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**Evaluation**

**Management response to the evaluation of UNDP support for  
climate change adaptation**

**I. Introduction**

1. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP conducted the evaluation of UNDP support for climate change adaptation in order to take stock of UNDP achievements and performance in helping partner countries adapt to new climate conditions created by global warming. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the multi-year evaluation plan of IEO (DP/2018/4) approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2018/1.
2. The primary focus of the evaluation was UNDP activities that *directly* contribute to climate change adaptation and assessed climate change adaptation finance channelled through UNDP in four policy domains: (a) agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security; (b) disaster prevention and preparedness, including recovery, and emergency response and reconstruction; (c) environmental protection and conservation; and (d) water supply and sanitation. The evaluation looks across the UNDP climate change adaptation offer but its scope excluded UNDP support for climate change mitigation. The exclusion of mitigation support, despite its critical importance, recognizes that there are fundamental differences in the drivers for mitigation and adaptation and strategies to address them.
3. UNDP welcomes the evaluation's findings and recommendations and provides clarification and evidence with regard to certain conclusions. The lessons from the evaluation will inform the coordinated UNDP offer for climate change adaptation.

**II. Climate change and adaptation – global context**

4. Adaptation is now increasingly emphasized as a vital element of a long-term global response to address the risks and impacts of climate change occurring now and expected to worsen in the future. Globally, the impacts of climate change are increasingly evident with impacts that predominantly affect the most vulnerable and poorer segments of populations. Recognizing this, and the need for collective action, the conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement are focused on scaling up adaptation action that is “country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent..., considering vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems”.



5. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated lives, livelihoods and economies, further exacerbating climate vulnerabilities across the globe. By 2030, climate change alone is projected to drive an additional 100 million people into poverty, derailing efforts to reach the targets outlined in the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

6. Fuelled by this urgency, there is increased political momentum and commitment for adaptation and resilience, and for adaptation to play a key and equal role to mitigation, in a green and resilient recovery. Following the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit, a call for action was launched by the newly formed Adaptation and Resilience Coalition, under the leadership of the Governments of Egypt and the United Kingdom, which is now supported by over 118 countries and 86 organizations and institutions. The Global Commission for Adaptation established in 2018 has declared 2020 a year of action, with concrete partnerships to deliver actions on the ground across key sectors and thematic areas. Progress and results from these actions will be showcased at the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021, hosted by the Government of the Netherlands. The United Kingdom presidency of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the United Nations Secretary-General placed adaptation and resilience high on the political engagement agenda at the Climate Ambition Summit held on 12 December 2020 to commemorate the five-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

7. Countries are accelerating their efforts on adaptation planning and implementation at national, subnational and local levels and gearing up to enhance and implement their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that form a key mechanism to embody their adaptation needs and priorities. Ahead of 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties, as of November 2020, 97 per cent of countries supported under the UNDP Climate Promise<sup>1</sup> (115 countries) plan to strengthen their adaptation goals and measures in their revised NDCs, to be submitted in 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> The Climate Promise, launched by UNDP and supported by over 35 partners, is the largest, most ambitious offer to help governments enhance their climate pledges. As of November 2020, UNDP is supporting 115 countries, including 37 LDCs; 28 SIDS; 42 fragile states and 14 higher emitters.

### III. UNDP support for climate change adaptation

8. **UNDP continues to respond to country needs to mainstream adaptation into development strategies and plans, aligned with the broader Sustainable Development Goals agenda.** In alignment with the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, UNDP advances country capacities through a whole-of-society approach to climate change adaptation and supports climate change adaptation in the context of resilient livelihoods, agriculture and food security, water resources, coastal zone management, ecosystems protection, resilient infrastructure, and climate information/early warnings and aims to advance integrated, cross-sectoral solutions across these priority themes.

9. **UNDP has a strong track record in supporting countries and their vulnerable populations to increase their resilience and adaptive capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities to evolving climate change risks and impacts.** The UNDP adaptation portfolio (primarily funded through vertical funds) supports over 100 countries, mainly least developed countries (LDCs), small-island developing states (SIDS) and countries in Africa, to integrate current and future climate risks and uncertainties into national and subnational development efforts, increase domestic public and private sector resources in climate resilient practices and investments, and codify, generate and disseminate knowledge. The UNDP portfolio (with over 1.2 billion in projects) has directly increased livelihood resilience for more than 82 million people, brought over 873,000 hectares of agricultural land under resilient practices, enhanced food security for over 6.3 million people, improved access to drinking water for 2.3 million people, protected over 16,000 kilometres of coastline and improved access to early warnings for over 13 million people.

