNDP is a partner to all major multilateral accords and conventions related to development. Besides the PEP, the only explicit partnership with funding implications for poverty-environment is the partnership with UNEP on PEI. Inter-agency rivalry at country level has often inhibited cooperation, except where co-funding and donor support

have been sought, such as for a GEF project that requires such cooperation. On technical and operational grounds, there is little incentive to cooperate. UNDP has a special role at country level; as a trusted partner of host governments it can lead donor coordination and promote nexus activities through the UNDAF. And the Delivering as One initiative in several countries is beginning to promote more cooperation among United Nations agencies.

#### **COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES ON THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS**

Cooperation and partnerships are intrinsically built into the workings of the United Nations system at country level through the UNDAF. UNDP often takes a lead role as the manager of the resident coordinator system. While the basic UNDAF format does not include poverty-environment linkages, a number of country offices emphasized in interviews that the UNDAF has proved a useful tool to incorporate poverty-environment linkages and to achieve broader collaboration. Nevertheless, inter-agency rivalry sometimes prevails, impeding cooperation.

Most of this evaluation's country studies and interviews reported project-specific cooperation with other United Nations agencies. The extent of this cooperation varied from full partnership to low-level liaison and invitations to assist. With agencies such as FAO, WHO and UNEP, which have little or no country representation and a primary focus on technical capacity, cooperation ranges from direct involvement in each other's projects (bringing complementary functions for better service delivery) to occasional interactions.

The relationship between UNDP and the GEF has endured for nearly two decades, and UNDP has used its comparative advantage to become the largest implementer of GEF projects. The relationship is based on mutual benefit: the GEF benefits from UNDP's country-level links and technical capabilities, and UNDP benefits by being able to provide requested environmental protection services to country partners.

UNDP capacity to address national and local development and the GEF goals of delivering global environmental benefits are clear and should encourage poverty-environment linkages (Box 5). Often, however, this mutual interest in providing co-benefits for development and the environment is lost during project formulation, review and implementation. In three country interviews, respondents described their difficulty in incorporating UNDP's core mandate of poverty reduction into the rules and procedures for obtaining GEF finance.

Poverty-environment linkages are commonplace, widely promoted and universally praised in the SGP of the GEF, administered and technically supported by UNDP. The SGP was designed to address local issues in producing global benefits. UNDP has done very well in implementing these projects, with a strong emphasis on the nexus.<sup>54</sup> Part of the reason for the effectiveness of the

SGP is that UNDP works directly with NGOs, community-based groups and communities, where poverty-environment linkages are much better understood and appreciated. Projects receive on average only \$20,000 (maximum \$50,000). Most respondents in this evaluation considered them to be very efficient in delivering results. However, several interviewees mentioned that it was often difficult to scale up and replicate SGP projects.

To enhance inter-agency cooperation, the United Nations has recently launched pilots of its Delivering as One initiative.<sup>55</sup> Participating country offices generally felt that initial results were positive in improving cooperation on poverty-environment nexus issues among United Nations agencies and with donors, other partners and the government. The United Republic of Tanzania country study provides an example of the progress that can be achieved in support

#### **Box 5: UNDP's comparative advantage in the GEF**

##### **UNDP roles as stipulated in the GEF**

- UNDP will play the primary role in ensuring the development and management of capacity building programs and technical assistance projects. Through its global network of field offices, UNDP will draw upon its experience in human resources development, institutional strengthening and non-governmental and community participation to assist countries in promoting, designing and implementing activities consistent with the purpose of the GEF and national sustainable development strategies. Also drawing on its inter-country programming experience, UNDP will contribute to the development of regional and global projects within the GEF work programme in cooperation with the other implementing agencies.

##### **Integration of the GEF portfolio into UNDP operations: the three pillars**

- Enabling activities that help countries to take stock of their needs, strengths and weaknesses in environmental management;
- Efforts to mainstream environment into the national development agenda;
- Strengthening capacity to mobilize and deliver financing.

##### **UNDP core strength and advantage**

- Its ability, through its network of country offices, to work with governments to mainstream global environmental issues into broader sustainable development programs.

*Source: The GEF 2006, Roles and Comparative Advantage of the GEF Agencies, GEF Council Document GEF/C.30/9*

<sup>54</sup> The GEF fourth Overall Performance Study noted that SGP contributes to numerous institutional and policy changes at the local, provincial and national levels and to building capacities within civil society and academic organizations to address global environmental concerns. Its success has resulted in a high demand for project funding.

<sup>55</sup> Involving Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

of the government as well as the difficulties that can be encountered (see Annex 3). Several other country offices indicated they were using Delivering as One as a model to improve cooperation despite not being part of the pilot.

The only formal agreement pertaining to the poverty-environment nexus within the United Nations is the PEI. In all studies of countries where PEI is operative, the evaluation found good implementation cooperation, though this was somewhat hampered by the absence of UNEP teams in individual countries. There was a general feeling that UNDP is taking a greater share of the administrative and technical burdens. However, this was seen as reasonable given that UNDP has country offices (through which PEI is implemented) and is heavily engaged with host country governments in building capacity to deal with poverty-environment linkages in national development planning. Cooperation between UNDP and UNEP is less consistent at the institutional level, however, since it has not been declared a strategic priority. PEI remains a programme in UNDP, but the path going forward is being reviewed.

### **COOPERATION WITH DONORS ON POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT ISSUES**

UNDP's role in working with other agencies provides a basis for greater cooperation on the poverty-environment nexus. One mechanism is the PEP, an informal network of development agencies seeking to improve coordination of work on poverty reduction and the environment within the framework of internationally agreed principles and processes for sustainable development. It meets annually and focuses on knowledge sharing and joint advocacy to encourage better cooperation and application of methods. PEP has been a strong supporter of PEI and has arranged funding for it. PEP also aims to improve donor collaboration on the poverty-environment nexus beyond the PEI, including through the UN-REDD, climate change adaptation funds and other funds.

UNDP has a pivotal role in donor coordination in many countries interviewed for this evaluation. In United Republic of Tanzania, the UNDP resident representative is also the United Nations resident coordinator and hence the Delivering as One programme coordinator. In Syrian Arab Republic, UNDP leads donor coordination, giving it additional leverage with the government and thus enabling poverty issues to be taken up. Where the United Nations presence in the country is small (e.g. Bulgaria), UNDP tends to work more with bilateral aid agencies. In other countries, such as India, donor coordination is weak and not encouraged by government. In such cases, this evaluation found neglect of poverty-environment linkage issues since they are rarely perceived as important by the host country.

### **3.5 CONTRIBUTION TO RESULTS**

If integrating environmental management and poverty reduction is to become a widespread reality, evidence must be available demonstrating that it produces benefits in a timely and efficient manner. UNDP's activities in the poverty-environment nexus are many and varied—capacity development, advocacy, PEI and donor coordination, for example—but in the final analysis, on-the-ground implementation of development projects using nexus principles must demonstrate results. This section examines the results achieved to date using the nexus and whether the evidence base is sufficient to extend the approaches more widely.

Country studies and interviews have shown that where nexus issues are recognized as critical to achieving sustainable development, there is strong support to address the nexus in programmes and projects. This has been shown in SGP and issues related to climate change. Positive results have been reported, and the beneficial outcomes have been used to encourage more such projects, though the reported results are based more on qualitative observations than on quantitative evidence. Questions have been raised about the effectiveness of programmes

concerning the nexus. The few nexus-oriented projects, scarcity of indicators, lack of funding and absence of incentives make it difficult to convince sceptics about the value of pursuing the nexus. These drawbacks also increase the need to demonstrate the importance of linking poverty and the environment more systemically in UNDP activities.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The effectiveness of integrated approaches to poverty and environment has been demonstrated through the PEI. Its strategic objectives include improving government policies and capacities to produce and implement sustainable development policies and budget plans that are pro-poor and pro-environment. Yet PEI is limited in budget and scope, and UNDP headquarters has not formally encouraged country offices to use PEI guidance, so its impact is mostly limited to the countries where PEI is being piloted. Promotion of PEI comes primarily from its own staff and the regional service centres.<sup>56</sup>

This evaluation has noted a number of beneficial results from PEI. Following positive outcomes from initial projects in Rwanda and United Republic of Tanzania in 2005, the programme was scaled up in 2007 to more African countries, several in Asia and Pacific, and two each in Central Asia and Latin America, for a total of 18.<sup>57</sup> Moving beyond its initial research and scoping, PEI now concentrates on capacity development in its client countries;<sup>58</sup> this is seen as the best

way to leverage change and acceptance of poverty-environment linkages. Pilot projects focused on the nexus undertaken in some PEI countries have demonstrated beneficial synergies for poverty reduction and environmental conservation.<sup>59</sup>

PEI results vary by country depending on government commitment, degree of cooperation within the government, efficiency of UNDP advocacy and effectiveness of implementation. Where government officials have recognized their country's dependence on natural resource management as a means to reduce poverty, receptivity to PEI is high (Box 6). In United Republic of Tanzania, for example, the PEI project is widely reported to have produced positive results. In adjacent Kenya, government support is lacking and progress is poor.

This evaluation's country studies have identified only one case where PEI failed (Box 7). In five of the seven case study countries where PEI is operational, country offices are supportive of PEI projects. They use this approach to promote cooperation among practice groups and integrate poverty and environment into their activities as well as into government planning. Significant progress has also been achieved in other countries where country offices have actively promoted integration. Some regard PEI as an important test case for the Delivering as One model.<sup>60</sup> There is some concern that PEI may concentrate too much on capacity development at the central level to the detriment of fuller integration of the nexus into UNDP's other programmes and projects.

<sup>56</sup> Asia and Pacific, Latin America, and Europe and CIS. The PEI is coordinated globally by the Poverty Environment Facility. The Africa region has a separate PEI Africa Regional Team. Both the Poverty Environment Facility and the PEI Africa Regional Team are located in Nairobi.

<sup>57</sup> Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam.

<sup>58</sup> PEI documentation, including 'Making the Economic Case: A Primer on the Economic Arguments for Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into National Development Planning', PEI, 2008; 'Mainstreaming Environment for Poverty Reduction and Pro-poor Growth', PEI, 2007; 'Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning: A Handbook for Practitioners', PEI, March 2009.

<sup>59</sup> The pilot projects may also be funded by other sources, such as SGP.

<sup>60</sup> United Nations High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence, 2006, <[www.un.org/events/panel/html/page1.html](http://www.un.org/events/panel/html/page1.html)>.

### **Box 6: Successful implementation of the Poverty-Environment Initiative**

#### **PEI is playing a unique catalytic role in integrating poverty reduction and environmental objectives in-country:**

- In United Republic of Tanzania, PEI is engaging with many actors in environment and poverty reduction, with a particular focus on building government capacity.
- In Rwanda, PEI has multiple government partners, ranging from specialized ministries through to finance and economic development.

#### **PEI has been careful to embed its in-country work into 'mainstream' development processes and institutions:**

- In United Republic of Tanzania, PEI has worked closely with finance and planning authorities, linking them with relevant environmental interests.
- In Mali, PEI has taken the lead in integrating economic issues and the environment.

#### **The PEI pilot project has been a learning and adaptive programme, shaped ultimately—if not immediately—to suit country needs:**

- In Kyrgyzstan, the learning and adaptation continues and has caught the attention of many government actors, despite the recent political turmoil.

#### **PEI has demonstrated the benefits of and the requirements for a joint programming approach between UNDP and UNEP for environmental mainstreaming:**

- As evidenced in all country case studies that included PEI (Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania) PEI has increasingly engaged in UNDAF review and planning.

#### **The full integration of poverty reduction and environmental objectives in-country is a long-term (10-20 year) process of institutional change:**

- It has taken time for PEI's catalytic role to become rooted in developing partnerships, as in Bhutan and United Republic of Tanzania, which are now engaging with civil society and the private sector. PEI's 'downstream' role in national and budgetary planning is starting to show signs of effectiveness.
- In a new PEI country such as Papua New Guinea (started 2008), integration of poverty-environment nexus issues into government planning is only just starting. The effort faces limited capacity in the government, which is more focused on increasing income levels, even if that involves over-exploiting natural resources at the expense of the poor.

*Source: Bass and Renard, UNDP-UNEP PEI Evaluation, 2009*

### **Box 7: Positive outcome from failed implementation of the Poverty-Environment Initiative: Viet Nam**

Viet Nam was the first PEI pilot project in Asia and Pacific. Government support was limited, and the PEI project was located in the Ministry of Natural Resource Management, where it received low priority, rather than in the Ministry of Planning and Investment. The project provided training and built some capacity, but it has not been able to integrate nexus issues into the government's planning. Its funding expires at the end of 2010, and it is unclear whether it will be extended.

Viet Nam is the only PEI pilot country not reviewed in the 2009 PEI Progress Report. The project does not have support from the country office at this stage. Senior staff say they want to take a more comprehensive view of promoting sustainable development, taking account of the links among all sectors.

The PEI regional team and Viet Nam country office have recognized the shortcomings. As a result, the programme was discontinued in its present form. A new programme was initiated, based on the lessons learned, and was located in the Ministry of Planning and Investment. This programme, started with major TRAC resources, now focuses on climate and sustainable planning.

*Source: Viet Nam country study and telephone interviews*

The 2009 PEI Progress Report<sup>61</sup> notes increased government attention to poverty-environment nexus issues and more integration into country programmes. It emphasizes the importance of streamlining PEI to ensure sustainability of institutional changes in governments. Independent evaluations of PEI have been more critical.<sup>62</sup> They raise concerns about the institutional configuration of PEI in the UNDP-UNEP relationship and the level of support it receives from the management of these agencies.

The sustainability of progress in capacity development depends in large part on the continuity of the initiative, which is viewed as important in most countries applying it. It is unclear how PEI will be funded beyond 2012, when the current donor commitment ends. PEI is considering whether to try obtaining more funding from PEP sources or to rely primarily on TRAC funding after 2012. PEI's status in the overall UNDP strategy is unclear, and its future is uncertain.

