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United Nations
Development
Programme

About UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with governments and people on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners that can bring about results.

World leaders have pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, including the overarching goal of cutting extreme poverty in half. UNDP, using its worldwide network, is coordinating global and national efforts to reach these Goals.

On the Ground in Developing Countries

Our focus is helping countries build and share solutions to the challenges of:

- **Democratic Governance:** More countries than ever before are working to build democratic governance. Their challenge is to develop institutions and processes that are more responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens, including the poor, and that promote development. UNDP helps countries strengthen electoral and legislative systems, improve access to justice and public administration, and develop a greater capacity to deliver basic services to those most in need. Through its programmes, UNDP brings people together within nations and around the world, fostering partnerships and sharing ways to promote participation, accountability and effectiveness at all levels.
- **Poverty Reduction:** Developing countries are working to create their own national poverty eradication strategies based on local needs and priorities. UNDP advocates for these nationally-owned solutions and helps ensure their effectiveness. We sponsor innovative pilot projects; connect countries to global best practices and resources; promote the role of women in development; and bring governments, civil society and outside funders together to coordinate their efforts.
- **Crisis Prevention and Recovery:** Many countries are increasingly vulnerable to violent conflicts or natural disasters that can erase decades of development and further entrench poverty and inequality. Through its global network, UNDP seeks out and shares innovative approaches to crisis prevention, early warning and conflict resolution as it has done recently in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. And because UNDP is on the ground in almost every developing country, wherever the next crisis occurs, we will be there to help bridge the gap between emergency relief and long-term development.
- **Energy and Environment:** The poor are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and lack of access to clean, affordable energy services. Energy and environmental issues are also global, as climate change, loss of biodiversity and ozone layer depletion cannot be addressed by countries acting alone. UNDP, through programmes such as the Equator Initiative, and the Global Environment Facility—a partnership with the UN Environment Programme and the World Bank—helps countries strengthen their capacity to address these challenges at the global, national and community levels, seeking out and sharing best practices, providing innovative policy advice and linking partners through pilot projects.
- **HIV/AIDS:** To prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and reduce its impact, developing countries need to mobilize all levels of government and civil society. As a trusted development partner, UNDP advocates for placing HIV/AIDS at the centre of national planning and budgets; helps build national capacity to manage initiatives that include people and institutions not usually involved with public health; and promotes decentralized responses that support community level action. Because HIV/AIDS is a worldwide problem, UNDP supports these national efforts by offering knowledge, resources and best practices from around the world.

In each of these five areas, UNDP advocates for the protection of **human rights** and especially the **empowerment of women**. Through our global network, we seek out and share ways to promote gender equality as an essential dimension of ensuring political participation and accountability; economic empowerment and effective development planning; crisis prevention and conflict resolution; access to clean water, sanitation and energy services; and society-wide mobilization against HIV/AIDS.

Within the UN System

UNDP is at the centre of the UN's efforts to reduce global poverty. At the global level, UNDP chairs the UN Development Group, which includes the UN's key players in international development. At the country level, the UNDP Resident Representative serves as Resident Coordinator of all UN development activities. Working to ensure the strategic integration of development efforts within the UN and among governments, donors and civil society is one of UNDP's most important roles. In a world of limited resources and capacities, UNDP helps to ensure the most effective use of UN and international aid resources.

Around the World

UNDP has a unique voice in international development. The annual *Human Development Report*, commissioned by UNDP, focuses the global debate on key development issues, providing new measurement tools, innovative analysis and often controversial policy proposals. It is guided by the belief that development is ultimately a process of enlarging people's choices, not just raising national incomes. The independent team of experts who write the Report draw on a worldwide network of leaders from academia, government and civil society who contribute data, ideas, and best practices. Developing countries and their international partners use the Report to gauge results and shape new policies.

The global Report's analytical framework and inclusive approach carry over into regional, national and local human development reports. The *Arab Human Development Report*, prepared by Arab scholars and intellectuals, has provided an honest, balanced—and at times—harsh view of the obstacles to development in the Arab world. And UNDP has also sponsored reports on the limitations of democracy in Latin America, the plight of the Roma in Europe and the importance of promoting entrepreneurship in developing countries. At the country level, more than 500 *National Human Development Reports* have been published in 143 countries. These Reports are created by national experts and intellectuals and in many cases, their research and advocacy has spurred policy debates that have inspired leaders in countries to build their own development solutions. UNDP also sponsors the Millennium Project which, with contributions from more than 250 development experts, produced far-reaching recommendations for eliminating poverty and achieving the MDGs.