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**Evaluation**

**Evaluation of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries in  
the context of United Nations peace operations**

**Executive summary**

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## I. Introduction

1. Violent conflict has a profound effect on human development. Conflict reverses developmental gains, disrupts economic markets and fractures governing institutions, greatly diminishing the ability of persons to live, work and get educated. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is essentially unreachable for many conflict-affected countries. The causal chains connecting conflict and development compel this investigation into whether UNDP interventions are helping to create the level of stability that is necessary for countries to advance their human development goals.

2. The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

(a) Assess how UNDP programming and policies support peacebuilding within the framework of large international operations and how UNDP supports a country's transition from immediate post-conflict to development; and

(b) Evaluate how UNDP response mechanisms function at headquarters and at operational levels during periods of transition in conflict-affected countries.

3. To achieve these objectives, the evaluation team has reviewed a broad set of UNDP programme activities in conflict-affected countries, then extrapolated and conflated findings that can be represented as "typical" and from which corporate lessons can be derived. The evaluation also looks at how UNDP operational partnerships with other United Nations offices and organizations have strengthened the broader United Nations and international response in conflict-affected countries and probes what added value UNDP brings to the table. Insofar as UNDP is engaged before, during and after Security Council mandated peace operations, the evaluation considers how UNDP is meeting expectations across these transitions.

4. Attention is given to stabilization and state-building and those programme activities that form the core of UNDP work in immediate post-conflict settings. The evaluation examines how the UNDP role in conflict situations is perceived by others, whether this role could or should be enhanced, and what comparative advantage UNDP is demonstrably capable of exploiting.

5. UNDP has indicated that there has been a reorientation of its conflict prevention and recovery support to more directly address the structural dimensions of modern conflicts, and to help partner countries identify and address the root causes of cross-border/inter-country and intra-national violence. The evaluation considers to what extent there is evidence of such a reorientation and the results thereof. The assessment considers whether the UNDP crisis response and management mechanisms are calibrated appropriately for carrying out expected support. This includes assessing whether rapid and predictable funding and human resource support are available and being utilized in crisis situations, and how UNDP is perceived as a partner among counterparts in United Nations Security Council mandated peace operations

6. The evaluation was conducted using a combination of country visits, desk-based case studies and research, and a series of interviews with stakeholders, including other United Nations organizations, donors, non-governmental organizations, UNDP partners, academic and independent researchers. In accordance with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, the evaluation sought to distil findings on programme outcomes in terms of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

7. As of May 2012, globally there were 17 peace operations led by the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and an additional 15 special political and/or peacebuilding field missions managed by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). This evaluation incorporates findings from nine primary case studies that were reviewed in detail (Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Somalia, South Sudan and Timor-Leste) and 11 secondary country case studies (Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Iraq, Nepal, occupied Palestinian territories, Sierra Leone and Uganda). The sample represents about 60 per cent of countries that come under an integrated mission; the sample also includes those countries that have commanded the greatest financial and personnel resources in the last decade. The nine primary case studies are drawn from four of the five UNDP regions, with the greatest number from Africa. The case studies were selected in order to capture a comprehensive and evaluable picture of UNDP activities across the diversity of conflict-affected circumstances in which it works. Field visits were undertaken for six of the nine case studies and the consultants chosen for the remaining three had recent extensive field experience in their chosen countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and South Sudan).

## II. Background

8. For the purposes of this evaluation, a conflict-affected country is one that in its recent past has experienced, is in the midst of experiencing or demonstrates the risk factors for violent unrest between forces (both organized and informal groups) that typically emerge from disputes over the distribution of resources (financial, political, natural, etc.) in a given society. Conflict occurs overwhelmingly in developing countries, typically those with high levels of unemployment, a lack of recourse to formal justice systems and large youth populations. A chief characteristic of countries in such circumstances is their functional deficiency in national governance and justice systems, making it difficult if not impossible to provide basic public services and to restore the necessary foundations for economic development and sustainable peace.

9. While each armed conflict has its own unique traits, there are some generally accepted common characteristics that typify this in the 21st century:

- Armed conflicts do not lend themselves to quick and clean definition. While open conflicts between countries and civil wars have both diminished significantly, nearly all contemporary conflict has a regional character, where a given conflict emerges or has impact across borders;
- Armed conflicts have generally revolved around challenges to a government's authority. The distinction between organized belligerents and civilians is often unclear;
- Armed conflicts do not follow linear paths of resolution, but cycles of recurrence and prolonged instability are common on the journey away from conflict;
- Peacebuilding is essentially an effort to create institutions for the peaceful management of conflict. Moving away from conflict is a political and developmental process that takes a generation, as long as 25 to 30 years.

10. United Nations integrated missions were first introduced in 1997 and further defined in 2000 through the landmark Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809), known as the Brahimi Report, and the ensuing United Nations reform process. Integrated missions were first informally used operationally during the United Nations deployment of two peacekeeping operations in 1999 to East Timor and Kosovo. The operational formulation of bringing together the work of security, political and development actors in theatre was central to the recommendations of the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, which ushered in the age of modern United Nations peace operations.