10. **UNDP supports the integration of climate risk into national planning and budgeting processes and strategies through national adaptation plans and enhanced adaptation targets and priorities through countries' NDCs.** This enables countries to align their adaptation planning processes with their national development plans and other existing planning efforts. Since 2008, UNDP has supported 75 countries in integrating adaptation into development policy, planning and investments.

11. **Given the widening gap between available public finance resources and the costs of adaptation, UNDP is increasingly focusing on catalytic private sector engagement and financing to invest in adaptation actions.** Partnerships with other United Nations organizations, multilateral development banks, capital providers, and value-chain actors are critical to scale adaptation action. The interconnectedness of climate change adaptation and development challenges strategically positions UNDP to play an integrator role and strengthens country systems and capacities to deliver cross-sectoral, integrated approaches to scale-up adaptation.

12. **UNDP aims to identify opportunities for investments that will help countries build forward better for a resilient recovery.** To cope with increasing climate risks, adaptation investments will be advanced in: early warnings, early action, and access to climate information; sustainable, resilient food/agricultural/water systems; nature-based solutions to protect ecosystems for long-term resilience; urban resilience (urban planning, resilient infrastructure, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)/waste management, clean air, energy access) with a focus on the urban poor and the resilience of public systems and infrastructure. Working together with partners, UNDP adaptation efforts will aim to build lasting resilience for at-risk communities and economies, contributing to health, food and water security, livelihoods, and jobs.

### IV. Findings and conclusions of the evaluation

13. **UNDP welcomes the evaluation's findings as useful to inform its work on climate change adaptation in line with its Strategic Plan, 2018-2021.** UNDP notes that its domain expertise across adaptation is extremely strong and it has a track record of success not only in programming (combined resources, including co-financing, of about \$4 billion mobilized, supporting over 90 countries) but in providing thought leadership and advancing dialogue and action on adaptation on the global stage.

14. **In this regard, UNDP also highlights ongoing efforts to:**

(a) articulate and communicate adaptation thematic offers in: [food and agricultural systems](#), coasts and water, [urban resilience](#), [nature-based solutions](#), [climate information and early warning systems](#), and national adaptation planning;

(b) strengthen partnerships across the United Nations system and multilateral development banks in advancing adaptation action, as exemplified in: (i) joint programming with the African Development Bank (ADB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Bank and others; and (ii) expanding the scope of support to countries to access financing for adaptation beyond vertical funds to include bilateral resources (such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the European Commission, the German Federal Ministry for the Environment);

(c) design and develop integrated, high-impact, at-scale adaptation projects and programmes and leverage the strength of the UNDP Global Policy Network to promote transformative shifts across policy, capacities and markets for long-term, sustained results;

(d) deploy innovative financial and risk instruments to leverage private sector investment and ensure sustainability of interventions; and

(e) invest in systemic evidence-base for learning through strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks at the project level, including impact evaluations and mining and communication of results and lessons at the portfolio level.

**15. Significant results and impacts have been achieved between 2008 and November 2020 through the UNDP adaptation portfolio.** Examples of key results and impacts include: 6.3 million smallholder farmers provided with more resilient agricultural practices; 2.3 million people gained increased access to drinking water; \$1 billion worth of infrastructure assets protected; 2 million hectares of land area protected; 45,800 hectares of marine area protected; and 873,771 hectares of agricultural land protected.