## RESULTS ON THE GROUND

UNDP has other programmes that have linked poverty-environment dimensions, including those supported by the DDC, UN-REDD, the recently created climate change adaptation funds and projects funded by bilateral donors. In addition to providing additional sources of funding, these programmes explicitly support

more attention to the nexus and encourage integration across practice areas in the institution to foster it.

Though the GEF is the largest single source of external funding for UNDP, GEF-funded projects are not evaluated on how well they deliver on poverty environment-nexus issues.<sup>63</sup> Programmatic results are therefore difficult to identify. The GEF's fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS-4), only notes briefly that GEF projects bring synergetic benefits for local people. It also concludes that "social and gender issues in GEF projects are not dealt with in a systematic manner", leading to widely divergent approaches.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, the GEF is cognizant of the important local developmental benefits its projects are delivering.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, the GEF's strategies since 2006 (GEF4 and now GEF5) have increasingly incorporated performance indicators relating to poverty.

Examples of this shift from a singular focus on global environmental benefits towards co-benefits for both the environment and human development are seen in the GEF's land degradation and biodiversity focal areas. The land degradation focal area strategy supports projects that restore degraded land—presented somewhat tenuously as a 'global environment benefit'—to assure more sustainable livelihoods for local people. The argument is that this work will also achieve global benefits in climate change

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<sup>61</sup> 'Scaling Up the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative, Annual Progress Report 2009', March 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Steve Bass and Yves Renard, 'Evaluation of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) Partnership with Norway 2004-2008', IIED, 18 June 2009; and Steve Bass, 'Brief Review of UNDP Environmental Mainstreaming in Relation to the UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative, Final Report', IIED, 2 September 2008.

<sup>63</sup> The Environment and Energy evaluation noted that, since GEF was the major source of funding for projects focused on environment and energy, the lack of formal attention to the poverty-environment nexus in GEF project design seemed to influence those in UNDP seeking GEF projects to focus more on global issues than on local issues related to the poverty-environment nexus. The dependence on that funding also tended to separate the environment and energy groups from the other practice areas.

<sup>64</sup> 'Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF', 2010, p. 142.

<sup>65</sup> The GEF evaluation, 'The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs', examined how these benefits contributed to more project success and sustainability. It found some progress but also noted a number of cases in which win-win solutions were not achieved, due to both inherent trade-offs that could not be resolved and lack of adequate attention in the execution of the project.



(increased fixation of carbon) and biodiversity (more organic matter in soil, for example). It is, in effect, an implicitly linked poverty-environment approach.<sup>66</sup> UNDP implements many, but by no means all, of these projects for the GEF.

In the course of implementing its initial projects, UNDP helped the GEF to recognize how these projects affected poor people in the areas around the projects. They also learned that building local support, based on improving the livelihoods of local people, was likely to improve the project's management and sustainability. Progress in mitigating global environmental degradation was found to depend on the support of local people to help protect the environment in their area. The 2006 GEF study 'The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs' examined how these benefits contributed to more project success and sustainability. It found some progress, but also noted a number of cases in which win-win solutions were not achieved. This was due to both inherent trade-offs that could not be resolved and lack of adequate attention in the execution of the project.

Results from the SGP have been evaluated favourably with respect to delivery of local developmental impact.<sup>67</sup> To deliver development results, projects have to build community support by helping to improve livelihoods, while at the same time maintaining a core focus on environmental benefits. Some projects introduce sustainable activities to provide incomes in the community (e.g. butterfly production and sales in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania), different crops, alternative sources of energy (e.g. from cutting local timber) or payments for environmental stewardship. In all interviews with countries where the SGP is operational, country offices regard it as their best example of linking poverty and environment. Its positive

contributions were mentioned in 5 of the 13 conclusions in the recent joint evaluation of the SGP by the GEF and UNDP (June 2008):

- Conclusion 1: The SGP has a slightly higher success rate in achieving global environmental benefits and a significantly higher rate in sustaining them than GEF medium- and full-size projects.
- Conclusion 2: The SGP has contributed to numerous institutional reforms and policy changes in the recipient countries to address global environmental issues.
- Conclusion 3: The SGP has contributed to direct global environmental benefits while also addressing the livelihood needs of local populations.
- Conclusion 4: The SGP has made significant progress in targeting its efforts to help the poor.
- Conclusion 10: Automatic graduation from the SGP of country programmes older than eight years risks reducing the cost-effectiveness of the overall GEF portfolio.<sup>68</sup>

Country offices like SGP projects because they build local capacity and provide clear examples of the benefits of addressing nexus issues. These positive results provide some evidence that taking better account of poverty-environment links is productive and helps achieve broader national goals.

Growing concern about climate change effects on the poor has generated new funding, aimed at both environmental aspects of climate change and protection of poor people from the effects of climate-induced natural disasters. But it is too soon to assess development impacts. UNDP country offices have highlighted cases in which bilateral donors have addressed poverty-environment

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<sup>66</sup> Those areas would be addressed under biodiversity conservation.

<sup>67</sup> Introduction, 'Report of the Third Independent Evaluation of the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, 1999-2002', GEF, UNDP, UNOPS.

<sup>68</sup> GEF and UNDP Evaluation Office, New York, 'Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme', June 2008.

nexus issues in their countries. These projects are designed to build government support for addressing the nexus, and especially for assisting in climate change adaptation.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATING RESULTS OF LINKING POVERTY AND ENVIRONMENT**

This evaluation has found that monitoring and evaluation for the poverty-environment nexus is almost entirely missing in UNDP, except for the specific case of the PEI. Without explicit indicators and attention to the linkages between

poverty and environment, monitoring and evaluation will remain unsupportive of the nexus and, worse, will encourage its exclusion at the expense of more sectoral issues.

UNDP has adopted a results-based management approach to reviewing its programmes.<sup>69</sup> Once poverty-environment indicators are developed, the same approach should be applied to poverty-environment work. To that end, it is useful to note that the Bureau for Development Policy is considering the development of a facility to establish such indicators.

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<sup>69</sup> 'Evaluation of Results Based Management at UNDP: Achieving Results', UNDP Evaluation Office, 2007.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1: Addressing the poverty-environment nexus is essential to achieving the UNDP mission.**

The linkages between poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and progress on achievement of the MDGs have been well established in analyses by UNDP and other major institutions. Poor people depend disproportionately on access to natural resources for their livelihoods, and development and poverty reduction programmes have significant effects on the environment.

UNDP has advocated for consideration of the poverty-environment nexus through conferences, publications and statements from successive administrators. UNDP programme reviews have stressed the value of addressing poverty and environment concerns concurrently and pointed out that poverty-environment linkages move in both directions. Greater attention to climate change adaptation in recent years has contributed significantly to raising awareness and understanding about the importance of addressing the nexus coherently, including its relationship to UNDP's work on preventing and recovering from natural disasters.

**Conclusion 2: Strategic planning and advocacy on the poverty-environment nexus are occurring at UNDP, but policy is not yet systematically translated into practice. Conversely, examples of good practice and success at local and regional levels are not being effectively communicated and replicated.**

The current strategic plan makes reference to the centrality of environmental preservation for

human development and well-being as well as the vulnerability of the poorest countries and peoples to climate change and other environmental factors. However, the emphasis centres primarily on focus areas and performance objectives, with insufficient attention to cross-area coordination. The absence of operational guidance on poverty-environment linkages limits the willingness and ability of country offices to work with government partners to expand this cross-area coordination.

It is evident that the UNDP environment and energy units at all levels are increasingly including 'sustainable livelihood' considerations in their environmental work. However, there is less cross-sectoral recognition from the poverty teams. The difference owes to multiple factors, especially the priorities of partner governments and donors. Country offices have considerable latitude to promote cross-sectoral programmes and projects linking environment and poverty priorities. This has resulted in wide variance across countries and focus areas.

Some country offices have effectively used observational results from projects on the ground to demonstrate benefits and build support for poverty-environment linkages. These have raised awareness among government partners about the importance of addressing poverty-environment linkages and demonstrated their critical role in reaching UNDP's goals. This shows how the ability to monitor progress related to nexus issues can significantly improve outcomes.

Safeguard policies and environmental assessment screening mechanisms have been established by other international organizations, especially the international financing institutions, to help ensure that support for economic development

does not cause excessive and unnecessary harm to the environment or indigenous peoples. Until now UNDP has not established these mechanisms, but they are now under development. The Bureau for Development Policy has drafted amendments to the UNDP Programme and Operations, Policies and Procedures manual establishing environmental screening procedures for projects, and there are plans to consider new environmental safeguards policies. These mechanisms could enhance cross-sectoral coordination for poverty alleviation and environmental protection.

**Conclusion 3: UNDP's institutional and financing architecture serves as a barrier to integrated approaches. Particular problems are dependence on external financing and concentration of substantive capacity in headquarters focus area teams, not where it is needed in country offices.**

UNDP's practice architecture and operational structure reinforce separation of focus areas, encourage individualistic approaches to specific topics and discourage cross-sector cooperation. Even the one programme explicitly focused on the nexus, the PEI, is separate from the UNDP structure and operates through a parallel administration.

The financial system is segmented, and UNDP approaches country support differently in the poverty area versus the environment area. Most poverty-related funding goes to policy support at country level and comes from UNDP's core budget. In contrast, most environment and energy area support comes through earmarked donor funds and supports specific projects. This dichotomy has major implications for how the two focus areas can enhance cross-sectoral linkages.

UNDP's developing support programmes for climate change adaptation hold promise for breaking down these institutional silos; the issues overlap with regard to responsibilities in UNDP's poverty reduction, environment and sustainable

development, crisis prevention and recovery, and democratic governance focus areas.

**Conclusion 4: UNDP efforts to integrate poverty alleviation and environmental protection programmes at country level depend on the interest of countries to make this linkage. All governments are committed to both poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. However, evidence suggests that many partner governments continue to believe there are major trade-offs between these goals. Given the wide variation in poverty and environment challenges faced by countries, UNDP can demonstrate how to minimize such trade-offs.**

The differences between countries regarding reliance on renewable or extractive natural resources, susceptibility to natural disasters, dependence of the poor on the environment and governmental development priorities means that UNDP's approach to the poverty-environment nexus has to be highly adaptable and attuned to country priorities. Furthermore, the opportunities for identifying win-win situations vary considerably depending on the type of environmental issue. For instance, biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods and provision of clean water provide opportunities for poverty reduction. How seriously a country deals with the nexus depends on the commitment and ability of the country office to address these issues and the technical, administrative and financial support available from the UNDP system. It has been clearly demonstrated that country offices can accomplish better results if they have better guidance, support and sustainable funding to develop capacity and demonstrate positive results nationally and locally.

Country programmes that take account of the links with governance and crisis management help UNDP to achieve its goals more effectively. However, in countries that approach or pass middle-income levels but continue to have a high incidence of poverty and environmental degradation, country offices face reduced budgets

that further limit their ability to address the cross-sectoral issues. Where governments do not prioritize addressing the poverty-environment nexus, this has contributed to reduced commitment by country offices to incorporate poverty-environment linkages into their programming. Conversely, where country offices have a strong commitment, they can better demonstrate the benefits of integrating environmental management and poverty reduction.

**Conclusion 5: UNDP is ideally situated to strengthen partnerships within the United Nations system to coordinate action on poverty alleviation and environmental protection.**

Cooperation and partnerships are an intrinsic part of the United Nations system at country level through the UNDAF. UNDP plays a key role in managing the resident coordinator system at country level and has the most extensive network of country offices. With its ubiquitous country presence and mandate to support achievement of the MDGs and meet international environmental convention obligations, UNDP is thrust into a prominent position in terms of building United Nations partnerships. In addition to its formal partnership with UNEP on the PEI and other environmental issues, UNDP cooperates with other agencies in the UN-REDD, climate change adaptation programmes, DDC and local donor coordination mechanisms. These collaborations improve understanding of the nexus issues and contribute to results. Yet there are examples of overlap or working at cross purposes, given the separate programmes and inconsistent cooperation among United Nations agencies and donors regarding poverty-environment linkages.

UNDP can help upgrade coordination among United Nations agencies. The UNDAF process in itself can improve cooperation and coordination among the agencies in support of government priorities. More attention to the poverty-environment nexus in UNDP contributions to UNDAFs can enhance its ability to assist governments address nexus issues and improve the overall effectiveness of the United Nations.

## 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: UNDP should ensure that practices follow principles. Apart from following policy and advocacy, there is a need to learn from good practices and to replicate successes.**

UNDP should build upon its analytical work and successful programmatic experiences to integrate poverty reduction and environmental management in its operations at the country level. UNDP's policy and advocacy work on the importance of the poverty-environment nexus should be more systematically incorporated into its programming.

This will also require identifying good practices and lessons from operations at the headquarters, regional and country levels and analysing success factors that can be scaled up and replicated. An important part of this work will be enhancing knowledge management across the various units, regions and country offices to ensure that good practices and lessons are disseminated across units and regions.

**Recommendation 2: The Poverty-Environment Initiative represents good practice and should be scaled up to provide a model of how UNDP does business at the country level. It should also be used as a model for working together with UNEP and other agencies.**

UNDP should formalize the largely successful PEI, scaling it up from a stand-alone programme managed primarily as a part of the environment and sustainable development focus area to a cross-sectoral approach that will inform the organization's work across the poverty reduction and environment and sustainable development focus areas, especially at the country level. The PEI model should be utilized to develop effective ways of integrating the concerns of poverty reduction and environmental management in UNDP programming. It should also inform other programmes and initiatives, such as climate change adaptation, that integrate poverty reduction and environmental management.

The PEI approach should also be used as a model for collaboration with other agencies. Lessons from both substantive and organizational cooperation between UNDP and UNEP under the PEI should be analysed and used to inform future collaboration with other members of the United Nations family.

**Recommendation 3: UNDP should provide guidelines and create verifiable indicators in order to further integrate poverty reduction and environmental protection into other UNDP operations. It must also invest in developing the capacity of its staff.**

UNDP should develop guidelines on how to integrate poverty reduction and environmental management goals into programming at global, regional and country levels. However, such guidelines will only be effective if staff understand the rationale for and importance of such integration and have appropriate incentives to work towards it. Therefore, UNDP must develop the substantive capacities of its staff in the regional bureaux and country offices to analyse poverty-environment linkages and integrate them into programming where appropriate. Furthermore, verifiable indicators should be developed to

monitor and evaluate poverty and environment integration in programmes.