11. The onset of relative stability in a conflict-affected country logically shifts the focus of attention to longer-term peacebuilding and redevelopment. Acknowledging gaps between the time-bound nature of United Nations security engagements and the longer-term development needs as countries transition from conflict, the General Assembly and Security Council adopted in 2005 a resolution creating a new United Nations peacebuilding architecture, comprised of three units:

- The *Peacebuilding Commission*, an intergovernmental entity that aims to bring together the resources of the international community for peacebuilding activities and to provide integrated strategies for peacebuilding and recovery. The commission convenes the relevant actors, including international financial institutions and other donors, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations and others in support of these strategies, and maintains focus throughout the peacebuilding process in a given country.
- The *Peacebuilding Support Office* assists and supports the Peacebuilding Commission, administers the Peacebuilding Fund, and supports the efforts of the Secretary General to coordinate the United Nations system in its peacebuilding efforts.
- The *Peacebuilding Fund*: At the request of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Secretary-General created the Peacebuilding Fund in 2006 to provide financial support to catalytic interventions that encourage longer-term engagements through development actors and other bilateral donors.

12. Since its founding in 1965, UNDP has played a major role in providing development assistance to countries. Since the early 1990s this has included the aim to both prevent conflict before it occurs and assist in recovering in its aftermath. The role of UNDP continues to evolve in keeping with the changing nature of conflict and the expanding array of international and regional humanitarian and development actors.

13. The formal acknowledgment by the General Assembly in its 1991 resolution 46/182 of the need to incorporate longer-term development considerations into humanitarian and recovery activities provided the basis for the UNDP mandate in immediate post-conflict settings. In particular, the General Assembly recognized the need for a coordinated and multidimensional response across the United Nations system. As a result, the longstanding function of UNDP as supporter and manager of the Resident Coordinator system was more clearly defined.

14. In an effort to move beyond ad hoc programming and to establish a clearer role within the United Nations system, UNDP has reorganized and made strategic adjustments. In 1995, the Emergency Response Division (ERD) was created,

providing the first formal headquarters-level UNDP entity focused on technical support to country offices facing conflict situations. ERD teams were established to provide strategic support to country offices and resident coordinators in times of crisis and could also deploy personnel to conflict-affected countries on a limited basis (20 to 30 days) to develop plans for a UNDP response in these situations. ERD also became responsible for providing Secretariat-level support to the UNDP Crisis Committee, established in 1997. The biweekly meetings of the Crisis Committee brought together representatives from each regional bureau and key operational offices to consider crisis situations and to design UNDP programme and resources deployment.

15. Today, the scope of UNDP crisis prevention and recovery (CPR) work is extensive and growing. CPR was included in the work plans of 39 countries in 2002. By 2010, this practice area was included in 103 country programmes, with an annual programme expenditure of over \$193 million. Five countries accounted for 40 per cent of country level programme expenditures (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and Sudan), with Afghanistan alone representing 23 per cent. During 2010, 60 per cent of contributions to UNDP for crisis prevention and recovery work came from other “non-core” sources and directed toward specific countries or thematic areas. UNDP programme expenditures for CPR annually represent about 25 per cent of the organization’s global programme expenditure.

16. The 2008-2011 Strategic Plan: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development provides the context for present scope of UNDP services to conflict-affected countries. The main crisis prevention and recovery outcomes include:

- enhancing national conflict prevention and disaster risk management capabilities;
- ensuring improved national governance functions post-crisis; and
- restoring the foundations for local development.

17. The Strategic Plan (DP/2007/43/rev.1) pays particular attention to implementation issues, noting on page 11 that “UNDP may need to (i) do more to help address risks before crises occur; (ii) help build capacity to respond faster to crises and put early recovery actions into place even during the humanitarian stage of a crisis; and (iii) have in place predictable internal funding and resources for rapid deployment after a crisis.”

18. The Strategic Plan states that UNDP will work across the United Nations system to assist in initiating immediate early recovery and transition activities, and facilitate short and medium-term post-crisis recovery strategies into longer-term frameworks. It will work to support the establishment of norms and guidelines; provide assessment and programming tools to support country level recovery processes; and provide advocacy support to boost funding for recovery efforts. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan states that more attention and support will be given to humanitarian/resident coordinators so that they can better perform their roles in conflict prevention. The Strategic Plan envisages UNDP playing a significant role in the emerging United Nations peacebuilding architecture, supporting the Peacebuilding Commission at the country level by assisting with the development of nationally owned, integrated peacebuilding strategies, and through the implementation of project activities supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

### III. Findings

19. **Finding 1. UNDP comparative advantages are perceived to be its on-the-ground presence, close partnership with government, role as a bridge between humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts, and role in governance and institutional change in the management of conflict. There are risks to having a wide remit and long-term presence, including a tendency towards ad hoc and overly ambitious programming, which consequently impedes UNDP performance.**

20. The perceived UNDP advantages must be considered through the lens of the United Nations reform process: how UNDP contributes to the United Nations system “delivering as one” and whether its in-country position and broad scope of activity are used to the comparative advantage of the entire United Nations country team. One of the inherent problems of UNDP presence in a country before, during and after a crisis is that it builds an historical expectation that the organization will respond positively to the many wide-ranging requests for support it receives. The result can be ad hoc and overly ambitious support programmes, coupled with limited financial and human resources and sometimes slow delivery.