**16. UNDP is pleased to note the evaluation's positive findings in relation to its extensive support and valued contribution to supporting vulnerable countries in building their resilience and adapting to climate change.** UNDP management notes key conclusions: (a) effectiveness of using UNDP country presence to capture a significant share of increasing adaptation commitments channelled through vertical funds; (b) development of a comprehensive UNDP climate change adaptation service offer that constitutes a solid platform for providing extensive support across geographic regions and sectors for an accelerated, scaled-up response to climate risk; (c) utilization of UNDP global presence to advance normative work and climate action, in cooperation with United Nations actors; (d) establishment of a considerable body of work and associated expertise in sectors critical for adaptation, including policy mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction, agriculture and food security, environmental protection and ecosystem-based adaptation, and water and coastal resilience; (e) progress in integrating vertical funds within the UNDP business model; (f) increased rigor in incorporating climate science in the design of adaptation projects resourced by vertical funds; and (g) extensive and valued climate adaptation support to SIDS.

**17. In relation to the recommendations provided by the evaluation:**

**(a) UNDP acknowledges recommendation 1, which indicates that UNDP needs to accelerate its attention to mainstreaming consideration of climate risks across its entire development portfolio.** Within the adaptation offer, UNDP notes it has applied rigorous analysis of climate risks and its interventions are designed based on extensive project-specific feasibility studies backed by robust scientific and field data, climate modelling, technical analysis, and detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessments. UNDP notes that availability of climate data and modelling is still nascent in many countries, and UNDP strives to support countries with at least 'no-regret' options and at best 'risk-informed' designs, along with capacity for adaptive management, as climate risks evolve. For application across the entire development portfolio, UNDP is pleased to advise that climate assessment and climate-risk screening are essential parts of its updated social and environmental standards (SES) and screening procedure (SESP), effective 1 January 2021.

(b) **UNDP takes note of recommendation 2, which identifies that UNDP should establish a system for tracking all investments that have significant climate change objectives, ensuring these are provided with appropriate technical support, oversight and visibility as part of the UNDP adaptation portfolio and as a basis for strengthening internal collaboration.** In 2020, UNDP conducted a mapping of ongoing projects in the adaptation portfolio and incorporated this data in the internal monitoring tool for portfolio analytics, lessons learning and knowledge management. UNDP will further introduce a robust tracking system that captures projects with significant climate change objectives – in both the mitigation and adaptation portfolios. This will ensure that project design and implementation for projects with significant climate change objectives are supported and monitored in a coordinated manner across the organization. These efforts are well aligned with UNDP efforts to promote measurability of climate finance and broader SDG-enabled investments.

(c) **UNDP takes note recommendation 3, that UNDP should take steps to reduce fragmentation across its climate change adaptation programming to more effectively achieve intended benefits at scale.** UNDP wishes to clarify that its offer on adaptation aims to advance adaptation strategies and solutions across countries and communities, irrespective of the funding sources. UNDP also underscores that adaptation finance, under the UNFCCC mechanism, and that channelled through bilateral donors, is primarily short-term and project-bound. Nonetheless, in recent years, the UNDP adaptation offer has evolved to support transformative, high-impact, at-scale programming by countries and communities. UNDP is increasingly building on pilot projects that laid out foundational capacities and generated an evidence base for further replication and upscale (for example, through the Green Climate Fund and leveraged finance). UNDP is exploring regional and programmatic approaches to adaptation, in collaboration with a variety of partners, focused on integrated approaches. For example, UNDP, in collaboration with the Global Water Partnership, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and other United Nations organizations (FAO, WFP), is designing a regional programme in southern Africa, focused on countries within the Southern African Development Community, that aims to enhance and increase the use of sustainable water resources management and nature-based approaches to reverse landscape degradation and improve water efficiency and agricultural production. UNDP is also designing a global programme on enhancing hydromet services for resilient development and adaptation action in climate vulnerable countries in partnership with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Copernicus, the United Kingdom Meteorological Office, the Red Cross, the Africa Hydromet Program, academic institutions and private sector hydromet service providers.