**Recommendation 4: UNDP must overcome the functional silos that prevent cooperation and integration between focus areas. Analysis of poverty and environment priorities should be incorporated into governance and crisis prevention and recovery, as well as gender support activities, and vice versa.**

UNDP should encourage cross-practice cooperation, recognizing that achieving desired results often requires integration and joint programming between focus areas. The design of country programmes should include a systematic analysis to help identify areas where integrating environmental management with the poverty reduction, democratic governance and crisis prevention and recovery focus areas would be important for achieving development results. This analysis should comprise one aspect of UNDP's proposed environmental assessment screening process, and it can be a useful tool when UNDP develops new environmental and social safeguard policies. It should be required that programmes be designed to address the integration in cases where the importance of such linkages has been established.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### I. MANDATE

The Strategic Plan of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the period 2008-2011 underlines the need for UNDP support “...to strengthen national capacity to manage the environment in a sustainable manner while ensuring adequate protection of the poor”, including “...expanded access for the poor to fundamental environmental and energy services”. The first and second multi-year funding framework 2004-2007 (MYFF) also emphasized the UNDP aim of promoting environmental sustainability in areas critical for poverty reduction, including water governance, energy services, sustainable land management and sustainable use of biodiversity.

UNDP has long been involved in the linkage between the environment and poverty. Nevertheless, its role and contribution to the poverty and environment nexus needs to be assessed, calling for this evaluation, undertaken by the Evaluation Office.

The results of this evaluation will be reported to the UNDP Executive Board, both to ensure UNDP’s accountability for achieving its intended results and to guide decision-making regarding its future role and strategies in the area. The evaluation will provide lessons learned and recommendations for enhancing UNDP’s strategic positioning and performance, in particular with regard to its role within the United Nations system.

### II. BACKGROUND

Environment in various formulations has featured as one of the key thematic areas of

UNDP’s work since the 1980s. The proposition that there are multiple, important linkages between poverty and environmental degradation – a complex poverty-environment nexus – has gained currency in the global community in recent decades, both within and outside the organization. UNDP recognizes that this poverty-environment nexus represents a challenge for sustainable human development. Yet disagreement continues about the significance of this nexus for UNDP’s developing country partners and about the best ways for UNDP to address it. This disagreement is deep rooted.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) was an innovative attempt during the latter half of the 1980s to focus the attention of the global community on the connections between environmental degradation and poverty on the one hand, and between sound environmental management and ‘sustainable development’ on the other hand. The Brundtland Commission set the scene for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also referred to as the Rio Summit).

That year the UNDP Human Development Report described the linkages between poverty, the bio-physical environment and human development as follows: “... one of the greatest threats to sustainable human and economic development comes from the downward spiral of poverty and environmental degradation that threatens current and future generations... the poor are disproportionately threatened by the environmental hazards and health risks posed by pollution, inadequate housing, poor sanitation, polluted water and a lack of other basic services.



Many of these already deprived people also live in the most ecologically vulnerable areas.”<sup>70</sup>

Yet the results of UNCED were a disappointment to many in developing countries because they did not result in significant new action to address the poverty-environment nexus, let alone poverty in general. Only the environmental part of the ambitious ‘sustainable development’ agenda resulting from the summit received much significant new funding in the following years, and it went only to the issues that were at the top of the industrialized countries’ environmental agenda: climate change, declining biological diversity and deterioration of international waters. Going into UNCED, expectations had been high for the emergence of a ‘global deal’ in which developing countries would help address deepening global environmental problems in exchange for substantial increases in official development assistance (ODA). But UNCED did not give rise to increases in ODA. Many rich countries opted instead to aggressively reduce their budget deficits in the years after UNCED, and their national ODA budgets were often easy targets.

In the final years of the 20th century, international support for environmental management in developing countries focused not on the poverty-environment nexus but rather on ‘global environmental problems’. Most developing countries agreed grudgingly to the emergence of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the early 1990s on the condition that it would not lead to cuts in other international transfers. GEF then launched its first programming cycle after UNCED with several billion dollars (since replenished three times) against a backdrop of declining ODA. The logic of GEF operations is that GEF resources are used solely to cover the incremental cost of helping developing countries address global environmental concerns. The premise is that, while poor countries would not otherwise spend scarce resources to achieve ‘global environmental benefits’, they will accept GEF resources for this purpose

because GEF money is additional to their regular ODA receipts.

UNDP’s core budget declined significantly over the 1990s. UNDP country offices had strong incentives to avoid using their shrinking core funds for environmental programming; instead they could depend on GEF funding to finance their environment portfolios. As a result, priority national environmental issues—local and national programmes related to environmental health and safety, sanitation, urban management, water resource management, soil management, energy management and so on—were likely to be passed over in favour of GEF priorities related to mitigation of climate change and conservation of bio-diversity and, to a lesser extent, management of international waters. Yet the kinds of national and local issues that are beyond the scope of GEF are precisely the ones most closely associated with poverty reduction. This sequence of events may have reinforced an oversimplified view among some developing country decision makers that sound environmental management was essentially separate from poverty reduction rather than a complement to it.

Notwithstanding these challenges, a network of development agencies (UNDP and UNEP) and international NGOs known as the Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP) has emerged in recent years. Its objective is to ensure that key poverty-environment issues are addressed within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNDP and others summarized the PEP arguments for stronger links between environmental management and poverty reduction in a joint message to the 2005 World Summit, which included the following points:

Greatly expanded public and private investment in the productivity of environmental assets can generate strong returns for poverty reduction, and is needed to create opportunities for people to lift themselves out of poverty.

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<sup>70</sup> Human Development Report 1992, *Global Dimensions of Human Development*, UNDP.

- Strong local institutions are key to improving environmental management for poverty reduction, and should be a strategic focus of capacity development efforts.
- Integrated approaches are needed to put pro-poor investments in the productivity of environmental assets at the heart of national development and poverty reduction strategies and sectoral planning at the national, subnational and local levels.
- Pro-poor changes in environmental governance—such as strengthening of property and resource rights to communally held land—will be needed to empower the poor and enable them to invest in, and reap the benefits of, improved management of environmental assets.
- Innovative market-based instruments can provide a mechanism for encouraging pro-poor investments in environmental management and the provision of environmental services, such as water and sanitation, especially in partnership with the private sector.
- Strengthening the information base for decision making—particularly with respect to the use of geo-referenced information tools—is crucial to attracting expanded, pro-poor investment in environmental assets and to help guide pro-poor policy development and implementation.
- Benchmarking donor support to the above in terms of aid volumes, as well as innovations and changes in donor policy and practice, is needed in order to enhance development cooperation effectiveness and partnerships.<sup>71</sup>

The Strategic Plan states that “...poor people depend disproportionately on the environment for their livelihoods...” Other UNDP policy statements stress that the **poor are the most exposed to environmental hazards**, from contaminated water and air pollution to toxic chemicals and degraded coastal zones. It is therefore not surprising that ‘environmental mainstreaming’ is one of the organization’s strategic goals for the coming four years. The Strategic Plan also confirms that poverty reduction remains “... at the centre of UN work in development...” Given this primacy of poverty reduction among UNDP’s goals, it is likely that environmental mainstreaming efforts will focus in large part on the poverty-environment nexus.

The Evaluation Office’s recent evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy<sup>72</sup> concluded, however, that **‘mainstreaming environment’** in general, including **mainstreaming in poverty reduction**, has **not been very successful** to date. If these efforts are to be more successful in the future, UNDP will need a better understanding of **why mainstreaming environment, particularly in relation to poverty reduction, is proving so challenging.**

#### THE ENVIRONMENT-POVERTY NEXUS AT UNDP

Only the UNDP environment and energy practice area appears to have paid significant attention to the poverty-environment nexus during the period of the recently completed MYFF. The first goal of the 2004-2007 MYFF—‘Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty’—was delivered through a series of ‘service lines,’<sup>73</sup> none

<sup>71</sup> UNDP, UNEP, IIED, IUCN and WRI, ‘Sustaining the Environment to Fight Poverty and Achieve the MDGs—The economic case and priorities for action—A message to the 2005 World Summit’, prepared in 2005 on behalf of the Poverty-Environment Partnership.

<sup>72</sup> This evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP work on environment and energy at the global, regional and national levels, emphasizing how UNDP has achieved its intended results. While focused mainly on the period 2002-2007, the evaluation also considered how events before 2002 shaped UNDP’s approach to environment and energy, as well as how the organization is positioned to move forward.

<sup>73</sup> These are: ‘MDG country reporting and poverty monitoring’, ‘pro-poor policy reform to achieve MDG targets’, ‘local poverty initiatives, including microfinance’, ‘globalization benefiting the poor’, ‘private sector development’, ‘gender mainstreaming’, ‘civil society empowerment’ and ‘making ICTD work for the poor’.

of which appeared to involve activities focused on the environment-poverty nexus. The same MYFF identified 'Energy and environment for sustainable development' as UNDP's third goal, to be addressed through six service lines.<sup>74</sup> Unlike the poverty-related activities, however, four of the six service lines related to environment and energy recognized the linkages between poverty and environmental degradation.

While the environment and energy practice area has recognized that UNDP needs to address the poverty-environment nexus, the poverty group may not have. The recent Evaluation Office evaluation of the UNDP role in Managing Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development mentioned above included analysis of UNDP's experience with this type of environmental mainstreaming more generally, though it did not go into these issues in detail or focus specifically on the poverty-environment nexus. The evaluation considered first the extent to which environmental considerations had been integrated within the work of UNDP's own poverty reduction, democratic governance and crisis response and recovery practice areas. Second, it looked at the extent to which UNDP had helped partner governments to mainstream environmental issues into key sectors such as industry, agriculture and energy at national and local levels.

The evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy concluded that despite its successive definition of a policy, an action plan and a strategy on environmental mainstreaming between 1999 and 2004, there was relatively **little collaboration between the environment and energy group** and the other main UNDP practice areas at headquarters, regional centres and country office levels. While the evaluation found that UNDP officers who worked on environment and energy activities were convinced of the need for mainstreaming,

they found little reciprocal interest on the part of the poverty reduction practice area or others. This was apparently at least partly due to a scarcity of institutional incentives or structures to facilitate mainstreaming within the organization. The evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy went on to speculate that in significant parts of the UNDP system **"...environment work is only tolerated because it is very largely externally funded"**.

The GEF, UNDP's largest source of funding for environmental activities since the early 1990s, has expressed frustration with what it considers UNDP's failure to mainstream environmental concerns within its development support programmes. The selection of UNDP as a leading implementer of GEF projects was originally justified as a means of integrating environmental considerations with UNDP's poverty reduction work. The evaluation of UNDP's role in Managing Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development concluded, however, that UNDP's success in accessing GEF resources has had the opposite result: it has reduced the incentive for this type of mainstreaming.

Another possible impediment to mainstreaming identified in the evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy is the absence of environmental safeguards policy, based apparently on the assumption that UNDP projects do not cause environmental harm. This lack of safeguards may have further reduced incentives for UNDP poverty reduction programmes to better integrate environmental considerations into their work.

## **MAINSTREAMING ENVIRONMENT AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL**

UNDP programme support for national environmental activities is most often channelled through

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<sup>74</sup> These are: 'frameworks and strategies for sustainable development', 'effective water governance', 'access to sustainable energy services', 'sustainable land management to combat desertification and land degradation', 'conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity' and 'national/sectoral policy and planning to control emissions of ozone-depleting substances and persistent organic pollutants'.

ministries of environment. This is the case especially in smaller countries and in least-developed countries. The capacities of these national agencies to promote or contribute significantly to mainstreaming environmental considerations into national development and poverty reduction processes is often very limited. Their task is further complicated by the fact that the types of environmental programmes supported by UNDP country offices are often difficult to mainstream into the development agendas of poor countries. **The environment portfolios of UNDP country offices are typically funded mostly by the GEF and therefore are largely composed of individual projects of limited duration focused on climate change, biodiversity and international waters.** GEF's preoccupation with global environmental benefits is often not perceived as supporting national environment and development priorities or as linked with national or local level poverty alleviation.

Mostly busy with specific projects, UNDP officers are not consistently engaging their government counterparts around the sorts of environmental management issues that arise in key socio-economic sectors. For example, they do not often address issues related to water resource management (except as they relate to international waters), liquid and solid waste management (except as they relate to persistent organic pollutants) or air pollution from domestic, municipal or industrial sources (except as they relate to carbon emissions), and so on.

## THE POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

The Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) emerged from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, an event that otherwise produced remarkably few concrete results. While it is still too early to make definitive judgments about the PEI, it appears to be among the most promising initiatives to address the poverty-environment nexus in the new century.

The Poverty Environment Partnership discussed above has been a strong supporter of PEI.

The PEI, a shared initiative of UNDP and UNEP, supports environmental mainstreaming at the national level. It was developed in response to the realization that: "...poverty-environment linkages have been poorly integrated into national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers ... (and) there is still a general lack of understanding of how environment and poverty are linked and/or how to include environmental sustainability in national, sectoral and district development processes."<sup>75</sup> The PEI has engaged with key socio-economic ministries in nine pilot countries in Africa and Asia<sup>76</sup> where it supports the development of capacities to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national and sectoral development plans.

UNDP and UNEP initially launched two parallel, uncoordinated initiatives but then jointly developed and launched their **Poverty-Environment Initiative** at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Designed to combine UNDP's experience in working with national governments with UNEP's environmental expertise, PEI is now expanding its operations to reach 40 countries. Expectations among donors and other stakeholders are high; at least some of them regard PEI as an important test case for the Delivering as One UN model.

The rapid growth foreseen for the PEI will entail a number of risks. The evaluation of UNDP's role in Managing Environment and Energy for Sustainable Development found that it lacks sufficient links with concrete, local activities, for example, and its approach to measuring results has deficiencies. The biggest challenge for PEI may be in finding effective ways to engage the rest of UNDP in a more robust process of environmental mainstreaming. The organization's credibility as a leader in integrating

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<sup>75</sup> PEI documentation.