21. **Finding 2. Despite recognition of the importance of conflict analysis and the development of its own conflict analysis tools, there is no UNDP-based standard operating procedure for when and how to conduct conflict analysis. As a result, the conduct of conflict analysis in both substantive and procedural terms remains varied across UNDP. Likewise, a “theory of change” is underutilized by UNDP.**

22. A recent inter-agency consultation across 10 conflict countries highlights some of the pitfalls in pursuing a silo “project” approach without commensurate analysis. It found that projects with a primarily economic focus can inadvertently exacerbate resource competition, perceptions of injustice and contribute to further tensions among groups. Nevertheless, there are country-level experiences that speak to the importance of both conducting and regularly updating conflict analyses. The UNDP experience in Nepal is illustrative here: on the basis of its on-going conflict analysis the UNDP country office was able to provide vital strategic oversight throughout the country’s civil war and subsequent peacebuilding process.

23. **Finding 3. UNDP often works in conflict settings through project support units, generally embedded within the public sector and operating in parallel to the national public sector. While this method can enhance the pace and quality of service delivery, it also runs the risk of weakening institutions that countries must rely on over the long term.**

24. The Strategic Plan denotes capacity development as a nationally led change process rather than a supply-driven approach. But there can be tensions between promoting nationally led change processes and the inherent risks in a conflict-affected country. UNDP and other international organizations often struggle in conflict settings to find an effective balance between directly providing services and expanding state capacities to deliver services. The calculus is especially difficult in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a weak state government has yet to establish nation-wide reach and has been unable to address many of the underlying causes of the continuing conflict.

25. The sustainability of UNDP support to conflict-affected countries depends not only on the manner in which the quest to build national capacities is carried out, but also the organization's ability to advocate for and maintain international support for longer-term peacebuilding activities once the initial crisis has passed. Building strong and inclusive local government is regarded as a benchmark towards sustainability of the peacebuilding process in post-conflict environments. Yet international support has not always been sufficient or timely. UNDP spending figures themselves confirm this lack of attention. In 2008/2009, 70 per cent of expenditures in non-fragile countries were spent on local governance. In contrast, in fragile countries expenditures for local governance were only 14 per cent, of which the largest portion (29 per cent) was spent on law and justice reform.

**26. Finding 4. "Before, during and after" is the common refrain of UNDP in regard to its work in conflict-affected settings. On account of its global deployment, and broad technical and administrative mandates, UNDP is engaged in virtually all facets of the work of United Nations country teams in conflict settings. Concerns have been raised that the UNDP role may be overly broad, sometimes encroaching on the relief and recovery work of specialized United Nations agencies.**

27. UNDP works in all developing countries affected by conflict. It has many roles, which are often defined through country and context-specific demands. UNDP programmatic and policy support aims to build national capacities to prevent conflict before it breaks out, mitigate its effects and help with recovery in its aftermath. The nature of UNDP assistance is further shaped by a multitude of operational partners, from political, peace and humanitarian operations that function under Security Council mandated frameworks to other international development actors and to host governments themselves. Beyond its programmatic role, UNDP has financial, administrative and coordination functions within the United Nations system and provides a bridge between humanitarian relief activities, peacekeeping and longer-term recovery and development in conflict-affected countries.

28. The broad and expanding array of UNDP activities in conflict settings is not universally embraced. Other United Nations organizations seeking funding and engagement in conflict settings have expressed concern that UNDP sometimes "overreaches" by engaging in technical support beyond its expertise and by favouring its own programmes when administering multi-donor trust funds. In a competitive funding environment, there is no easy answer to this concern of overreach other than for UNDP to continue to provide evidence of its comparative strength in specific areas. The Integrated Mission Planning Process provides a useful framework for the division of labour at the outset of an integrated mission, but with some notable exceptions (Liberia, Timor) there has been less coherence and direction at the drawdown stages.

**29. Finding 5. Development activities cannot stop or prevent conflict alone, but the work of UNDP and other organizations can support and encourage national conflict prevention capacities. Evidence suggests that UNDP has been able to contribute to conflict prevention, especially by expanding national capacities that help to mitigate and manage the underlying structural causes of violence.**

30. What constitutes conflict prevention support for UNDP encompasses a range of development activities, including the development of forums for non-violent

settlement of disputes, employment generation activities and rule of law development support. With an overall onus on national actors as the protagonists in a conflict prevention setting, UNDP support has increasingly been geared toward building so-called “infrastructures for peace” — the case specific set of interdependent state structures, cultural norms and resources which cumulatively contribute to conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

**31. Finding 6. UNDP has been effective in providing timely technical and financial assistance to national rule of law projects. This includes supporting reconstruction/rehabilitation of essential legal system infrastructure and expanded local access to legal aid. Especially noteworthy are the efforts of UNDP to address the challenge of bridging traditional dispute resolution and formal justice systems, and furthering transitional justice in post-conflict contexts.**

32. For many development organizations, including UNDP, there remain gaps between the theoretical understanding of legal systems and the complexity of designing and implementing projects in conflict settings. Greater understanding of the political economy of a given country in conflict is needed in order to approach the interrelated elements of legal reform in a coherent fashion. For instance, judicial training that allows judges to make better judgments is not likely to have much impact if there is no judicial independence, if corruption still dominates the legal system or if the police system is destroyed or biased. Similarly, benefits gained from raising the capacity of the lower courts can be entirely undermined if the final court of appeal is incompetent or corrupt.