(d) **UNDP takes note of recommendation 4, which indicates that UNDP should improve the technical underpinnings of its adaptation service offer in each sector (specifically the agriculture and food security sector), with special attention to strengthening capacities in disaster risk reduction (DRR).** UNDP acknowledges the complementarities and potential for synergies across the climate change adaptation (CCA) and DRR domains. UNDP is strengthening collaboration and coordination across its DRR and CCA work in support of the shared objective of integrated risk management and vulnerability reduction for greater impact. UNDP DRR work has been advancing an integrated approach with CCA for several years, for example, by promoting the application of risk information across time scales in risk assessment and by strengthening the coherence of DRR/CCA policy instruments and fostering institutional coordination arrangements. For example, UNDP has supported risk reduction interventions in the context of long-term policy and planning, with more than 50 DRR plans developed at national and subnational levels since 2008. UNDP is developing a risk-informed development offer that includes a DRR/CCA mainstreaming strategy tool to facilitate better coordination and coherence in implementing DRR/CCA considerations in development planning, programming and budgeting. Examples of this work include the Programme on Climate Information for Resilient Development in Africa and the GCF project in Malawi, Scaling-up Early Warning Systems and Use of Climate Information. UNDP will further advance this integrated approach by strengthening observation infrastructure, setting up early warning systems, implementing loss and damage accounting, building technical knowledge and capacities for reiterative climate risk assessments, addressing slow-onset climate-induced disasters, and building capacities for preparedness and early action.

Regarding the need to improve the technical underpinnings of adaptation in each sector, UNDP clarifies that it has strong partnerships with United Nations organizations, including FAO, UNEP, UNICEF, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the International Labour Organization, WMO, the

World Health Organization, WFP and others, which have enabled UNDP to advance collaborative adaptation actions across all key domains. For example, within the agriculture and food security domain, UNDP has developed the food and agriculture commodities strategy (FACS), with the direct engagement of multiple teams across the Global Policy Network and United Nations organizations. UNDP further notes that support to adaptation within the agriculture/food systems domain follows globally advocated, country-driven approaches focused on adaptive capacities, climate risk management, resilient technologies/practices, access to finance/markets, and agriculture/water planning incorporating climate risks. UNDP notes that its adaptation support in the agriculture and food security domain since 2008 amounts to \$717 million in grants and \$1.7 billion leveraged in co-financing for projects in 43 countries, including 27 LDCs and seven SIDS. Key impacts and results include: 6.3 million smallholder farmers across more than 1,100 communities have benefitted from more resilient agriculture, and 873,771 hectares of agricultural land are under improved management.

**(e) UNDP welcomes recommendation 5, which identifies that UNDP should expand adaptation support in SIDS.** UNDP adaptation support to SIDS amounts to \$329 million in grant funding, with an additional \$141 million under development in 18 SIDS. Key impacts and results include: 7,800 kilometres of coastline protected; 165,500 people benefiting from increased access to climate information; 124,344 people with increased access to drinking water; and 1.3 million people directly benefitting from more resilient livelihoods. Through its SIDS offer, UNDP has committed to expand its support to multipliers that accelerate progress and build on its comparative advantage in enhancing support to SIDS through a combination of integrated action over the next 10 years. These include climate action, developing blue economies, and promoting digital transformation. Under the climate action pillar, UNDP supports governments in SIDS to enhance climate adaptation by incorporating risk reduction and planning for short, medium and long-term risks, in combination with advancing a whole-of-island and ridge-to-reef approach to development planning and policymaking. As part of the digital transformation pillar of the integrated SIDS offer, UNDP provides technical support for the employment of new technologies and to expand access to data to strengthen disaster risk reduction systems. For example, in Comoros, one of only two African LDC-SIDS, a UNDP-GCF project is implementing measures to help the country adapt to increasing extreme climate risks (including droughts, flooding, and water quality due to landslides/erosion) that impact the country's drinking and irrigation water supply, benefitting approximately 450,000 people.

**(f) UNDP agrees with recommendation 6, which indicates that UNDP should establish clear priorities for private sector engagement on climate change adaptation.** UNDP has been steadily increasing private sector engagement in adaptation and framing adaptation efforts to support a range of private sector actors, including micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), value-chain actors/businesses, and crowding-in financial/capital providers, including in insurance and other risk-informed financing areas. UNDP is also developing a structured approach for engaging the private sector in climate change adaptation, informed by a new framework focused on de-risking private sector investments in the adaptation space. UNDP has accelerated its support to market and value-chain development, enterprise development for MSMEs, access to finance, and broader adaptation innovation through innovative toolkits (for example, the  [toolkit for value-chain analysis and market development, integrating climate resilience and gender responsiveness](#) ) and strategies. Furthermore, a flagship initiative on insurance and risk facility is being established as part of the Finance Sector Hub and underpinned by the tripartite agreement between the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Insurance Development Forum. The facility will provide a one-stop shop for UNDP country offices, programme countries, and partners for all issues related to insurance and risk finance.