<sup>76</sup> Bhutan, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam.

the environmental management and poverty reduction agendas is vulnerable as long as such integration is not visible within the organization.

This evaluation builds on findings of the evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy. Among other findings, it reported that mainstreaming environment into other UNDP practice areas, including into poverty reduction programmes, has met with very limited success to date. In light of the primacy of poverty reduction among UNDP strategic goals, it will be valuable to examine in much greater detail the experience in trying to link environmental management and poverty reduction efforts.

### III. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

#### OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the UNDP contribution to development results over a fixed period of time. It will provide findings and recommendations that are expected to assist in identifying strategies and operational approaches to strengthen UNDP's development effectiveness in the area. This exercise is expected to provide the Executive Board and relevant stakeholders with an independent, sound and accountable evaluation that:

- Assesses UNDP's positioning and contributions to managing the poverty-environment nexus, considering how effectively the agency has integrated poverty reduction and environmental management into its programming;
- Assesses the experience of the PEI, approaches to climate change adaptation and other relevant initiatives that address the poverty-environment nexus at national, regional and global levels;
- Enhances UNDP's strategic position and performance with respect to the poverty-environment nexus, particularly with regard to its role in the United Nations system; and

- Broadens understanding of the most effective ways to address the issue and overcome practical barriers to integration of sound environmental management and poverty reduction.

The findings will be timely, as UNDP and the global community accelerate their efforts to help the world's poorest and most vulnerable people adapt to the environmental degradation associated with climate change.

#### SCOPE

The evaluation will be both retrospective and prospective, taking stock of the past while looking into the future. It will emphasize UNDP's role in the field, especially with regard to the United Nations reform process. While taking a longer term perspective, the evaluation will focus on the **period since 2004**, covering **MYFF II** and the **strategic plan** implementation periods. However the evaluators will also consider conditions that existed prior to MYFF II.

This evaluation will not assess the impact of UNDP's individual projects or programmes in poverty and environment. Rather, it will emphasize the organization's overall effort to optimize its contribution to environmental management for poverty reduction, identifying key lessons from previous cooperation and providing targeted recommendations.

It will encompass a detailed analysis of UNDP policies and strategies for integrating the principles of sound environmental management into its poverty reduction programmes and for integrating the principles of effective poverty reduction into its environment and energy programmes, at global, regional, national and local levels. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which UNDP has contributed to similar integration among its national and local partners.

The evaluation will seek close collaboration with the Evaluation Unit of UNEP, including joint evaluation of the experience of the PEI.

The assessment and judgement of current approaches must take account of the effects of United Nations reform. These aspects will bear to some extent on the choice of specific country case studies for more detailed evaluation. The evaluators will be expected to act on the basis of rational selection criteria agreed with the Evaluation Office.

#### **IV. KEY EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS**

In addition to addressing the standard evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability – this evaluation will be organized around a set of specific questions, each of which may address more than one of the criteria. These questions are intended to make the criteria more precise and accessible, thus optimizing the focus and usefulness of the evaluation. The choice of evaluation questions determines the subsequent phases of information and data collection, methods of analysis, and derivation of final judgements.

The evaluation questions and their rationale will be revisited and modified by the evaluation team in the final inception report and then validated by the Evaluation Office. The current questions are:

##### **RELEVANCE AND UNDP'S ADDED VALUE**

The extent to which the rationale for UNDP's involvement is relevant to its mandate and adds value vis-à-vis other actors; the extent to which integration of the environmental and poverty reduction dimensions of UNDP's programming is relevant:

- How do the development priorities of UNDP's developing country partners affect UNDP's capacity to promote environment mainstreaming into poverty programming and vice versa, at local, national and global levels?
- How does UNDP's experience in working at the poverty-environment nexus compare

with the experience of other international organizations? What can UNDP learn from the experience of others and what can others learn from UNDP's experience?

##### **EFFECTIVENESS/IMPACT**

The extent to which UNDP's efforts to integrate environment and poverty have been effective in achieving their desired results and impacts:

- What have been the key results of UNDP's work at the poverty-environment nexus?
- How has UNDP support ensured adequate protection of the poor, including expanded access to fundamental environmental services?
- What impacts do global and regional trust funds such as the GEF have on UNDP's efforts to address the poverty-environment nexus? To what extent do these funds help to focus efforts on the nexus? How do they do this and how could their impacts be enhanced? To what extent do these funds impede mainstreaming? How does this happen and how can this effect be reduced?
- How and how well has the PEI and the strategic environmental assessments contributed to UNDP's corporate capacity to help partners address the poverty-environment nexus at global, national and local levels? What sorts of initiatives (analogous to the PEI and SEA) have emerged to help 'mainstream' poverty into energy and environment programming? What results have been achieved? What have been the impediments to their effectiveness?

##### **EFFICIENCY**

The extent to which different approaches and partnerships were efficient:

- Which approaches to addressing the poverty-environment nexus are most successful within the UNDP environment and energy and poverty reduction practices? Why are these approaches successful?

- Which approaches have proven less successful and why?
- How can the more successful approaches be integrated into other UNDP programmes?

## SUSTAINABILITY

How and how well the results of UNDP’s work integrating poverty and environment programming have contributed to sustainable human development and to what extent they have contributed to lasting change.

- To what extent is ‘environmental mainstreaming’ treated as a priority within the poverty practice area? To what extent is ‘mainstreaming of poverty reduction’ treated as a priority within the environment and energy practice area? What have been the principal results and wider changes of these respective mainstreaming efforts?
- What institutional incentives, if any, encourage this sort of integration within the organization? Are these incentives sufficient? How could such incentives be enhanced, if necessary?
- What impediments, if any, limit this sort of mainstreaming at UNDP? How could such impediments be reduced, if necessary?
- How and how well does UNDP assess the environmental risks associated with its poverty reduction activities?
- The extent to which UNDP support strengthened national capacity to manage the environment in a sustainable manner including adaptation to climate change.

## V. METHODOLOGY

This will be an objectives-based evaluation, focusing on whether UNDP’s strategies and programme outcomes are likely to achieve their stated objectives. The evaluation will take into account the changing global environmental and poverty debate as well as evolving international concerns and priorities.

The evaluation will consist of **three main phases** during which **five methodological stages** will be developed.

Three main phases of development	Five methodological stages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inception/design</li> <li>■ Implementation</li> <li>■ Synthesis/reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Structuring the evaluation</li> <li>■ Data collection</li> <li>■ Analysis</li> <li>■ Judgements on findings</li> <li>■ Recommendations</li> </ul>

Findings emerging from previous evaluations point to problems in implementing environmental mainstreaming in UNDP. This evaluation will focus on understanding the reasons behind this performance. To do so, it will identify key approaches to the poverty-environment nexus adopted by UNDP and adopt a method to look at some of the most and least successful practices. The experience of UNDP at the global, regional and country levels will be studied closely to understand what works and why. This will be supplemented by surveys conducted at all levels of programming, targeting programming staff in both the poverty and environment areas.

The evaluation will comprise broad research, data collection and analysis as well as a series of country studies and evaluation of the activities of a sample of UNDP regional centres.

## DATA COLLECTION

Primary data collection methods will consist of:

- Reviews of key documents and financial information;
- Interviews;
- Country case studies;
- Regional consultations;
- Global consultations;
- Survey questionnaire.

All of these approaches will focus on the questions listed in the section above.

## **DOCUMENT REVIEWS**

The goals and objectives are elaborated in the UNDP strategic plan 2008-2011 and the MYFF 2004-2007. These documents, with the associated reports on progress and performance, provide the defining overview of objectives, priorities and achievements from management's perspective. These will form a starting point for the evaluation.

Other relevant guidance material, practice notes, performance assessments and evaluations on environment and poverty produced by UNDP will be reviewed, as will applicable evaluations carried out by the GEF Evaluation Unit.

Available financial data on the UNDP environment and poverty programmes will be summarized and analysed.

## **INTERVIEWS**

Interviews will be conducted with key people at UNDP (BDP, regional bureaux, regional centres and country offices), UNEP and key partner organizations at the three levels.

## **COUNTRY CASE STUDIES**

A sample of countries will be selected based on transparent criteria for country case studies, which will provide important data and illustrative examples. These case studies will be designed to leverage contextual and institutional knowledge on the ground. The goal is to produce comprehensive case studies that generate knowledge and lessons for the evaluation and can also function as high-quality stand-alone studies. It is recognized that case studies of thematic evaluations can never be used for statistical generalizations, but they can contribute significantly to theoretical generalization and illustration of findings.

The main criteria for the selection of countries will be to achieve regional balance and a mix of country typologies (e.g., large countries, least-developed countries and small island developing states). One possibility is to carry out half the case studies in countries where the PEI has been active and the other half in 'non-PEI' countries. In selecting the 'non-PEI' countries, one option is to select countries where other UNDP approaches to the poverty-environment nexus are believed to be working well and warrant closer scrutiny.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used. Evaluation methods will include interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and reviews of key documents, including outcome and project evaluations, progress and monitoring reports, and other relevant documents.

Each country study will produce a country report which will also undergo stakeholder validation.

A pilot country visit will be carried out to allow the evaluation team to test the approach and the questions.

## **REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS**

At selected regional centres the evaluation team will interview UNDP staff and consult with partner organizations.

## **GLOBAL CONSULTATIONS**

Global consultations will emphasize UNDP headquarters staff and management, as well as organizations that share UNDP's interests and goals. These will explore past, present and future collaboration as well as UNDP's future positioning on managing environment for poverty reduction within the United Nations system.

Special attention will be given to UNEP. Interviews will also be conducted with selected



staff of international organizations, government agencies, the private sector and relevant national and international NGOs. These will include the GEF Secretariat, GEF Evaluation Office, World Bank, IUCN, International Institute for Environment and Development and World Resources Institute.

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

The main purpose of the questionnaire will be to complete and validate the information obtained through other sources. With a goal of capturing different perspectives within the organization, it will concentrate on UNDP staff working on environment and poverty, as well as the resident representatives and country directors, on UNDP's role and positioning for supporting environmental management for poverty reduction.

## **ANALYSIS AND OVERALL JUDGMENT**

In addition to the specific findings of the evaluation questions, the evaluators will arrive at an overall judgement on the degree to which UNDP's support to the poverty-environment nexus has contributed to the achievement of development results. There should be balance between the section on evaluation questions and the rest of the report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The report should provide detailed operational recommendations, relevant within the UNDP context, organized by target groups. These recommendations should be ranked and prioritized according to their relevance and importance to the purpose of the evaluation.

Options for implementing the recommendations should be presented along with an indication of the respective limits and possible risks. In all cases recommendations will need to be cross-referenced to the corresponding conclusions. Furthermore the evaluation team may select (with justification) the three most important

recommendations that should be highlighted to UNDP management.

## **I. EVALUATION TEAM**

This evaluation is to be carried out by a team with advanced knowledge and experience in development cooperation policy and poverty and environment linkages. Consultants should also possess appropriate training and documented experience in conducting evaluations, as well as field evaluation methods and techniques. The team should comprise a reasonable mix of consultants familiar with the different regions, but with particular experience regarding Africa, Asia and Latin America. The team must be prepared to work in English and possess excellent drafting skills.

The core evaluation team will comprise four international consultants and one senior national consultant in each of the country studies. One of the international consultants will be designated as the team leader, providing intellectual leadership and direction and leading the dissemination of the findings and recommendations. A principal consultant will lead the practical aspects of the work, including coordinating all country studies. Two team specialists, with expertise and responsibility respectively in environment and poverty/gender dimensions, will complete the core team. Other consultants (international and national) may be engaged as needed. The team will be supported by one research assistant. The Evaluation Office task manager will provide guidance and quality assurance and will participate in country case studies as appropriate.

All members of the team will be selected by the Evaluation Office, taking into account the technical qualifications in the subject matter and in evaluation.

The task manager, team leader and/or principal consultant will conduct the pilot country mission; the remainder of the country study missions will be conducted jointly by members

of the international team and the national consultants. The UNDP country offices will designate a focal point to provide support to the country missions.

All team members will be responsible for drafting components of the report. The team leader will be responsible for drafting the integrated final report and executive summary, with the support of the task manager.

## **II. QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM**

An internal quality assurance team of staff from Evaluation Office will be set up to ensure adherence to the quality standards of the Evaluation Office, pertaining to both the process and the outputs or milestones.

## **III. ADVISORY PANEL**

As part of the consultative process, the Evaluation Office will establish an external advisory panel comprising four individuals from different countries, including representatives of international agencies. The members will be selected based on their stature in the fields of environment, poverty, international development and evaluation. The advisory panel will ensure the quality of the evaluation and will review and comment on the draft final report. The Evaluation Office will become a member of an 'extended' advisory panel, which will remain in existence until the completion, dissemination and final review of the evaluation. The panel's inputs and comments are expected to enrich the process and enhance understanding of the issues among a wide audience.

## **IV. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

The Evaluation Office task manager will manage the evaluation process. The task manager will provide backstopping support and ensure coordination and liaison with all concerned UNDP units and other key agencies, provide guidance, ensure substantive supervision of all research and determine the evaluation team composition.

In the case study countries and regions, the country offices and regional centres will make relevant material available and will support the evaluation team and national consultants in liaising with key partners and in discussions with the team. They will also provide support on logistical issues and planning for the country visits by the team. Each country office and regional centre will appoint a focal point who will assist in preparing relevant documents, hiring national consultants and setting up meetings with stakeholders.

The evaluation team will be responsible for development, research, drafting and finalization of the evaluation, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office task manager and other relevant units of UNDP, notably the Bureau for Development Policy.

The Evaluation Office will meet all costs related to conducting the evaluation and will manage the evaluation process, providing support and ensuring coordination and liaison with key agencies. The Evaluation Office will be responsible for the report and for presenting it to the Executive Board.

## **V. EVALUATION AUDIENCE**

The evaluation users are the Executive Board; UNDP management; headquarters bureaux; country offices involved in policymaking, programming and implementing cooperation programmes; and partner countries. Multinational organizations, academics, think tanks, NGOs and civil society groups are likely to be very interested in the evaluation report, and the team should take account of this interest.

