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Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of the regional programme for Africa, 2008-2013

Context, background and findings

1. The regional programme for Africa, 2008-2013, was approved by the Executive Board at its Annual Session in 2007. It focuses on four broad themes – poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; consolidating democratic and participatory governance; conflict prevention, peace-building and recovery; and energy, environment and sustainable development – all with a view to maximizing the provision of regional public goods and developing African capacities (institutional and human) across the four areas.
2. The 2012 evaluation report, prepared by the Evaluation Office, presents findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the assessment of the performance of UNDP in terms of its contribution to regional development results and its strategic positioning in the region. The objectives of the regional programme evaluation are to: (a) provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board; (b) facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, in particular in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014; and (c) provide stakeholders in regional programme countries and among development partners with an objective assessment of the contributions made by the regional programme.
3. The evaluation involved a comprehensive desk review, supplemented by interviews with staff of the Johannesburg and Dakar Regional Service Centres; online/telephone interviews and country visits, including to the offices of major beneficiaries; a survey of resident representatives and country offices; and cybermetric analysis of key regional-programme knowledge products.
4. The evaluation concluded that the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) regional programme: (a) has been highly relevant and effective; (b) has been strategically positioned to interact with the African Union and regional economic communities (RECs); (c) has provided leadership in knowledge-generation and knowledge-sharing; (d) has also provided quality and cost-effective advisory services to regional and national stakeholders; (e) has responded well to emerging issues;



and (f) has contributed appropriately to regional public goods. Generally, the evaluation also found that the regional programme incorporated gender considerations and adopted a capacity development approach to its interventions.

5. While highlighting achievements and best practices, which contributed to development results across the region, the evaluation also identified areas for improvement. The key actions respond to the findings and recommendations and build on ongoing work, including: (a) *a new strategic framework* to guide future support to Africa; (b) *implementation* through merger of the two Regional Service Centres and clarification of roles and responsibilities, including an enhanced role for resident representatives/resident coordinators where regional institutions are located; and (c) *strengthened partnerships*, principally with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.

Annex. Key recommendations and management response

Evaluation recommendation 1. The regional programme should continue to focus on interventions where a regional approach brings the greatest value added. First priority should be given to strategic initiatives, undertaken in consultation with other United Nations partners, that strengthen the capacity of regional institutions and support the implementation of their priority frameworks. In the case of multi-country programmes, the regional programme should focus primarily on the provision of expertise, facilitation of cross-country exchanges and knowledge management, with country programmes implementing national or subnational activities. Where it is appropriate for the regional programme to implement country-level activities, this should be done in close collaboration with country offices, with a view to eventually incorporating these activities into country programmes.				
Management response: Relevant and acceptable. The new regional programme for Africa, 2014-2017, will continue to focus on regional public goods, principally strengthening the capacity of regional institutions and providing support to the implementation of their priority frameworks. Multi-country programmes will continue to focus on the provision of expertise, facilitation of cross-country exchanges and knowledge management. An enhanced role will also be given to the resident representatives/resident coordinators in country offices co-located with regional institutions. The regional programme will seek to minimize activities that are of a purely national nature and will work closely with country offices to ensure synergies between country programmes and the regional initiatives from which countries benefit. Response already initiated through the formulation of the new regional programme in close coordination with the African Union Commission and the regional economic communities (RECs). The process of consultation and implementation will also be undertaken with the United Nations agencies, particularly the Economic Commission for Africa and those partners that have regional programmes in support of the RECs.				
Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Focus further on the development priorities of the African Union and other regional institutions in the formulation of the new regional programme for Africa.	2014-2017	Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) /Regional Service Centre (RSC)		
1.2 Engage with actors, including United Nations partners, that are supporting the African Union and RECs through regional programmes.	2014-2017	RBA/RSC		
1.3 Engage in regular dialogue between RBA and the African Union and RECs to review progress and adjust to emerging priorities.	2014-2017	RBA/RSC		
1.4 Increase synergies between the regional and country programmes to ensure more	2014-2017	RBA/RSC		

targeted subregional responses, in particular through continued participation of resident representatives/resident coordinators in Project Appraisal Committees (PACs) and the Regional Programme Advisory Board.				
Evaluation recommendation 2. The Regional Bureau for Africa should develop a results-oriented strategy for engagement with regional institutions.				
Management response: Relevant and acceptable. Response already initiated through RBA request to the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) to lead the negotiation of relevant partnership agreements with the African Union and RECs, which will also facilitate their role as implementing partners for the RBA regional programme.				
2.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Africa, 2014-2017, and subsequent programming.	2014-2017	RBA		
2.2 Negotiate a long-term memorandum of understanding with selected RECs that is similar to arrangements with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and that will form the basis of the future results-based and improved issue-focused approach to addressing subregional and regional challenges.	2014	RBA/BERA/RSC		
Evaluation recommendation 3. The regional programme and projects should be designed from the outset in consultation with stakeholders, in particular the African Union and regional economic communities and, to the extent possible, national governments and country offices, to ensure ownership.				
Management response: Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. Enhanced ownership is among the guiding principles informing the design and future implementation of the new regional programme. The team designing the new regional programme has already commenced consultations with the African Union and some RECs as well as country offices. Participation of the African Union and RECs and country offices in the UNDP project appraisal process has already started and will be strengthened.				
3.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Africa, 2014-2017, and subsequent programming.	2014-2017	RBA/RSC		