**33. Finding 7. UNDP is widely perceived as an experienced and impartial provider of electoral support, with notable examples of effective support in several conflict-affected countries. UNDP has moved away from elections as an event and towards supporting the electoral cycle as a whole. There remains an over-emphasis on technical inputs; and there have been cases where the political concerns of an operation, particularly those pertaining to keeping a peace agreement “on track”, have clashed with the more immediate concerns of UNDP over political plurality in elections.**

34. Electoral support as a coordinated effort within an integrated mission can be very successful, but it is not without pitfalls. The trade-off between the cautious political imperatives of a Security Council mandated operation are not always compatible with the “social contract” obligations of UNDP to broaden participation in elections despite potential objections from an incumbent government.

**35. Finding 8. UNDP has made progress in supporting opportunities for women to participate more fully in the emerging political and legal landscape of post-conflict countries. Notable successes include the expansion of female access to justice in some countries, especially for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.**

36. In many conflict-affected countries, there are low national capacities to collect and report on disaggregated data, including gender variables. UNDP is aware of this and, as part of its Early Recovery Strategy outlined in 2009, indicated its intention to collect more gender disaggregated data for priority countries and to develop more gender-sensitive assessment tools. The strategy also highlights UNDP intentions to



identify and use more consultants with gender expertise as immediate crisis response advisers.

37. Gender-based violence almost always increases during civil war. Despite the disproportionate impact on women in conflict, women are often not included in decision-making and planning processes in most conflict-affected countries. UNDP is currently supporting programming on gender-based violence in 22 countries, including in development and crisis contexts. The evaluation found that although concerted efforts were made by UNDP to “mainstream” gender issues within its own programmes, the issue of macro-analysis and influence on government policy received relatively less attention. The macroeconomic framework set in the post-conflict period is likely to endure for many years. It will determine how the economy grows, which sectors are prioritized for investments, and what kinds of jobs and opportunities for employment will be created and for whom. Yet the placement and promotion of women’s voices in this process remains below par.

**38. Finding 9. UNDP has had varied success in its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts, reflecting a multiplicity of context-specific factors in conflict settings. In a number of cases, UNDP has succeeded in fostering innovative approaches. There has been a tendency to concentrate on immediate outputs rather than longer-term impacts.**

39. UNDP provides technical assistance on DDR in 20 countries and indicates that it takes a “holistic approach” to DDR that involves the wider community in addition to ex-combatants. DDR is always an inter-agency effort requiring a coordinated effort and UNDP has made increasing efforts to coordinate with peacekeeping troops. The real UNDP comparative advantage in DDR is in the reintegration of former combatants, but it is vulnerable to unpredictable funding patterns, particularly for longer-term reintegration programmes. Resources have tended to focus on the physical return process and integration “packages”, and far less to community integration strategies and the associated reconciliation and peacebuilding that they entail.

**40. Finding 10. Security is central to the stabilization agenda in conflict-affected countries and UNDP is frequently called on to assist with security sector reform (SSR). Security issues rarely fall under donor aid programmes so bilateral assistance is usually drawn from limited alternative funds and is often insufficient. Success is largely determined by the willingness of recipient countries to initiate reforms. UNDP efforts to bolster civilian oversight are noteworthy. Better sequencing and coordination between SSR and other sectors is encouraged.**

41. The security sector is not an autonomous, independent collection of public institutions; rather it is an integrated component of a country’s public administration and thus part of the state’s overall governance system and structure. The role of civilian oversight — and UNDP efforts to bolster this sector — is essential. It is one of the most effective methods of ensuring that the state does not become the source of insecurity, but is part of the solution. SSR cannot be divorced from other governance reforms and yet precisely because security issues rarely fall under donor aid programmes — with bilateral assistance for security issues consequently drawn from limited alternative funds — they tend to be a parallel and relatively underfunded function within the broader aid effort.

42. **Finding 11. UNDP interventions in livelihoods and economic revitalization are an important and often innovative component of the broader United Nations approach to conflict-affected settings. Within integrated missions, there has been some tension between the time-bound and technical nature of the approach taken by peacekeepers towards DDR and the longer-term UNDP developmental objectives that focus on building local capacities for economic generation. Similarly, donor timeframes in conflict-affected settings are relatively short, limiting the scope and scale of UNDP interventions.**

43. While widely acknowledged as beneficial in terms of contributing to immediate peacebuilding and conflict prevention aims, the broader impact and sustainability of UNDP livelihood work in conflict-affected settings needs to be considered. Most information provided by UNDP on these activities is based on tangible outputs of numbers of jobs created and individuals trained. Meanwhile, broader issues regarding creation of longer-term economic opportunities in conflict-affected societies remain uncertain. Nearly every country considered for this evaluation remains among the lowest in per capita income globally and will most likely remain as such for a generation during their emergence from conflict. With this in mind, it may be beneficial to consider UNDP initial interventions as stop-gap in nature in conflict-affected settings, laying the foundations for economic development in the future.