## **VI. FOLLOW-UP, DISSEMINATION AND LEARNING**

This corporate evaluation is expected to help UNDP identify key lessons on strategic positioning that can provide a useful basis for strengthening the organization's role in managing environment

for poverty reduction. It will present good practices from country case studies and also draw lessons from unintended results. Country offices will be able to use the evaluation to strengthen their strategic position and vision vis-à-vis partners, while UNDP headquarters and regional centres are expected to use it as a tool for advocacy, learning and buy-in among stakeholders. The evaluation report and recommendations

will be shared within the organization through a variety of means. The evaluation will be presented to UNDP management, who will be responsible for preparing a response to its findings and recommendations. Innovative ways of disseminating the evaluation findings will be sought to reach as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

## ANNEX 2

# EVALUATION MATRIX

<b>MAIN QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE ADR (INCEPTION REPORT)</b>	
<b>RELEVANCE</b>	
A.1a	To what extent has PEN been integrated into overall UNDP strategies and programmes (environment and energy, poverty, governance and crisis recovery) since 2004?
A.1b	Is the poverty-environment nexus considered relevant to UNDP's support to countries for MDG goal achievement?
A.1c	Is UNDP considered by other international agencies and country partners to be a major global actor on PEN?
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	
A.2a	How well has UNDP managed to link PEN aspects in its poverty and environment practice areas at the global, regional and country levels?
A.2b	Has UNDP been able to integrate PEN-related issues into its other practice areas, especially crisis prevention and recovery, and governance?
A.2c	Is there evidence that UNDP has been able to encourage government agencies to implement PEN-related policies and programmes?
A.2d	Have environmental impacts been taken into consideration when UNDP designs and supports poverty alleviation and job creation programmes and projects?
A.2e	Is the availability of funding a major determinant of the extent of linkages across UNDP poverty and environmental programming?
A.2f	Are there specific limitations in environmental trust funds (GEF, MLF, REDD, etc.) that restrict the strength of the linkage being made on the poverty-environment nexus?
A.2g	Are there specific constraints in poverty alleviation funding and programmes that restrict consideration of environmental priorities?
A.2h	Are there particular incentives or disincentives to increase PEN linkages for regional centres and country offices and their staff focused on poverty and environment?
A.2i	How does UNDP's decentralized management structure aid or impair the closer integration of poverty reduction and environmental protection strategies?
A.2j	To what extent does UNDP HQ management articulate a closer link between poverty and environmental programming?
A.2k	Do UNDP's programming guidance and training programmes focus attention on the utility of forging closer links between environment and development programming?
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	
A.3a	What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the PEI as a joint UNDP-UNEP partnership?
A.3b	Does the PEI constitute an efficient mechanism for developing pro-poor sustainable development policies in countries?
A.3c	Are there redundancies and overlaps of the PEI with efforts by other UNDP units and United Nations and international organizations?
A.3d	How does PEI stack up against other UNDP programmes, such as GEF SGP, REDD, CCAF, etc., in terms of efficiently advancing pro-poor sustainable development policies?

<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
A.4a	With respect to the PEI and the other programmes focused on the PEN, is there evidence of catalytic impact, and replication?
A.4b	Are there indications that international donors will continue and expand funding for PEN-related programming?
<b>UN REFORM</b>	
B. 1	Do the Delivering as One UN strategies and UNDAF have a bearing on UNDP's current and future efforts to link poverty and environmental programming?
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
C.1	To what extent is UNDP playing a leadership role on PEN with other stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, other international organizations, civil society and the private sector?
<b>GENDER</b>	
D.1	Are gender issues being raised in the context of PEN, recognizing that poverty and environmental degradation may affect men and women differently? (PEI, MDGs etc)
<b>OUTCOMES &amp; REGIONAL / COUNTRY VARIATIONS</b>	
E.1	Are there differences across regions and countries in the development of PEN-focused projects and programmes? Why?
<b>M&amp;E</b>	
F.1	Are there sufficient indicators within the UNDP results-based management for country offices and regions to gauge PEN achievements?

## COUNTRY CASE STUDY SUMMARIES

This annex presents summaries of the findings of the nine country-based case studies conducted as part of the evaluation. These case studies were used as an important source of evidence to support the findings of the evaluation. Each case study involved a review of relevant documents and interviews with key individuals. The documents reviewed included major national policies and strategic frameworks as well as UNDP country programme documents (such as the UNDAF and the country programme action plan) plus specific documents related to the poverty-environment nexus.

### BHUTAN

Despite a steady rise on the Human Development Index and impressive growth of gross domestic product, 23.2 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line. Poverty in Bhutan is mainly a rural phenomenon; the poor comprise about 30.9 percent of the rural population but only 1.7 percent of the urban population. The Gini coefficient also is relatively high, at 0.416. Although the country maintains a positive state of environment, new environmental challenges are emerging due to a growing population with changing lifestyles and development needs. These challenges include air and water pollution, land degradation, conversion of forest and agricultural lands for infrastructure development and urbanization, and excessive solid waste. The impacts of climate change are also being felt in the form of flash floods and landslides, while rapid glacial retreat creates risks of glacial lake outburst floods.

In Bhutan, policymaking and programming are guided by the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH), with safeguards to the environment ensured through sound policies

and stringent laws. Article 5 of the Constitution of Bhutan (2008) stipulates that at least 60 percent of the country should be under forest cover for all time. The government addresses poverty-environment linkages primarily through the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2008-2013), which adopts an integrated conservation and development approach to ensure that livelihoods of the people are also addressed through sustainable use of environmental resources by communities.

In support of these policies the government has developed the following programmes: (i) Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages in National Plans, Sectoral Strategies and Implementation (PEI Phase I; budget, \$1,387,975); (ii) Local Governance Support Programme (LGSP) (budget, \$7,250,000); and (iii) Joint Support Programme: Capacity Development for Mainstreaming Environment, Climate Change and Poverty Concerns in Policies, Plans and Programmes (budget, \$4,860,000). Donors include the Austrian Development Agency, Government of Denmark, JICA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Helvetas, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), UNEP and UNDP. UNDP's promotion of poverty-environment linkages has primarily been through support to the GNH Commission and government efforts to mainstream issues related to the poverty-environment nexus (PEN) in planning guidelines and by supporting public expenditure reviews.

The linkages between poverty and environment tend to be much clearer at the local level, as demonstrated by the Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Project and the Integrated Livestock and Crop Conservation Project, as well as many of the GEF/SGP projects. Local government support through the LGSP is

seen as a good opportunity to mainstream the poverty-environmental agenda into local plans and programmes.

The UNDP country office works through four programmes: poverty reduction and MDG achievement, democratic governance, environment and energy, and crisis prevention and recovery. Between 2005 and 2009, programme budget support totalled \$21.879 million. The programme expenditure for Bhutan has steadily increased from \$2.788 million in 2004 to \$4.635 million in 2009. A large portion of the expenditure went to programmes under democratic governance (35.8 percent), followed by poverty reduction and MDG achievement (33.8 percent); expenditures for environment and energy together with crisis prevention and recovery accounted for 26.7 percent of programme expenditure.

To create awareness and understanding on poverty-environment issues, a series of consultative workshops was held between 2007 and 2010 under the PEI. These engaged key agencies—GNH Commission, Ministry of Finance and National Environment Commission, as well as civil society groups and NGOs—with a key role in mainstreaming poverty and environment in the development planning process. The efforts paid off. The GNH Commission, as the key implementing partner of the programme, has now embraced the task of ensuring that environmental considerations are integrated into all sector development plans.

Efforts are under way to integrate poverty-environment linkages into the planning manual to ensure that sectors include these concerns in their development plans and programmes. The country office is supporting the government to look at modalities for benefit-sharing and payments for environmental services to ensure that communities, especially the poor, benefit from the positive state of their surrounding natural environment. The country office is also giving advice on policy and regulatory matters on issues such as sustainable land management,

human-wildlife conflict management and rural energy.

During the period 2004 to 2009, 96 UNDP projects were implemented in Bhutan, 78 of which had poverty-environment linkages. These included 18 projects managed by the environment and energy unit, 9 projects by the poverty unit and 51 projects by the GEF/SGP. The programme budget for the 78 projects totalled \$16.95 million, of which 70 percent went to environment and energy projects, 18 percent to projects under the poverty and MDG unit, and 11 percent to GEF/SGP projects.

The UNDP country office works in partnership with other development partners and with civil society groups such as the Tarayana Foundation and the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature. The partnerships with the Government of Denmark in the PEI and the programmes with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Helvetas, JICA, European Community, Austrian Development Agency and WWF demonstrate the extent of the country office's collaboration with development partners to mainstream PEN.

The country office has tapped the expertise available in the regional centre in Bangkok, especially the UNEP-UNDP PEI team of advisers, to support the PEI project in Bhutan. It has been supported by the UNDP regional bureau. Feedback indicates that the country office has built successful partnerships with other development partners, including United Nations agencies, to move the PEI forward. Most partners see the synergy between the PEI and their own programmes in Bhutan. The country programme action plan and UNDAF arrangements with the government have provided the environment that has enabled the country office to advance the initiative.

Institutionally, the country office has played a key role in supporting government efforts to mainstream PEN in planning guidelines. The development of poverty-environment indicators

linked to policy documents is under consideration, and further efforts are being made to include these indicators in the national monitoring system and to strengthen data collection and management. Through the PEI, national stakeholders have significantly increased their awareness and understanding of poverty-environment linkages and of the importance of integrating them into development planning. The country office has played an influential role in helping the government to develop and implement environmental policies of direct relevance to the sectors—such as hydropower, renewable natural resources and tourism—that are driving economic growth. However, the government has limited capacity, and PEI programmes need to take this challenge into account when designing programmes for developing countries.

## Conclusions

Overall the evaluation exercise finds that UNDP Bhutan has been quite successful in integrating PEN into country programmes and projects.

The PEN initiative in Bhutan has enjoyed strong government support and buy-in, especially from key agencies, such as the GNH Commission and the National Environment Commission. Commitment to both poverty reduction and environmental management is well entrenched in the development policies of Bhutan as defined in the 10<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. Furthermore, the PEN initiative is very much in line with Bhutan's home-grown GNH development philosophy.

Institutionally, UNDP has played a role in supporting the government's efforts to mainstream PEN in planning guidelines. Also under consideration is development of poverty-environment indicators linked to policy documents through implementation of the joint support programme (2010–2013). Efforts are being pursued to include these indicators in the national monitoring system and GNH and policy screening tools.

PEI, the flagship PEN project in Bhutan, has been appropriately anchored at the GNH Commission. This has enabled the project to be properly implemented as a cross-cutting activity and to overcome the silo effect in government organizations. Having the appropriate implementation partner has also ensured the programme's sustainability. Though coordinated by the GNH Commission, the project has the collaboration of other partners including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, National Environment Commission, local governments and civil society.

Bhutan has already produced a number of achievements, particularly in raising national awareness and commitment to mainstreaming the PEN. Through the PEI, national stakeholders have significantly increased their awareness and understanding of poverty-environment linkages and of the importance of integrating them into development planning. The focus is now on local planning processes through integration of poverty-environment linkages into the local development planning manual.

A recent workshop (March 2010) provided a good opportunity for stakeholders to share the lessons learned through field projects and case studies demonstrating the PEN concept, approaches, practices and issues. More public advocacy could be used to raise awareness on PEN and related issues, using television programmes, news reports and public seminars. Special events such as Earth Day, World Environment Day and International Day for the Eradication of Poverty could be used to advocate for the PEN.

The inclusion of poverty reduction elements in the environment and energy and SGP projects has been noted for more than 70 per cent of the UNDP projects reviewed in Bhutan. Although environmental sustainability is addressed in less than half of the poverty-reduction projects, this proportion has significantly increased over the years. The nexus is also being addressed in the



recent governance projects, such as the LGSP, that focus on enhancing local governance so that services can be delivered effectively and efficiently to support poverty reduction.

Many SGP projects provide evidence of the PEN, especially projects that have worked effectively with communities. One of the reasons that SGP projects show better PEN focus is that by design they are required to deal directly with communities to find and implement collective local solutions to environmental problems (biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation) that affect their livelihoods. The larger projects generally have to deal with government bureaucracy and upstream systemic issues, such as inter-institutional policy coordination. There is thus a need to provide more opportunities to scale up good SGP projects, as these should showcase the benefits of PEN.

The UNDP country office has used its good relationship with the various development partners to enhance its efficiency in supporting projects that mainstream PEN through leverage funding. The country office has played an influential role in helping the government to develop and implement environmental policies of direct relevance to the sectors that are driving economic growth, such as hydropower and renewable natural resources and tourism. Although budget allocations for poverty-environment policy measures have increased, further efforts need to be pursued in this area, for example by supporting public expenditure reviews to assess the effectiveness of programmes/projects in addressing poverty-environment issues.

## **KYRGYZSTAN**

In Kyrgyzstan 35 percent of the population lives below the national poverty line, and the unemployment rate at the end of 2008 was 11.1 percent. Gross domestic product was valued at \$12.11 billion in 2009, calculated using purchasing power parity. Major environmental issues facing the country include land degradation, climate change, radioactive waste and pollution,

and threats to biodiversity. The need for sustainable environmental development is stated in the country development strategy for 2009-2011. Its three main priorities areas are (1) economic growth, with a focus on poverty reduction, innovation, modernization and job creation; (2) better governance, with a focus on human rights, law enforcement, governance without corruption and an effective judiciary; and (3) better quality of environment, with a focus on environmental security and adaptation to climate change.

The UNDP country office works in partnership with national and international agencies, the private sector and NGOs. With respect to environmental priorities, UNDP works especially with the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry.

In support of the country development strategy, the government has developed action plans for 51 projects totalling \$2,657,929, with assistance from the Joint Country Support Strategy, an initiative of the Asian Development Bank, Swiss Cooperation, UK Department for International Development, World Bank and United Nations agencies. It constitutes the core donor strategy in support of the country's development agenda for the period 2007-2010. UNDP's role in promoting the importance of poverty-environment linkages has been to advocate directly with the government, especially the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry, as well as contributions in project development and institutional support.