**(g) UNDP takes note of recommendation 7, which indicates that UNDP should strengthen the gender equality dimensions of its policy and capacity-related support in adaptation-related programming.** In doing so, UNDP highlights the strong progress and robust results in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through its adaptation-related programming. As noted in the evaluation, UNDP focus on gender equality (in investments marked as having an adaptation objective) is in line with, if not better than, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average. Currently, 67 per cent of UNDP expenditures marked as having an adaptation objective have gender as either a significant or principal objective. Within the adaptation portfolio, 84 per cent of adaptation

projects directly mainstream gender and advance gender equality. In addition, the current portfolio of projects financed by the environmental vertical funds apply gender analysis and action plan requirements across the entire portfolio to ensure that gender considerations are included during project design and development stages. At global level, UNDP has worked to ensure gender considerations are integrated in key climate finance mechanisms, including in establishing GCF and developing its initial and subsequent gender policy and action plan. UNDP continues to serve in a leadership role in key global partnerships, including the GEF Gender Partnership and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) Generation Equality Forum action coalition on feminist action for climate justice. Project-level results have contributed to gender equality, including supporting women's economic opportunities in climate-resilient livelihoods, such as through targeting women-led SMEs and women's collective groups, and support for women farmers through climate-smart agriculture; boosting women's decision-making and leadership in climate-resilient governance, particularly at local level; and supporting gender responsive policies. Examples of this work include: [From Word to Action: Projects with Innovative Solutions to Promote Nature Conservation, Climate Action and Gender Equality](#) (Costa Rica); [Enhancing adaptive capacities of coastal communities, especially women, to cope with climate change induced salinity](#) (Bangladesh); [DIPECHO II](#) (Latin America and the Caribbean), and [EnGenDER](#).

(h) **UNDP takes note of recommendation 8, which identifies that, in order to better coordinate across an increasingly complex portfolio of environment projects, including for climate change, UNDP should take steps to upgrade its information management system and avoid running separate/parallel information systems for specific programme portfolios.** UNDP notes that the project information management system (PIMS+) is specifically designed to monitor oversight services required by vertical funds. While PIMS+ is already linked to Atlas, UNDP will take further steps to integrate PIMS+ into its new cloud-based enterprise resource planning system for effective and efficient monitoring and reporting at the project and portfolio levels while keeping its core functionalities.

## V. Future UNDP support for climate change adaptation

**18. The UNDP adaptation strategy is centred on designing and developing the next generation of adaptation proposals** that: (a) provide innovative, integrated solutions to adaptation that can deliver long-lasting, transformative results; (b) utilize existing and new partnerships with the private sector, national development banks, financial institutions, multinational development banks and other United Nations entities; and (c) explore options for programmatic approaches.

**19. The adaptation pipeline for the next few years will drive a diverse geographic and thematic focus** in the following areas: climate information and early warning systems, water resource and coastal management, flood management, improved practices for climate resilient agriculture, and mainstreaming adaptation into national frameworks and strategies. UNDP adaptation work will also focus on integrated solutions and nexus areas to advance development action through climate action. It will feature a coherent, integrated offer across DRR and adaptation; cross-cutting solutions across mitigation and adaptation; system-level, holistic approaches to sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems; and integrated water resource management.

**20. UNDP is expanding its focus and areas of support towards new emerging themes in adaptation around health, urban resilience, insurance and climate security.** Under urban resilience, UNDP is advancing an integrated approach to reducing climate risk in cities by enhancing low-carbon, climate resilient development, building the enabling environment for climate-risk informed urban planning and policy, driving investment into adaptation in cities, and accelerating and scaling urban resilience action in ways that leave no one behind. UNDP is working with coastal cities in Africa to help some of the world's fastest-growing urban areas address the risks of sea-level rise, flooding and persistent drought by building climate-resilient infrastructure, livelihoods and local economies. Recently, UNDP adaptation support has expanded in conflict-affected and fragile states, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia and Sudan, with targeted efforts that address climate security issues. UNDP also



supports climate-sensitive approaches in the areas of food and water security and ecosystems, as these are often generators of intra and intercommunity tensions..