44. **Finding 12. UNDP administers the pivotal coordinating role of the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator within integrated missions, straddling the political, humanitarian and development dimensions. Management effectiveness in these missions is highly context-specific. A critical unresolved issue for the United Nations is the extent to which humanitarian and development activities should be decoupled from the political process.**

45. United Nations integrated missions face complex and competing aims. A recent study from the United Nations Integration Steering Group highlighted the often confusing and inconsistent interpretation of policy that arises in the midst of crises response activities. The importance of linking political, security and development objectives in conflict-affected states is no longer an issue of debate. However, a holistic approach does not always alleviate tensions that can arise among humanitarian, development, political and security agendas. As a step towards improving cooperation, there are now quarterly meetings at the Assistant Secretary-General level between DPKO, DPA and UNDP to review priorities and interventions. Another positive step in the United Nations integration effort has been the evolution of the Integrated Missions Planning Process.

46. **Finding 13. The “cluster” approach is chaired by the humanitarian coordinator with the primary support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. UNDP leads the Early Recovery Cluster, which has received mixed reviews, with criticism directed especially towards a lack of clarity in purpose, insufficient funding, and a paucity of monitoring and evaluation tools in use.**

47. Experience with the Early Recovery Cluster in recent events has highlighted confusion over the kinds of recovery projects that are deemed eligible for inclusion in a Consolidated Appeal Process or its equivalent. In some cases critics contend there has been too much attention paid to crisis security, law and order measures and

transitional justice, and not enough attention to longer-term planning and capacity building efforts.

**48. Finding 14. UNDP has effectively promoted dialogue among government and civil society at national and local levels, enabling a broadening of the constituency for peacebuilding, and improvements in programme design in priority areas through the engagement of a wider range of stakeholders.**

49. UNDP is beginning to exploit new opportunities in conflict-affected countries to use South-South cooperation. Benefits include the relatively swift deployment of human resources to assist, with a better understanding of the country circumstances, as well as utilizing appropriate technologies and techniques. This is especially true in cases where sufficient local government capacity will take a generation to build.

**50. Finding 15. UNDP manages multi-donor trust funds in many conflict settings. The management of these funds has encountered some criticism with respect to high overhead charges, slow disbursement and the perceived preferential treatment given to the organization's own development support programmes. Greater attention should be given to capturing lessons to inform country offices and partners.**

51. The particular mix of funds in any given post-crisis effort is context-specific. All 20 of the conflict-affected countries reviewed for this evaluation showed a significant surge in UNDP financing for country-based programming in the aftermath of major conflict events and, in every case, the UNDP country-office budgets remained elevated for at least several years thereafter.

**52. Finding 16. UNDP has made important refinements and improvements in human resources and procurement in recent years, with clear evidence that the organization can now respond quicker and more effectively to requests for assistance in the wake of conflict and disaster events. Continuing improvements are needed, however, as the logistical, recruitment and procurement procedures that UNDP utilizes remain in many cases insufficient to the demands of a highly fluid conflict environment.**

53. Guidelines and procedures are important, but the success or failure of UNDP working in conflict-affected countries usually comes down to the pace of response and the quality of personnel. The onus is on UNDP to quickly deploy high calibre and well-trained staff and consultants in the field. When response is slow, it brings reputational and operational consequences to the organization. It should be noted that there is evidence that UNDP has improved its SURGE and fast-track procedures; and there are cases where a rapid and effective response is recognized.

**54. Finding 17. UNDP plays a prominent role in the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Its effectiveness is contingent on realistic planning, rapid response, quality personnel, effective coordination with partners and sufficient funding.**

55. For UNDP, transitions from peacekeeping operations represent a complex and sensitive operational period, where its support activities often take on elevated significance in consolidating a country's progress away from conflict. The effective management of these transitions is of particular interest at present as several United Nations peacekeeping operations are soon to wind down, with support continuing through integrated peacebuilding offices, United Nations country teams and special

political missions. New United Nations Transition Guidelines should provide an opportunity for more effective, actionable interagency planning and budgeting.

**56. Finding 18. UNDP relies heavily on non-core donor contributions to fund its programme activities, especially in conflict-affected countries. In 2010, 70 per cent of UNDP global country programme expenditure was funded through “other donor resources”. Democratic governance activities, in particular those aimed at extending government legitimacy and enhancing capacities for conflict management and service delivery, have generally been the main areas for UNDP support in conflict-affected settings.**

57. In countries where an integrated peacekeeping operation has been deployed, there is often a discernible jump in UNDP programming expenditure reflecting both the elevation of the situation and the broader international attention. Timor-Leste, for example, experienced a 30 per cent jump in UNDP programme expenditures in the year following the deployment of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste.

**58. Finding 19. UNDP lacks a coherent and systematic assessment of progress towards CPR objectives within their country support programmes. Specific indicators or benchmarks have not been established for UNDP work in crisis environments and there is no consistent practice regarding the setting of baselines at the outset of country-based projects in order to track progress and improvement.**

59. Gauging the efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP support in conflict-affected settings can be problematic as many project activities are process-oriented, time-bound and subject to a rapidly changing political landscape. The relationship between resources committed and outcomes achieved is not linear; it requires a more subtle theory of change with incremental and measurable benchmarks.