The country office supports Kyrgyzstan through development programmes, facilitating dialogue with the government, helping to build capacity for civil society and providing analysis by local and international experts. UNDP has several programmes addressing environmental and poverty issues:

- *Poverty reduction.* This programme, under way since 1998, assists the government and civil society in providing relief to the country's poor. It helps in formulating strategies to fight poverty and implementing and

monitoring the performance of the development plan for poverty eradication.

- *Sustainable development and the environment.* Kyrgyzstan has ratified 11 international agreements relating to biodiversity, climate change and desertification as well as other global environmental priorities, and it has joined many regional and sub-regional initiatives. UNDP provides technical assistance to the National Council on Strategic Development to aid inclusion of environmental issues in economic and social development policies. UNDP also helps the government to gain access to financial resources for environmental projects.
- *Democratic governance.* This programme concentrates on decentralization of power and self-government in the regions, reforming government executive power and reforming Parliament.
- *Crisis prevention and recovery.* UNDP engages in a range of activities to reduce disaster risks in regions where natural disasters and serious conflicts undermine sustainable development.
- *Gender mainstreaming and PEN.* The country office has incorporated gender issues into all ongoing activities, policies, management systems and procedures.

Projects/programmes working towards PEN include: (1) Community-based rangeland management in Temir Ayil Okmotu, Issyk-Kul Region, Kashat village (funded by various donors); (2) strengthening policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into the fishery sector, Issyk-Kul Oblast (\$426,200); (3) demonstrating sustainable mountain pasture management in Suusamur Valley (\$427,154); (4) Naryn area-based development programme (\$240,000); (5) promotion of renewable energy sources for development of remote regions of Kyrgyzstan (\$215,667).

The country office receives adequate support and guidance from headquarters and the regional centre on PEN issues, although implementation remains a work in progress. The country office

is making an effort to coordinate its poverty-environment activities across practice areas and among government ministries. Cooperation with other United Nations agencies and donors is progressing, and sustainable development concepts are being included in the UNDAF.

Positive results of the country office's promotion of poverty-environment linkages can be seen in the successfully implemented project for community-based rangeland management in Temir Ayil Okmotu, Issyk-Kul Region and Kashat Village, which had these results and impacts:

- The rangeland management functions of the Ayil Kenesh (local parliament) have been transferred to the Public Association of Pasture Users.
- The new Law on Pastures has been adopted and is entering into legal force. This will shore up and broaden the legal ability of the Public Association to play a role in sustainable management of pastureland and ensure project sustainability.
- The Public Association developed simple mechanisms and democratic decision-making procedures in pasture management at the community level.
- The project continues to evolve with the support of another donor, ARIS, and is now being replicated in Susamyr village.

## Conclusions

The relevance of the poverty-environment nexus in Kyrgyzstan is clear. Strategic documents, examples of mainstreaming and country experts confirm that UNDP poverty alleviation activities are shifting towards a more sustainable development orientation.

The relationship between environment and poverty in the UNDP approach is not clear. This may be because the task of PEN mainstreaming was assigned to country offices relatively recently, beginning in 2009, and because it is difficult to combine problems of a global character, such

as maintaining the quality of ecosystems, with problems of a more local character, such as assistance in poverty reduction and infrastructure development. Global environmental issues (and global public goods) are less vital for Kyrgyzstan than local problems, such as poverty reduction, economic growth and infrastructure development. This demonstrates the need to:

- More clearly demonstrate the relationship between the environment and local development needs, possibly through more work in the field, such as pilot projects;
- Attract broad stakeholders to work towards improving the sustainable development of specific areas.

The current UNDP division into programmes and practice areas is not effective for PEN realization. Insufficient coordination within the UNDP office and competition between practice areas make it difficult to solve problems in an integrated way in the territories. To cite one example, a project for the conservation of fish in Issyk-Kul required a large investment for equipment. However, the project's sustainability is in doubt because of circumstances relating to issues of poverty, corruption and natural resource management. An area-based development approach might be more effective.

The separate clusters, such as the programme for environmental protection for sustainable development and the socio-economic development unit, have credibility, and stakeholders see their worth. The programmes work more at the institutional level, as with UNDP's enormous contribution in legislation. Many experts believe that UNDP should not limit its focus to national policy in poverty and environment but should also implement projects in the field, to demonstrate innovative approaches.

PEN issues must be addressed in all ministries and departments. Currently, such issues are addressed by the President's Security Council. Many experts have noted that PEN issues should be considered within the concept of sustainable development. Accordingly, Kyrgyzstan should consider a concept for sustainable development (following the example of Kazakhstan) and confirm it institutionally through the establishment of a council for sustainable development in the Prime Minister's office.

To ensure mainstreaming of PEN issues, careful preliminary studies must be carried out to assess the situation, plan activities and develop concrete outcomes and results. This should involve key stakeholders, including partners from government agencies, NGOs, donors, international organizations and businesses.

## **MALI**

Mali ranked 160th out of 169 countries in the 2010 UNDP Human Development Report, with a Human Development Index rating of .309. Just over half of its population (51.4 percent) earns less than \$1.25 per day.<sup>77</sup> The annual birth rate is projected at 2.4 percent through 2014, and the adult literacy rate is 26.2 percent. A quarter of gross domestic product (25.6 percent) comes from natural resources (agriculture, livestock and fisheries), all of which are highly susceptible to environmental threats, particularly land and water resources. Over 80 percent of the country's estimated 14 million inhabitants depend on access to and use of natural resources. Over 80 percent of rural and urban household energy requirements are met by wood fuel and biomass resources.

The country's geographical location, small percentage of arable land (14 percent) and low level of economic development leave Mali

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<sup>77</sup> 2010 Human Development Report, Multidimension Poverty Index, Statistical Annex, pg. 153. The figure is calculated at purchase price parity.

vulnerable to climate change. Almost three quarters of the population (73.2 percent) lives in rural areas under extreme poverty. Sustainable land management is a major concern, with the economy largely dependent on the primary sector, notably agriculture and farming.

There is clear political will at national level for addressing PEN, as demonstrated by development of the poverty-environment indicators and their integration in (among others) the CSCR and the National Policy for the Protection of the Environment. There is evidence of public awareness and support for PEN, indicated by the large number of NGOs and community organizations implementing related activities.

UNDP has been a major partner in the effort to mainstream natural resources and environment into the country's Strategic Framework for CSCR and the National Policy for the Protection of the Environment. It has also been a partner in implementation of the PEI, which has included several diagnostic studies, including the development of indicators.

With responsibility for four of the five UNDAF areas, the UNDP country programme supports national efforts for poverty reduction and environmental management through the following programme areas and service lines:

- Poverty reduction and MDG achievement, with a focus on promoting inclusive growth, gender equality and MDG achievement; fostering inclusive globalization; and mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS on human development;
- Democratic governance, with a focus on fostering inclusive participation and responsive governing institutions; support to national partners to implement democratic governance practices grounded in human rights and gender equality;
- Environment and energy, with a focus on catalysing environmental finance; promoting climate change adaptation; and expanding

access to environmental and energy goods and services for the poor;

- Combating HIV/AIDS.

Two thirds of the country office programme budget is committed to activities directly related to PEN under the UNDP-CCF 2008-2012, most of it (54 percent) to poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs and 12 percent to environment and energy.

UNDP has effectively mainstreamed PEN in two practice areas: poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs, and environment and energy. Several initiatives demonstrating PEN linkages are in place, including the PEI and the integration of livelihood concerns in GEF projects, particularly in the biodiversity focal area.

The main results of the PEI project include greater awareness and knowledge on poverty and environment linkages at national level; establishment of tools and mechanisms to integrate environment into national development planning and decentralization frameworks; and enhanced national capacity to integrate environment into national development planning and decentralization processes. PEI-Mali II has been developed to strengthen national capacity to implement environmental strategies and develop tools, financial mechanisms and sustainable management of the environment and human development.

Yet the PEI evaluation of December 2008 concluded that the initiative in Mali has not achieved all its intended results and rated it 'moderately satisfactory'. Problem areas related to the structure/composition of project management committees and delays in fund disbursements.

The UNDP country office has successfully supported communities in developing and implementing poverty-environment community projects, particularly through the GEF/SGP. These have contributed to environmental conservation while also addressing community livelihoods through income-generating activities.

In terms of programme and project implementation, partnerships with various stakeholders have been strengthened.

## Conclusions

Consultations with the country office indicated that staff have limited understanding as to what constitutes the poverty-environment nexus in practical terms. This confusion points to the need for a definition and guidelines, indicators or criteria for PEN, as well as guidance in assessing operational progress.

Arising from the PEI experiences, PEN programmes will remain a major challenge. There are operational issues, such as delays in release of funds, and institutional issues, such as coordination. Experience also shows that implementing PEN-type projects requires restructuring within the country office to facilitate collaboration among the various units.

Other lessons from PEI:

- A strong project management unit is needed at country level to ensure greater impact on national and local planning processes and stronger advocacy with national decision makers.
- Community-based demonstration projects should be developed and implemented on sustainable environmental management and improved living conditions to support decentralization of environmental management and strengthen advocacy for mainstreaming into national and local development plans.

## MOROCCO

Morocco is a middle-income country with annual per capita income of \$4,725 and a population of approximately 34.3 million people. It is estimated that from 2001 to 2007, relative poverty declined from 15.3 to 9.6 percent nationally, while for the same period vulnerability decreased from 22.8 to 17.5 percent. The data indicate that 1 percent of people suffered from hunger nationally in 2007

compared to 1.8 percent in 2003 and 4.8 percent in 1984. However, 2.8 million people still lived below the poverty line in 2007.

Morocco has three key ecosystems: mountainous/forest, oasis/desert/semi-desert and Mediterranean/coastal/marine. These zones experience different forms of land use, providing important environmental goods and services. Some of these land uses are vital to the national economy (e.g. phosphate mining, tourism) and also to the livelihoods of the rural poor (e.g. rainfed and irrigated agriculture, pastureland, water for irrigation). One of the major concerns in Morocco therefore relates to degradation of environmental resources (land, water, biodiversity), which also poses a threat to the livelihoods of communities that depend on these goods and services.

Morocco has in place one major national development framework relevant to the PEN: the national initiative for human development (NIHD) policy statement, promulgated in 2005 by the King. A second framework, providing the government's poverty strategy, is currently being formulated. The NIHD encapsulates the PEN principles of participatory local development based on achievement of the MDGs. The concept note on the poverty strategy framework calls for establishing an innovative mechanism to coordinate poverty-related initiatives, such as an instrument similar to the poverty reduction strategy papers, modelled specifically for middle-income countries. UNDP has been a major partner in the development of these instruments. A review of both indicates that more effort is needed to identify and capture the linkages between poverty and environment and to further identify the role environment should play in poverty reduction.

Most of the major projects being implemented by the government with support from UNDP and other partners (ART-GOLD, the regional Oasis projects, GEF/SGP) are designed as integrated rural development projects and thus are 'PEN compliant'. National political will for PEN

is also demonstrated in the King's description of the NIHD at its launch as a national policy of participatory local development based on achievement of the MDGs.

There is public support for PEN, as indicated by the large number of NGOs and community organizations implementing related activities (such as the SGP portfolio). Communities understand the link between poverty and environment. Some NGOs believe the government should give more priority to poverty-environment linkages.

The UNDP country office, consistent with the organization's global mandate as the lead authority on sustainable development, is playing a useful role in promoting the coherent implementation of the poverty/environment dimension of sustainable development in Morocco. This is particularly the case regarding the practice areas addressing poverty and the MDGs and environment/energy. Headquarters and regional centres give satisfactory support to thematic issues relating to PEN activities.

## Conclusions

As a middle-income country, Morocco's issues relative to poverty have more to do with disparity and the impacts of environmental conditions on livelihoods of rural populations. Because of issues such as climate change, desertification and biodiversity degradation, PEN remains relevant.

Funding for integrated rural development projects and programmes (equivalent to PEN) has not been an issue in Morocco so far, as the government contributes the bulk of resources for development. Technical support remains critical, however, and UNDP is best placed to provide it, with its focus on upstream support (advisory/policy support and capacity building).

Integrated rural development projects present a good opportunity to address PEN issues, with the objective of achieving both poverty and environment outcomes. GEF/SGP by design must meet the criteria of poverty reduction

and environmental conservation, and these have proved most effective as vehicles for delivering on PEN at the grass roots.

UNDP continues to enjoy the trust and confidence of the government as a strategic partner. Its key assets are its neutrality, experience with partnership building and technical experience on PEN and sustainable development, drawn from the global network of UNDP country offices, regional service centres and headquarters units.

Constraints to effective integration of PEN issues include limited understanding of the concept, need for indicators/guidelines and lack of criteria for PEN, as well as the clustering of programmes as poverty or environment.

## PARAGUAY

The incidence of poverty in 2008 in Paraguay was 38 percent, while extreme poverty was 19 percent. In rural areas 48.8 percent of the people are poor and 30.9 percent are extremely poor. The richest 10 percent of the population accounts for 40 percent of revenues, while the poorest 40 percent accounts for only 12 percent. By 2007 only 10.7 percent of the poor had access to basic sanitation, and nearly 50 percent used firewood and charcoal for food preparation.

The total area of Paraguay is 406,752 km<sup>2</sup>. Recent declines in forest cover have been dramatic. In 1990 the forest area was 202,201 km<sup>2</sup>, but by 2000 it had fallen to 176,471 km<sup>2</sup>. The latest information (September 2009) indicates a further decrease to as little as 37,178 km<sup>2</sup>.

The government addresses poverty-environment linkages primarily through the following policies: Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development 2004–2008 (2005); National Environmental Policy for Paraguay (2005); National Strategy to Combat Poverty (2006); National Policy Guidelines for Development–Paraguay 2015 (2006); and Public Policy for Social Development 2010–2020 (2010). In support of these policies, the government has implemented a series of

programmes with different funding sources, but no explicit PEN link has been identified.

Counterpart institutions in the environment and poverty areas are weak, so UNDP activities have emphasized governance and strengthening of public administration. Budget allocation varies widely in the practice areas of governance, environment and poverty. In the short to medium term, allocation of resources for PEN-related projects has been decreasing.