**21. Transformative approaches must include support to enabling environments (policies, regulations, markets), governance, addressing structural inequities, and ensuring gender-responsiveness and inclusion.** Given that adaptation finance is earmarked to strictly address climate risks and impacts, leveraging public and private finance is critical to addressing structural barriers that exacerbate vulnerabilities to climate change. UNDP thematic, financial and policy specialists have come together to design new, innovative, gender-responsive, inclusive, paradigm-shifting adaptation solutions tailored to country needs. These NextGen proposals include elements of blended finance, access to markets and finance, private and public partnerships, and financial sustainability and viability. These efforts can leverage UNDP expertise and assistance to advance integrated national financing frameworks.

**22. UNDP is expanding its engagement with a wide range of partners that are pursuing adaptation initiatives or have keen interests in engagement.** Strategic agreements and targeted discussions with multilateral development banks, national development banks, private sector entities, United Nations organizations and academia are underway to advance partnerships in GCF programming. These partnerships will be embedded as critical components of adaptation proposals, both to fill gaps in the concessional and commercial layers of a climate adaptation project's capital structure and to provide the required technical support and market linkages for sustainable project impact. Specifically, joint initiatives with multilateral development banks will seek to maximize the comparative advantage of multilateral institutions to explore blended finance opportunities and utilization of complementary financial instruments. Engaging with national development banks, UNDP will focus on technical assistance and capacity building to unlock or complement new and existing sources of capital directed towards project beneficiaries to support the viability of adaptation solutions that include business models, technologies and financing arrangements involving the private sector. UNDP partnerships with private sector entities, including value chain actors, capital providers, investors, corporations and MSMEs, will involve initiatives (using policy and financial instruments) to de-risk participation and investment in climate risk management interventions.

**23. UNDP is actively partnering with local private sector and non-governmental (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to create a system to encourage and foster locally led adaptation,** finding innovative solutions to enhance community resilience with cultural acceptance and local support. Partnerships and strategic agreements with United Nations entities, including FAO, UNICEF, UNEP and others, are in place and joint programming opportunities are being actively discussed. UNDP is working closely with diverse partners (including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Rockefeller Foundation, UN-Habitat, WMO, and other United Nations entities) on global initiatives, including risk-informed early action partnerships and the Global Commission on Adaptation track.

**24. UNDP is moving to design multi-country programmes for countries with similar climate risks and adaptation needs.** Potential areas fall primarily in climate information and early warning systems, climate resilient agriculture/water/food security, and urban resilience. This programmatic approach will allow UNDP to help countries address systematic barriers to adaptive action, beyond the national context, to increase impact. Examples include the climate resilience food and agriculture systems programme (that builds on the UNDP FACS strategy), the urban resilience programme, and the resilience in water-agriculture-food production in southern Africa programme.

**25. UNDP will continue to build on its contribution to advancing global dialogue and commitments to adaptation, acting as convener and thought leader across key global initiatives and platforms.** As the institutional lead for the adaptation and resilience track of the Climate Action Summit in 2019, UNDP contributed to advancing commitment and key initiatives, including the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, and the Coalition for Climate Resilient Infrastructure (InsuResilience). With its Administrator one of the commissioners, UNDP has been a strong partner in the Global Commission on Adaptation, advancing the work of key tracks such as locally led action and disaster prevention. UNDP will continue to work closely with the Resilience and Adaptation Coalition and Partners formed at the Climate Action Summit 2019, including with Global Commission on Adaption. UNDP will support the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021 by



substantially contributing to the framing concept and supporting identification of key champions/frontrunners. UNDP is also a key partner in the 2021 Food Systems Summit and aims to advance action on food and water security issues through platforms such as the Water Conference planned in 2023.

26. UNDP adaptation efforts respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, anchored in the COVID-19 response offer – Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030 – and its technical lead role across the United Nations system supporting countries in developing socioeconomic impact assessments and socioeconomic response plans. The UNDP adaptation offer will contribute to resilient recovery by integrating health risks and impacts in adaptation strategies and policies, strengthening health-care systems, including through improved climate data and information, better climate-induced disease surveillance, integration of adaptation and social protection systems, investments into agriculture, food and water security, bolstering and diversifying livelihoods, and promoting jobs through ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions. UNDP is working to scale up existing regional and country initiatives and investments in adaptation as an important pillar of green, resilient recovery and building back better – especially for SIDS, LDCs and the Africa region.