## **IV. Conclusions**

**60. Conclusion 1. UNDP is one of very few international organizations able to operate “at scale” across multiple programme areas, before, during and after the outbreak of conflict. This work directly links to the broader UNDP emphasis on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to UNDP crosscutting priorities such as women’s empowerment.**

61. UNDP comparative advantages are perceived to be its on-the-ground presence, close partnership with government, its role as a bridge between humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts, and its role in governance and institutional change in the management of conflict. The wide scope of UNDP activity constitutes a weakness when resources are spread too thinly. Country offices have not always matched the inherent “worth” of an activity against the likely impact it will have in achieving wider goals set by the organization. There is a tendency to continue implementing some portfolio activities with insufficient staff and/or financial resources when their continuing relevance is questionable or when there are other international organizations better equipped to deal with them. The evaluation found only rare examples of a clear articulation of theories of change that allowed UNDP to develop and monitor meaningful change indicators. Hence, the default position has been to assume that all activities contribute to peace and are of equal worth.

**62. Conclusion 2. UNDP is often caught off guard and unprepared when conflict erupts, despite its in-country position and close contacts with government and civil society. Anticipating conflict and helping to prevent its outbreak requires detailed and operational conflict analyses to be carried out at the country level.**

63. A conflict analysis sets the stage for a theory of change. Once the problem is assessed and the triggers of violence are known, a theory of change suggests how an intervention in that context will change the conflict. But this must be preceded by a thorough understanding of context. The operational landscape in most conflict-affected countries is characterized by new and fluid forms of internal conflict, usually brought on by multiple “triggers”. UNDP (and the United Nations in general) invests a great deal into data-collection and analyses, yet it often seems ill-informed about the political tensions and relationships that can so quickly develop into violence.

64. Despite recognition of the importance of conflict analysis and the development of its own conflict analysis tools, there is no UNDP-based standard operating procedure for when and how to conduct conflict analysis. As a result, the conduct of conflict analysis in both substantive and procedural terms remains varied across UNDP. UNDP has been very good at codifying the dynamics of conflict in a generic sense, through increasingly sophisticated strategic analyses, particularly at a global level. But there remains a disjuncture between the holistic conceptual umbrella of “knowledge” within the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the operational constraints of individual countries. The result in some cases has been a waste of resources on small, inconsequential activities that have traction only for the duration of the “project”, but little long-lasting impact on peacebuilding.

**65. Conclusion 3. The effectiveness of UNDP programming support in conflict-affected countries is often contingent upon events in the political and security realm, which are largely beyond UNDP power to influence. Where a modicum of political settlement has been reached and peacekeeping has maintained security, UNDP interventions have been able to support a broader conflict resolution, peacebuilding and ultimately, development agenda.**

66. During the past decade, UNDP has built substantive capacity in many core areas of peacebuilding that are relevant to its development mandate, and UNDP has shown it can be very effective when political and security situations have stabilized. Some of the greatest UNDP achievements in post-conflict peacebuilding have been in states which are either: (a) geo-politically less prominent and hence where the United Nations role is greater vis-à-vis other actors; or (b) beset with geo-politically charged environments (like Kenya or Georgia) where political and security influences have become so polarized by internal/external influences that UNDP is able to take on a “non-threatening” mediation role.

67. Where the semblances of political reconciliation have been scant and violence on-going, UNDP interventions have had limited impact and progress has been frequently reversed on account of low national buy-in for development interventions or the resumption of conflict.

**68. Conclusion 4. UNDP administers (but does not direct) the critical coordinating role within integrated missions in crisis situations, straddling the political, humanitarian and development dimensions. Management**

**effectiveness in these missions is highly context-specific. One area that needs greater attention is the dissemination of learning derived from managing pooled multi-donor trust funds.**

69. Conceptual and operational issues between UNDP and its security, political and humanitarian partners in integrated missions often revolve around the inherent tension between the time-bound nature and approach of a peace operation as opposed to UNDP longer-term development agenda. The Integrated Mission Planning Process has provided a useful and structured mechanism for ensuring UNDP involvement at the inception of a mission, yet case study findings indicate that UNDP influence in the process remains relatively small compared to the security and political concerns of other actors.

70. The global experience of UNDP in managing pooled multi-donor trust funds is not systematically captured, while such knowledge could be useful when a UNDP country office needs to understand and explain to their partners the various options available. Given the continued need for support where UNDP is expected to manage/administer trust funds not only in the context of post-conflict recovery, but also for post-disaster recovery, greater attention should be given to institutional arrangements in order to more effectively manage this issue at the corporate level.

**71. Conclusion 5. UNDP has demonstrated that it can be an effective partner and participant in peacebuilding. Problems arising during the transition to peacebuilding point to a lack of logistic and substantive preparedness, as well as a reduction in donor funding after the drawdown of the integrated mission.**

72. UNDP is well-considered for its implementation of activities funded through the Peacebuilding Fund. In addition, the UNDP partnership with the Department of Political Affairs in Security Council mandated integrated peacebuilding offices (including Burundi and Sierra Leone) have demonstrated the utility of combining development activities and political processes.