Interviews with government officials working in planning, environmental issues, social policy and agricultural issues have revealed that the government supports the UNDP country office initiatives, as verified in the updated Action Plan and present government priorities.

The country office has been working in partnership with GEF for more than a decade. Projects include the Paraguay Wildlands Project, covering the period 2000-2010, with a budget equal to about half of all the evaluated projects in the environmental portfolio. In 2010 the GEF started its small grant programme in Paraguay, with PEN explicit in the formulation of projects. UNDP is working jointly with FAO for a sustainable forestry project funded through UN-REDD that includes a significant PEN component.

The country office receives a good deal of headquarters and regional support on environmental issues, as verified in the implementation of projects to date and new initiatives being designed and implemented. Headquarters and regional offices provide less support for poverty programmes than for the environmental practice area. The PEN concept is accepted by key actors, though its practical application is weak due to lack of experience in formulation, evaluation and implementation. This is exacerbated by the weak capacity of public institutions, as well as the dependence on donors, who often have other priorities than PEN.

The country office has technical appreciation of local partners and has often acted as an 'operator'

to achieve results; however, the technical capacity to implement PEN activities more widely and effectively is weak.

Inter-agency collaborations are few in Paraguay, and the UNDAF is now being consolidated. The need for resources in a period of tight budgets creates difficulties in achieving effectiveness.

Projects implemented by UNDP do not explicitly focus on PEN, as verified by a review of the Results Report for Paraguay (2004-2007) and the Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR, 2008-2009) and supported by the team's fact finding. PEN is explicitly mentioned in the Results Report and ROAR, with achievements and results closely related to processes of institutional strengthening, policy development and monitoring of the MDGs. However, neither document directly links environmental programming to poverty reduction impacts.

Two initiatives in particular have strong poverty-environment linkages (although neither highlights this linkage): the Paraguay Wildlands Initiative and the Inclusive Development Project Bridges. Eleven additional projects can be considered to have poverty-environment linkages that generate significant contributions to ongoing and future work related to the nexus, even though these linkages are not explicitly identified.

Those entities with duties related to planning and execution of poverty and environment policies incorporate PEN initiatives in their proposed policies. However, it is not possible to demonstrate the execution of systematic actions, such as programmes and projects, promoted exclusively by these entities.

UNDP has systematically promoted programmes and strategies related to poverty and environment, taking note of government demands and the strategic agenda. Service delivery capacities have increased, not specifically related to the PEN but more generally, through two planning cycles: 2004-2008 and 2008-2012.

## Conclusions

The PEN concept has a good level of understanding and acceptance by the authorities and technical experts involved in poverty, environment and governance. Support is conditioned on having flexible methods to achieve better integration and funding and on emphasizing the need for dialogue and joint efforts. If developed in this manner, there are real possibilities for tangible and sustainable transformations in Paraguay.

In a population vulnerable to extreme poverty, successful implementation of PEN interventions is problematic because survival issues overshadow consideration of environmental impact. It is generally more efficient to target less destitute populations that have greater market elasticity. Interventions aimed at sustainably increasing incomes among poor populations, using innovative economic incentives such as micro finance, require government and private sector agreements to guarantee markets.

Areas protected for environmental benefits offer an important focus for PEN activities in Paraguay. These areas also provide opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for both indigenous and non-indigenous populations. It is important to prioritize PEN-related short-term programmes and projects in these areas. Despite its relatively small size, Paraguay has cultural differences that need to be analysed and taken into account in attempting to forge closer poverty-environment linkages.

Counterpart institutions linked to PEN are important partners in improving environmental management and reducing poverty. It is especially important to strengthen the abilities of regional and local governments to manage for sustainable development. It is not enough to formulate national policies and strategies to execute PEN; also needed are intervention processes and awareness to promote the productivity of environmental assets in the fight against poverty.

Some environmental issues in Paraguay, such as land possession and community land rights,

are very difficult to resolve due to political and social conditions. This directly affects the extent to which UNDP can develop projects and the extent to which they will succeed.

The project to monitor the budget for public investment, like the one executed in the Invest in People project, could be duplicated in other countries, serving as a guide to creating public policies and political and civic awareness to extend the investment for poverty and environment. To incorporate PEN indicators in this initiative would be a milestone contribution to consolidating the approach and improving its monitoring and follow-up.

## RWANDA

Poverty is a priority issue in Rwanda's development policy. The structural dimensions of poverty and vulnerability, particularly demographic pressures and environmental degradation, exacerbate an already complex situation. Population density in Rwanda is the highest in Africa, with over 350 persons per km<sup>2</sup> (well above the sub-Saharan average of 31), and the approximate population growth rate is 3.5 percent per year. In addition, 89.5 percent of the nearly 9 million people live in rural areas, with livelihoods dependent on the natural environment.

The significance of environmental management to the government's policy objectives is underscored in documents such as the EDPRS, Vision 2020, Environment and Natural Resources Sector Strategic Plan (ENRSSP, 2009), Environment and Climate Change Strategic Plan, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) plus its Organic Law on the Environment, and the Environment Act of Rwanda. A key goal to be achieved by 2020 is integration of environmental objectives into all policies and programmes pertaining to economic and social development as well as all decision-making processes.

The poverty-environment nexus in Rwanda is significant, as demonstrated also by recent reviews and studies in the context of PEI.



However, this is not fully recognized at national level. For example the EDPRS treats environment as a sub-theme under rural development, together with agriculture. Documents available to the evaluation team indicate that government structures and the environment sector remain weak, and the effort of mainstreaming the environment into EDPRS needs to continue. Rwanda is one of eight countries<sup>78</sup> selected to pilot the Delivering As One concept; it signed on in April 2007. Any discussion of UNDP's contribution to PEN in Rwanda must be seen in this context since UNDP operates within the One UN Joint Programme, not as a separate entity.<sup>79</sup> The United Nations plays an essential role in this effort. The UNDAF constitutes an important platform for the United Nations country team to help the government realize the goals set forth in the EDPRS and vision 2020. The total proposed budget for UNDAF 2008-2012 is \$357 million.

The UNDAF 2008-2012 addresses poverty and environment as two separate issues. Outcome 4 of the component on energy and the environment for sustainable development is 'Management of environment, natural resources and land is improved in a sustainable way', and outcome 5 of the component on achieving the MDGs and poverty reduction is 'Rwandan population benefits from economic growth and is less vulnerable to social and economic shocks.' This indicates that the PEN concept is not yet embraced at the planning or operational levels.

The UNDP country programme document for 2008-2012 proposes a total contribution of \$41 million, with \$9.5 million earmarked for programmes related to PEN (\$8.5 million to environment, \$1 million to poverty). The country programme document also treats environment and poverty as separate issues for budgeting/programming purposes.

The UNDP country office is promoting coherent implementation of the poverty and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in Rwanda, particularly in the context of UNDAF and the One UN programme. The PEI, in addition to other country programme activities and support to the government, has resulted in greater visibility for UNDP. The overall impression is that UNDP is the most trusted government partner in the country, though this poses a challenge in terms of how to meet the additional responsibilities.

The PEI project has contributed significantly to the development of a knowledge base on poverty and environment linkages in Rwanda. Examples of these contributions include an economic analysis of costs of environmental degradation, identification of poverty-environment-energy linkages and a pilot integrated ecosystem assessment. PEI also contributed to the development of environmental mainstreaming tools for the EDPRS through guidelines for the process as well as poverty-environment indicators and a strategy for monitoring them.

## Conclusions

UNDP continues to command respect and appreciation from the government of Rwanda and external partners with respect to PEN issues. However, this leads to added expectations in terms of leadership and financial/technical contributions in context of the UNDAF and the One UN programming process.

From the limited opportunity to engage the UNDP country office staff in dialogue concerning PEN, it was clear that PEN is not well understood, nor is there a common understanding of what sets it apart from other related issues such as environmental mainstreaming.

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<sup>78</sup> Along with Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

<sup>79</sup> Clarification during the briefing session with Aurelien Agbenonci, the United Nations Country Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative.

Rwanda remains in a 'reconstruction' mode and is trying to get to a 'sustainable development' mode. Environment is not yet a top priority, but it is recognized as a critical element in the fight against poverty. In this context, therefore, efforts to mainstream PEN must be sustained over a long time. In particular this will require capacity building and provision of tools to promote knowledge and awareness (through research, assessments and studies) on the poverty-environment linkages.

A key attribute of the PEI mechanism is its capacity to draw on the strengths and comparative advantage, including financial resources, of both UNDP and UNEP in support of a key programme area (PEN) that would otherwise fall between the cracks. If the PEN programming approach is to take root in UNDP, more PEI-type projects will be needed.

Much has been done to promote and advocate for PEN from headquarters and regional service centres, including DDC. Yet indications are that PEN has not taken root in the UNDAF, and the country programme document addresses poverty and environment as separate issues. This points to the need for concerted efforts to develop the tools (manuals, brochures, guidelines) for awareness raising and targeted training of UNDP staff who are expected to manage PEN-related programmes, as was done for gender/environment mainstreaming. It also calls for commitment, determination and consistency by the UNDP country office to support national priorities and initiatives.

## **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Poverty is a major development challenge in Trinidad and Tobago, with 16.7 percent of the population classified as poor and 1.2 percent indigent. Cash transfers from the government tend to camouflage real poverty rates. Despite huge revenue streams from energy, income distribution remains unequal; the Gini coefficient of 0.39 has not changed since 1997/1998. The age

group 1-19 accounts for 43 percent of the poor, and 38 percent of the poorest households are headed by women. The north-east and south-east areas of Trinidad are the poorest regions of the country. The question of poverty and race is politically sensitive. Afro-Trinidadians are somewhat more likely to be poor (40 percent of the poorest quintile) than Indo-Trinidadians (30 percent).

Acute pressures on resources include land use changes, deforestation, biodiversity loss, risk of natural disasters and increased pollution. The west coast of Trinidad has been affected by high levels of contamination from industrial waste, petrochemicals, boats and tourist facilities. The Buccoo Reef and other reefs in south-west Tobago have suffered substantial loss of coral and reduced diversity of marine fauna. As an island state, Trinidad and Tobago is vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change such as temperature increase, changes in precipitation and rising sea levels.

The country's Vision 2020 Draft National Strategic Plan (2005) devotes little attention to the environment. The government has increased social assistance to vulnerable groups but has paid more attention to poverty-energy than to the poverty-environment nexus. A poverty reduction strategy is being developed. PEN efforts include Green Fund investments (2010), efforts to comply with international conventions and achieve MDGs, and emerging strategies for protection of natural areas (by the Environmental Management Authority).

UNDP has helped improve health service delivery through a project for institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Health. It provided assistance in complying with multilateral environmental agreements and in capacity building with the Environmental Management Authority and Ministries of Planning, Housing and the Environment, Education, Local Government, and Community Development, Culture and Gender Affairs, as well as a network of NGOs.

Despite the low priority for environment in the UNDP country strategy, the country office has supported 75 environment and energy projects during the past decade. The GEF/SGP funded 65 projects totalling \$1.75 million. Three other GEF projects totalling \$3.5 million were under preparation; 39 GEF/SGP projects supported biodiversity; protection of threatened species; habitat preservation; protection of watersheds, coastal wetlands and marine habitats; and management of protected areas. Since 2004 the country office has strongly favoured poverty reduction, with 79 percent of programme funding. Democratic governance was the next highest category with 15 percent of the portfolio. Energy and environment constituted just 6 percent of the portfolio.

Financial resources in support of portfolio implementation came mainly from GEF and the government, and partnerships were established with the JB Fernandes Trust, Royal Bank of Canada, Canadian International Development Agency, Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund and UNEP.

## Conclusions

There is a disconnect between the policy orientation of UNDP programming in Trinidad & Tobago and the objective of achieving closer linkages on poverty and environment programming. This suggests a low level of support and guidance on PEN from headquarters and the regional centre. Efforts to link environment and poverty face numerous obstacles, including a general lack of awareness and information regarding PEN, absence of political will to mainstream the environment and a weak framework for scaling up best practices from GEF/SGP, the most tangible UNDP programme related to PEN. The government undervalues ecosystem services as an asset for the poor. UNDP has facilitated national Green Fund investment modelling GEF/SGP, compliance with international conventions and MDGs, and livelihood strategies for protecting natural areas. There is evidence of inter-agency collaboration with International

Labour Organization and UNEP but no such collaboration around PEN. Aside from joint preparation of the UNDAF, the United Nations agencies in the country have not established a practical mechanism for Delivering as One.

UNDP has provided valuable support for PEN progress at local levels through small grants programming. Small grants have also had a significant impact on public policy and practice, testing new ground as pilot projects that pressure government agencies and influence policy. For example, the microcredit programme at the Ministry of Social Development generated lessons learned to inform national microcredit policy. The GEF/SGP played a critical role in creating the Green Fund model, demonstrated viable agricultural alternatives to pesticides and addressed the problem of persistent organic pollutants. At the national level, the sustainability of UNDP efforts to address PEN requires a change in political will and new public policy commitments to address obstacles that hamper PEN.

Decision makers have not mainstreamed PEN concerns into the UNDAF or government policy framework. This has hampered progress in addressing underlying drivers of poverty and environmental degradation. Public policy has devoted little attention to the environment and has dissociated energy policy from environmental concerns. Policy on poverty reduction is fragmented and inconsistent. It is essential to integrate ecosystem services into programmes for sustainable development and poverty reduction. This will require significant investment in capacity building to mainstream environmental concerns including environmental interdependence, governance, planning and financial management.

## UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Poverty in United Republic of Tanzania can be considered within the context of three fundamental realities. First, about 87 percent of the country's poor lives in rural areas. Second,

these rural people overwhelmingly depend on agriculture and other natural resource uses for their livelihoods. Finally, the economy is based largely on land and natural resources, particularly forests, biodiversity and agriculture. Thus poverty and environment are intrinsically linked, and PEN is a central consideration in all sustainable development policies and strategies.