3.2 Hold more systematic and inclusive consultations, accelerating them during the formulation of the new Regional Programme Document.	2013	RBA		
3.3 In addition to NEPAD, institutionalize the participation of the African Union and RECs in the Regional Programme Advisory Board together with institutionalized participation of regional bodies in the UNDP PAC.	2014-2017	RBA/RSC/UNDP-African Union Liaison Office in Addis Ababa		
Evaluation recommendation 4: With respect to its strategic initiatives and projects, the regional programme should sharpen its focus and articulate in the Regional Programme Document a limited number of outcomes and outputs. In addition, the Regional Bureau could consider identifying a few unifying cross-cutting themes of high relevance to Africa in coming years that can be mainstreamed across interventions to give additional coherence and visibility to the programme.				
<p>Management response: Relevant and acceptable.</p> <p>While the number of outcomes and outputs in the new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be driven by the results framework of the Strategic Plan, the outcomes and outputs will also be aligned with a priority set of African objectives and targets. The new regional programme will be developed based on reduced and more focused thematic areas prioritized in the region and translated into the outcomes with clear and quantifiable baselines, indicators and targets that tell a simple story line of the challenges faced and the responses that UNDP intends to make to support economic and social transformation in Africa.</p> <p>Unifying cross-cutting themes highly relevant to Africa have already been identified to include areas such as gender equality, youth empowerment, capacity development and South-South cooperation.</p>				
4.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Africa, 2014-2017, to develop more targeted outcomes and outputs.	2013-2017	RBA		
4.2 Formulation of Results and Resources Framework for the new regional programme will be built on stronger data capture, using the knowledge products, such as the <i>African Human Development Report</i> and <i>African Economic Outlook</i> .	2013	RBA/Operations Support Group (OSG)		

4.3 Enhance the role of the RBA Evaluation Advisers in establishing outcomes, outputs, benchmarks, targets and indicators for the new regional programme and subsequent projects.	2014-2017	RBA/RSC/OSG		
4.4 Mainstream gender and other cross-cutting principles during Regional Programme Document and project formulation processes.	2013-2017	RBA/RSC/OSG		
Evaluation recommendation 5: With respect to technical and advisory services, UNDP's global policy bureaux and the Regional Bureau for Africa should ensure an integrated strategy for the provision of a necessary range of regional advisory and technical support services to country offices. The management should monitor the effect of services provided by the Regional Advisers and take decisions based on the need for and the efficacy of support in helping country offices to realize development results.				
Management response: Relevant and acceptable. In close coordination with the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), RBA/RSC has been strengthening and will continue to strengthen investment in the professional development of staff and improve its capacity to provide high-level advisory services to regional institutions and country offices.				
5.1 Adjust the current business model for the Regional Service Centre to strengthen internal capacities and ensure efficient and focused support in priority areas to regional institutions and country offices.	2014-2017	RBA/BDP/Bureau of Management/ Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)/RSC		
5.2 Develop innovative ways to support collaboration between regional and global advisory functions that are demand driven and responsive to African needs and priorities.	2014-2017	RBA/BDP/BCPR/RSC		
5.3 Develop innovative ways to support knowledge exchange between RBA Policy Advisers and global advisory functions to provide effective support to	2014-2017	RBA/Country Offices/RSC		

regional institutions and countries.				
Evaluation recommendation 6: The Regional Bureau for Africa, BDP and BCPR should strengthen monitoring and follow-up by the Regional Service Centre for learning, knowledge management and effectiveness.				
<p>Management response: Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated.</p> <p>Several knowledge products have been developed jointly with BDP, and efforts will be made to systematize the development of new knowledge-management products during the implementation of the new regional programme, 2014-2017, bearing in mind responsiveness to Africa's needs and priorities.</p> <p>BCPR and BDP are already being consulted closely in the preparation of the new regional programme and RBA will continue to promote a cross-practice approach in the planning and implementation of regional projects and advisory services in support to more coherent and effective interventions.</p>				
6.1 Develop a more systematic knowledge-management strategy that is responsive to Africa's needs, priorities and positive best practices.	2014	RBA/BDP/BCPR/RSC		
6.2 In project formulation for the new regional programme, give more attention to communicating and disseminating African knowledge products.	2014- 2017	RBA/BDP/BCPR/RSC		
Evaluation recommendation 7: The Regional Bureau for Africa through the regional programme should further enhance development and dissemination of regional knowledge and knowledge products.				
<p>Management response: Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated.</p> <p>The new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be developed to give appropriate attention to the development and wide dissemination and use of African knowledge and knowledge products.</p>				
7.1 Design a knowledge-management and communication strategy that is responsive to regional needs and that seeks to capture and disseminate good practices in Africa.	2013-2017	RBA/RSC/BDP/Communications Office		
7. 2 Foster an organization-wide knowledge-management strategy that uses successful African pilot projects as the basis for scaling up global initiatives.	2013-2017	RBA/RSC/BDP/Communications Office		