73. Unlike the planning process at the start of integrated missions, there has been no equivalent planning and guidance for the transition to peacebuilding or the drawdown of peacekeeping operations. The Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict, Report of the Secretary General (A/66/311-S/2011/527) and the recent development of new United Nations Transition Guidelines should provide an opportunity for more effective, actionable interagency planning and budgeting.

74. UNDP has worked effectively with other United Nations agencies, departments and programmes to promote dialogue among government and civil society at national and local levels, enabling a broadening of the constituency for peacebuilding. The United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action (co-chaired by UNDP and DPA) serves as a useful entry point for increased coherence in conflict prevention and peacebuilding work, and is particularly useful in providing programme design and strategic advice to the resident coordinators.

**75. Conclusion 6. UNDP has achieved a measure of success with expanding opportunities for women to participate more fully in the emerging political and legal landscape of post-conflict countries. Notable successes include the expansion of female access to justice in some countries, especially for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. UNDP has been less successful in its efforts to improve the gender balance of its own staff working in conflict countries.**

76. The 8-point agenda for gender equality has been an important UNDP effort and a potential blueprint for the wider United Nations system. It has yet to be harnessed as the working gender strategy within integrated missions.

**77. Conclusion 7. UNDP has yet to strike an optimal balance between direct programme implementation and national implementation in many conflict countries. Direct service delivery may escalate the achievement of specific outcomes and may be initially necessary to safeguard against corruption. However, it also runs the risk of weakening institutions that countries must rely on over the long term.**

78. The issue of sustainability can sometimes clash with the desire to “get the job done”, particularly in countries where capacity constraints are profound. UNDP typically works in conflict settings through project support units, operating in parallel with the national public sector. The wage and benefit incentives used to attract talented staff for these United Nations assignments are, in fact, salary stipends, and they often create major distortions in the public service labour market. As noted in the Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict, Report of the Secretary General (A/66/311-S/2011/527), it is important to “avoid any negative impact on national capacity-development, for example the brain drain of local capacity to international and bilateral organizations”.

**79. Conclusion 8. UNDP operational effectiveness and efficiency has been improving, with clear evidence that the organization can now respond quicker and more effectively to requests for assistance in the wake of conflict and disaster events. Continuing improvements are needed, however, as the logistical, recruitment and procurement procedures that UNDP utilizes remain in many cases insufficient to the demands of a highly fluid conflict environment.**

80. The UNDP SURGE initiative and fast-tracking procedures have gone some way toward addressing the challenge of a shortage of skilled staff on hand at the outbreak of conflict. While temporary rapid deployment may help achieve short-term immediate recovery aims, there are trade-offs; the very nature of fragile states demands the building of relationships and trust over a protracted period. The effectiveness of UNDP in conflict situations will remain contingent on the quality and capabilities of in-country management and staff. Selecting skilled staff to fill appointments in countries at risk for conflict and carrying out robust training programmes for staff in these countries constitute the two most important actions to ensure UNDP effectiveness.

81. Recognizing that volunteers of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) comprise one-third of all international civilian personnel in eight of the nine primary case studies of the evaluation where there is an integrated mission, it is important for UNDP to give greater recognition to the important contribution made by these volunteers towards peace and development.

## V. Recommendations

**82. Recommendation 1. UNDP should significantly enhance the quality and use of conflict analysis at the country level, including guidance and standard operating procedures detailing when and how analyses should be developed and periodically updated. Effective analyses of needs and risks should, crucially,**

**lead to a theory of change for the planned UNDP support and then directly to a sequence of activities and a means of measuring progress against objectives.**

83. There is at present no UNDP-based standard operating procedure for when and how to conduct conflict analysis. As a result, the conduct of conflict analysis in both substantive and procedural terms remains varied across UNDP. Nevertheless, there are country level experiences that demonstrate the value of conducting and regularly updating conflict analyses.

**84. Recommendation 2. UNDP should make greater efforts to translate corporate management cooperation between UNDP, DPKO and DPA to the specifics of country priorities and the sequencing of interventions. This would imply a more central role for UNDP in the planning stages at the beginning of integrated missions and then through the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and in the drawdown of an integrated mission. Clear corporate guidelines and criteria need to be developed in this regard.**

85. The Integrated Mission Planning Process has proved a useful and structured mechanism for ensuring UNDP involvement at the inception of a mission, yet case studies indicate that UNDP influence in the process remains relatively small compared to the security and political concerns of other actors.

**86. Recommendation 3. UNDP should be unambiguous in establishing what recovery projects are eligible for inclusion in a Consolidated Appeal Process or its equivalent. UNDP should make better use of “situation teams” that convene quickly during the outbreak of conflicts.**

87. Experience with the Early Recovery Cluster in recent crisis events has highlighted confusion over the kinds of recovery projects that are deemed eligible for inclusion in a Consolidated Appeal Process or its equivalent. In some cases critics contend there has been too much attention paid to crisis security, law and order measures and transitional justice, and not enough attention to longer-term planning and capacity building efforts.