There is clear political will to address PEN at the national level. This is demonstrated by the development of poverty-environment indicators<sup>80</sup> and the level of integration in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP/MKUKUTA) of 2005-2010 for Mainland; the Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (ZSGRP/MKUZA) of 2006-2010 for Zanzibar; and other national programmes. PEN is a nationally driven process.

Clear public support for PEN is indicated by the large number of NGOs and community organizations implementing PEN-related activities. Also attesting to this support is the large number of requests for support to community-based projects (GEF/SGP) to the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group and the Tanzania Community Forest Conservation Network.

UNDP has been a major partner with the government in mainstreaming natural resources and environment into the second generation of Tanzania's PRSP programme. UNDP has played a key role in supporting programmes and projects to mainstream poverty and environment issues in government policies, strategies and programmes at all levels in the NSGRP/MKUKUTA for mainland and ZSGRP/MKUZA for Zanzibar, as well as in diagnostic studies.

UNDP's current programme in Tanzania focuses on four practice areas:

- Governance (non-PEN)

- Pro-poor and wealth creation (related to PEN)
- Environment and energy (related to PEN)
- Crisis prevention (non-PEN)

Governance receives the majority of the country office budget (32 percent in the 2009 budget) followed by pro-poor/wealth creation (25 percent), environment and energy (16 percent) and crisis prevention and recovery (8 percent).<sup>81</sup>

UNDP has effectively recognized the linkages between poverty and environment and developed projects to respond to country priorities from both perspectives. Several initiatives demonstrating PEN linkages are in place, including the PEI (phases 1 and 2), supported by UNDP in partnership with UNEP; climate change projects, including the UN-REDD programme on climate change adaptation; and the integration of livelihood concerns in the GEF projects, particularly in the biodiversity focal area.

The PEI project has promoted awareness of the linkages between poverty and environment, and it continues to contribute to understanding and development of PEN tools and indicators. Key results include the following:

- Established a national environment education strategy;
- Conducted various trainings, meetings and workshops;
- Contributed to development of poverty-environment indicators, and reviews of the Poverty Reduction Strategy process and Poverty Monitoring System;
- Assessed needs and determined requirements for poverty-environment linkages at local level involving all key stakeholders in planning and implementing activities.

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<sup>80</sup> Vice President's Office, Development of Poverty-Environment Indicators Report, August 2006.

<sup>81</sup> These percentages are not intended to add up to 100% as there are administrative and other programme costs not included within the four practice areas.

Overall, the UNDP country office has successfully achieved most of the PEI targets and objectives. The programme (phases 1 and 2) has made significant contributions to building government capacity for integrating poverty-environment issues into the PRS process and development of poverty-environment indicators. The country office has supported communities in developing and implementing community projects, which have contributed to conserving the environment while enhancing community livelihoods through income-generating activities. Partnerships with stakeholders have been strengthened in programme and project implementation.

The One UN joint programme on capacity development has enabled UNDP to programmatically engage other United Nations partners and national research institutions in assisting with MDG support, National Human Development Report, statistical capacity development and policy/research work. Improved government capacity has increased efficiency and hence reduced transaction costs. This implementation modality provides experiences that can be replicated for PEN projects in the country.

UNDP's main focus is on capacity development and governance issues, capitalizing on its position in global partnerships and its reputation as a neutral institution and an honest broker in development.

The country office, consistent with UNDP's global mandate as the lead authority on sustainable development, is promoting coherent implementation of the poverty-environment dimension of sustainable development within the country, particularly in the context of the governance/environment partners group. The PEI, in addition to other country programme activities and support to the government, has resulted in greater visibility; the overall impression is that UNDP is the most trusted government partner in the country.

UNDP continues to exploit its comparative advantage and opportunities to promote PEN in United Republic of Tanzania:

- It provides substantive technical experience on poverty and environment issues with support from the regional service centre in Johannesburg, the DDC and headquarters units.
- It has strong working relations with the government based on mutual respect and trust.
- The resident representative serves as the United Nations country representative and chair of the UNDAF/One UN programme.
- UNDP is an active player in the Tanzania Development Partners Group on sustainable development and environment.
- UNDP has strong linkages with GEF (including SGP) and the secretariats of multi-lateral environmental agreements (Convention on Biodiversity, UNFCCC, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification).
- UNDP has strong partnerships with key partners, including Danida, UNEP, Vice President's Office Environment Unit.

UNDP strategies and approaches in supporting the country PEN process are focused 'upstream'. For example, of the \$6.537 million (16 percent of total budget) allocated to environment and energy for 2009, 93 percent went to mainstreaming environment and energy into national strategies, and only 7 percent to expanding access to environmental and energy services for the poor.<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusions

Consultations with the country office indicated limited understanding among staff about what constitutes PEN in practical terms. This points to the need for a definition, guidelines/indicators and criteria for PEN and for guidance in how to assess progress in achieving operational progress regarding the nexus.

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<sup>82</sup> Programme Overview 2009, United Republic of Tanzania programme tree, 2009 budget.

Joint programming and funding of PEN programmes will remain a major challenge. Development partners continue to have policies that dictate their preferences on thematic areas, different proposal approval and funding cycles, and/or different monitoring and evaluation and reporting requirements (e.g. the GEF). Harmonizing and coordinating joint programming for PEN will remain a challenge.

Funds allocated for management of the PEI project were not adequate for the country office to achieve all the planned results for the year. This has hampered the office's ability to reach the targets set in the planned activities. The country office is also facing a challenge in sourcing funds for unfunded components of many of the projects. For example, the PEI phase 2 and joint programme on environment both have some project components that remain unfunded.

Political will, a high degree of commitment and support from key stakeholders at all levels, and highly participatory processes are required for the success of the multi-sectoral programmes and cross-cutting themes, including PEN.

The primary responsibility for mainstreaming of environment is in the Vice President's Office, while poverty issues fall under the Ministry of Finance and Planning. Addressing the PEN therefore becomes a challenge in that other ministries and government agencies may not be as committed.

Country office experience suggests that integrating environment into the policies, strategies and plans should continue at the 'upstream' level. However, there is a need to extend integration and mainstreaming to implementation, particularly to projects at community level.

In spite of the push for PEN from UNDP headquarters and elsewhere, the country office continues to cluster programmes as poverty or environment, as also proposed in the UNDP Strategic Plan (2008-2011). This creates difficulties for advancing the PEN concept.

Government policies and legislation on benefits and cost-sharing arrangements through ecosystem payment mechanisms remain weak or non-existent. For example, few benefits of big projects on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and protection trickle down to local populations, a disincentive to participation in PEN.

## **VIET NAM**

Viet Nam is considered one of the most successful countries in reducing poverty, as evidenced by its poverty rate decrease from 58 percent in 1992 to 15.5 percent in 2006. Poverty is mostly confined to rural, mountainous and isolated areas, as well as to ethnic minorities and small-scale farmers, especially women. Half of the ethnic minorities living in the highlands are poor. More than three quarters of Vietnamese live in rural areas. A million Vietnamese need emergency relief annually from natural disasters, especially floods. The major environmental issues include deforestation, land degradation and natural disasters. Poverty is evident in areas where disaster risks are high, and the poor and near-poor in urban and rural areas are most vulnerable.

In Viet Nam, the following UNDP-assisted policies and strategies have incorporated poverty-environment linkages: the Ten-Year Strategy for Socio-economic Development 2001-2010; Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (2002); National Orientation Strategy for Agenda 21 (2004) and the National Strategy for Natural Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020 (2007). In support of these policies the government has developed the following programmes: National Programme for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (referred to as P133) in 1996; Programme on Socio-economic Development in Especially Disadvantaged Communes in Mountainous, Isolated and Remote Areas (referred to as P135) in 1998 and the National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change (2008). Assistance has come from the World Bank and other bilateral donors including Australia, Denmark, Sweden

and Switzerland. UNDP's role in promoting poverty-environment linkages has emphasized advocacy, advisory services, capacity building and donor liaison to key governmental agencies, such as the ministries of Planning and Investment, Natural Resources and Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs.

Between 2004 and 2009 UNDP provided about \$125 million in project and programme support to Viet Nam. The environment and energy for sustainable development cluster received 17 percent and the poverty cluster 23 percent of the aid. Analysis of projects shows that 54 percent of the funds are in projects with explicitly identified poverty-environment linkages, or such linkages are recognized but not highlighted.

The Harmonizing Poverty Reduction and Environmental Goals in Policy and Planning for Sustainable Development project (referred to as VPEP) was UNDP's PEI initiative in Viet Nam. Under this project, various capacity-building activities were carried out, including awareness-raising and communications, training and skill development, study visits and pilot projects. A poverty-environment network was begun, a project manual for monitoring and evaluation was developed, and the use of strategic environment assessment was promoted at various levels. Other programmes with strong poverty-environment linkages addressed energy conservation ('promoting energy conservation in small and medium enterprises') and climate change ('strengthening national capacities to respond to climate change in Viet Nam, reducing vulnerabilities and controlling greenhouse gas emissions') through the environment and energy policy advisory unit, which supports development work in Viet Nam. Before adoption of the climate change policy, the UNDP-assisted project briefed four high-level political and government institutions: the Prime Minister's Office, National Assembly, Central Committee of the Communist Party and Office of Government.

The UNDP country office works in partnership with the International Support Group for Natural Resources and Environment (ISGE), established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) in June 2001. The new ISGE Framework Agreement for the 2008-2010 period, involving MONRE and the Embassies of Canada, Denmark and Sweden, was officially signed in June 2008.

## Conclusions

Within the UNDP clusters, the level of cooperation leaves room for improvement. Interviews with the poverty cluster suggest that its staff were not clearly informed of PEN and how it related to their work programme. However, integrating poverty eradication elements into environmental programmes has had more success. The environment and energy cluster maintains close contacts with the regional centre for the PEI programme.

Nonetheless, results are evident from UNDP's promotion of poverty-environment linkages. The new Law on Environmental Protection and the Biodiversity Law have incorporated poverty-environment elements; the VPEP has built the capacities of the MONRE, and its strengthened capacities have resulted in formulating its strategy for 2011-2020 as well as sector plans for 2011-2015. The policy advisor for climate change has helped establish UNDP's leadership in this area. The country office, as aid coordinator, has leveraged official development assistance in poverty and environment with various donor groups, development banks and aid agencies jointly providing budgetary assistance. The UK Department for International Development provided budget support to implement the VPEP. The GEF/SGP funds have also contributed to enhancing poverty-environment linkages. Thus, even though the VPEP has not gained policy traction, UNDP has succeeded in promoting sustainable development, which in turn has provided a balance to the government's emphasis on development.

The PEN concept requires both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Approaches that directly address the needs of the poorest populations are important, as the poor are generally located in remote hills or coastal villages where they are highly susceptible to environmentally related disasters. Climate change heightens the risks to these already marginalized communities. PEN concepts should be incorporated into projects, while the PEN philosophy should be linked with that of sustainable development at the policy level.

Implementing cross-sectoral policy concerns is a major challenge in a silo-type institutional setting. However, this is not an issue for PEN alone. Other multi-sectoral issues such as gender face the same problem. A partial solution has been to try to include such policies in the UNDAF and then mainstream them across the agencies. Outcome III of the 'One UN' plan and Outcome 1 of the UNDAF 2006-2010 provide the basis for the PEI in Viet Nam.

In promoting the PEI programme, the regional office is a necessary and extremely useful support to countries, particularly in fostering the opportunity for countries to share their experiences.

As environmental management is not central to the government's economic growth philosophy, the development partners and donors have an important role in assisting the government to pursue a path of sustainable development. Donor support is significant and externally generated, so donors can thus exert a balancing influence at various levels. In sustainable development, UNDP's level of influence exceeds the financial resources it can provide. The importance of its advisory and capacity-building roles was confirmed in the interviews carried out for this study.

The 2009 VPEP environmental mainstreaming workshop concluded that there are many routes to seeking sustainable development in Viet Nam; pursuing the national policy goal is only one. Another is mainstreaming and enhancing the governance process. PEN concepts can be still be pursued in project design and incorporated in climate change projects. More work can also be done under the umbrella of Agenda 21. Thus, all these routes are important tools to keep pushing the concept in ways that are understandable to the government and the people and can help them appreciate its value.

The Viet Nam case study offers several lessons that could help in the design and implementation of PEN projects elsewhere. First, the government partner institution should execute and implement the programme. Several case studies have found that economic planning and finance agencies have a greater influence than environmental agencies at the national level, and this case study supports that finding. Second, it is vital to establish policy coherence between PEI programmes and development strategies, especially if the latter have already achieved policy traction with the government. In countries that are highly dependent on natural resources or affected by environmental pollution, PEN issues are evident and can be used as a means to pursue more sustainable development strategies. Third, capacity building seems to be needed in the UNDP country office, as the two important clusters (environment and poverty) are not balanced in their approach towards PEN. This may require top management intervention; it cannot be left to the clusters themselves to define their role in the programme. Fourth, greater public support is needed, and a greater advocacy is required to link PEN to sustainable development.





## ANNEX 4

# PEOPLE CONSULTED

### NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

#### UNDP

##### **Regional Bureau for Africa**

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##### **Regional Bureau for Arab States**

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Taishi, Yusuke, Programme Analyst, Regional Support Unit

##### **Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS**

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Torres, Emma, Advisor, Environment and Energy

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Hough, John, Deputy Executive Coordinator, GEF, EEG

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Lim, Bo, Principal Technical Advisor, Climate Change Adaptation, EEG

McNeil, Charles, Senior Policy Advisor, EEG

Mergler, Holly, Programme Analyst, EEG

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### **Global Environment Facility**

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van den Berg, Rob, Director, Evaluation Office  
Zavadsky, Ivan, Program Manager/Senior Water Resources Management Specialist

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Kulthanan, Sirisupa, Assistant Resident Representative  
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Krause, Martin, Team Leader, Environment and Energy  
Laganda, Gernot, Regional Technical Advisor, Climate Change Adaptation  
Mackay, Angus, Advisor, Climate Change Adaptation  
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Ranawana, Sanath, Regional Advisor, PEI, Asia and the Pacific  
Tsering, Dechen, Deputy Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific

### **Civil Society**

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## **BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA**

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Jojart, Paula, Project Assistant, Gender Team

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## ANNEX 5

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