**88. Recommendation 4. Greater attention should be given to institutional arrangements in order to more effectively manage and disseminate knowledge on pooled multi-donor trust funds at the corporate level — and how this can serve country offices requested to manage such funds.**

89. Until recently, UNDP global experience in managing multi-partner trust funds was not systematically captured. Such knowledge is useful when a UNDP country office needs to understand and explain to their partners the various trust fund options and to know what they should do to set up a trust fund. The Independent Evaluation of Lessons Learned from Delivering as One (draft report, 26 July 2012, forthcoming) notes that the “firewall in the management of the MPTF [Multi-Party Trust Fund] has worked effectively”. Yet given the continued need for support where UNDP is expected to manage/administer trust funds, not only in the context of post-conflict recovery but also for post-disaster recovery, greater attention should be given to conveying the institutional arrangements to partners.

**90. Recommendation 5. To reinforce the importance of “delivering as one” in post-conflict settings, the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board should raise with the United Nations Secretariat and Security Council, for their consideration, the importance of establishing clear guidance on the division of**



**labour and resources during the drawdown of integrated missions in order to ensure that individual organizations such as UNDP are adequately prepared for their enhanced role during transition and post-transition.**

91. The Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict, Report of the Secretary-General (A/66/311-S/2011/527) recommended enhancing the United Nations use of standing civilian capacities. The recommendation underscored the pivotal role of UNDP in resource mobilization and development support in post-conflict settings and recommended that UNDP take the lead role in clusters relating to core national governance functions, justice and capacity development.

92. For UNDP, transitions from peacekeeping operations represent a complex and sensitive operational period, where its support activities often take on elevated significance in consolidating a country's progress away from conflict. The effective management of these transitions is of particular interest at present as several United Nations peacekeeping operations are soon to wind down, with support continuing through integrated peacebuilding offices, United Nations country teams and special political missions. New United Nations Transition Guidelines should provide an opportunity for more effective, actionable interagency planning and budgeting.

**93. Recommendation 6. Cooperation with international financial institutions, including the World Bank, should be further developed in the areas of joint approaches to post-crisis needs assessments and crisis prevention planning.**

94. The Integrated Mission Planning Process has been designed by the United Nations to help achieve a common understanding of strategic objectives in a particular country by engaging all relevant parts of the United Nations system, and to provide an inclusive framework for action that can also serve to engage external partners, such as the international financial institutions, regional organizations and bilateral donors. Post-crisis needs assessments (PCNA) are now being developed through a collaborative scoping exercise undertaken by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the World Bank. PCNAs help to identify the infrastructure and government support activities that are needed to support countries as they move towards recovery.

**95. Recommendation 7. UNDP should establish an internal human resources programme designed to prepare and place female staff in conflict settings and should set tighter benchmarks for offices to meet gender targets.**

96. UNDP has a mixed record of accomplishment in terms of the gender balance of its work force in some conflict-affected countries. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 2010 only 23 per cent of the staff were women. In post-crisis Cote d'Ivoire, the vast majority of professional staff in 2011 were male, with only two women employed, neither in key posts. This poor gender ratio is replicated in the integrated United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire. These and other examples attest to the need for a concerted effort to meet gender targets in conflict-affected countries.

**97. Recommendation 8. All programming for conflict-affected countries should articulate a clear exit strategy. Direct implementation projects should be required to justify why they cannot be nationally executed and include capacity development measures and a timeframe for transitioning to national implementation modalities.**

98. While it is clear that building national and subnational capacity takes time and depends on many factors, including a robust education system, UNDP has yet to strike an optimal balance between direct programme implementation and national implementation in many conflict countries. Direct service delivery can escalate the achievement of specific outcomes and may be initially necessary to safeguard against corruption. However, it also runs the risk of weakening institutions that countries must rely on over the long term. The capacity for governing that gets built through UNDP support can be quickly eroded by the “brain drain” that takes trained national counterparts to new jobs either in the private sector or, perversely, in international aid organizations such as the United Nations.

**99. Recommendation 9. UNDP should expand its staff training programmes for countries identified as at-risk for conflict, revise hiring procedures for staff to stress experience in conflict settings, and provide additional incentives for experienced staff to continue working in conflict-affected hardship posts.**

100. The UNDP SURGE initiative and fast-tracking procedures have gone some way to addressing the challenge of a shortage of skilled staff on hand at the outbreak of conflict. However, the effectiveness of UNDP in conflict situations will remain contingent on the quality and capabilities of in-country management and staff. Selecting skilled staff to fill appointments in countries at-risk for conflict and carrying out robust training programmes for staff in these countries constitute the two most important actions to ensure UNDP effectiveness.

**101. Recommendation 10. UNDP should establish new guidance for project development in crisis-affected countries, including generic sets of benchmarks and indicators. This should also include monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress in conflict settings. These tools should build from programme indicators developed in non-conflict contexts and then be revised to reflect changed circumstances brought on by conflict.**

102. New guidance is needed because UNDP currently lacks a tool for the coherent and systematic assessment of progress towards crisis prevention and recovery objectives within country support programmes. Specific indicators or benchmarks have not been established for UNDP work in crisis environments and there is no consistent practice regarding the setting of baselines at the outset of country-based projects in order to track progress.