## Annex. Key evaluation recommendations and UNDP management response

### Recommendation 1. UNDP needs to accelerate its attention to mainstreaming consideration of climate risks across its entire development portfolio.

This will require more rigorous application of the UNDP social and environmental safeguards policy, in project formulation and monitoring, and tailored guidance and advice on how to assess and mitigate the risks of climate change and variability in different sectors, with a focus on climate-exposed sectors. Periodic spot-checks of the application of climate risk screening policies would then be in order. This will also require increased clarity in UNDP programmes, based on the scientific evidence, about the magnitude of the medium and long-term risks presented by climate change, and actions required to address them. While outcomes of climate change mitigation efforts will determine the profile of these risks and their consequences, scaled up adaption efforts are required now, even under the most optimistic mitigation scenarios.

#### Management response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation acknowledging that it is important to apply climate risk-screening to assess climate exposure and design strategies to mitigate risks. UNDP is already undertaking significant efforts to screen such risks. In particular, within the adaptation offer, rigorous analysis of climate risks and interventions has been applied, informed by scientific data, analysis, and detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessments. UNDP notes that availability of climate data and modelling is still nascent in many countries and UNDP strives to support countries with at least ‘no-regret’ options and at best ‘risk-informed’ designs, along with capacity for adaptive management as climate risks evolve.

Climate assessment and climate-risk screening are essential parts of the updated social and environmental standards (SES) and screening procedures (SESP), effective 1 January 2021. Both aim at early detection of climate-related risks and impacts and finding appropriate mitigation measures if avoidance is not possible. The scope of standard 2 (climate change and disaster risk) has been broadened to allow for better integration of disaster risks and to encompass provisions to respond to climate-induced impacts. UNDP is building a cadre of experts in the regional hubs to advise on SES standard 2 and on providing training and capacity building on climate-related topics to UNDP staff and implementing partners.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1 Include additional guidance on climate assessment and climate-risk screening in the updated SES toolkit.	Q4 2020	BPPS		Completed.
1.2 Build a cadre of experts on standard 2 (climate change and disaster risk) in the regional hubs to advise country offices during project preparation and implementation.	Q1 2021	BPPS		

### Recommendation 2. UNDP should establish a system for tracking all investments that have significant climate change objectives, ensuring these are provided with appropriate technical support, oversight and visibility as part of the UNDP adaptation portfolio and as a basis for strengthening internal collaboration.

The objective should be to ensure that all projects that have significant adaptation objectives are supported to integrate the best available methods for incorporating climate science into project design and implementation and are recognized as part of a portfolio that cuts across a significant proportion of UNDP business. This would also support better coordination between vertical fund programming and other funding streams, as well as continuing efforts to improve coordination among climate and disaster risk reduction personnel across the UNDP policy and crisis bureaux.

<b>Management response:</b>				
<p>UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that it has invested in strengthening capacity to analyse its investments to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, through its results-linking platform and introduction of a range of project markers. UNDP has completed a mapping of ongoing projects in the adaptation portfolio, which was incorporated in the portfolio analysis dashboard, an internal monitoring tool for organizational lessons learning and knowledge management. UNDP will utilize its project marker or other robust tracking systems to capture projects with significant climate change objectives. This will ensure that project design and implementation can be effectively supported and monitored in a coordinated manner across the organization. It will also enable UNDP to analyse the degree to which climate change objectives cut across UNDP programmes and projects.</p>				
2.1 Introduce a mechanism to track ongoing and pipeline projects with significant climate change objectives to enable the provision of coordinated technical support and oversight across the organization	Q2 2022	BPPS, BMS		
<p><b>Recommendation 3. UNDP should take steps to reduce fragmentation across its climate change adaptation programming to more effectively achieve intended benefits at scale.</b></p> <p>To address fragmentation and more effectively promote realization of intended benefits at scale, UNDP should look for opportunities to establish larger programmes that blend development and adaptation finance, working in concert with multiple partners. Regardless of the scale of finance it brings to bear, UNDP should increase attention to scalability in project selection and design and be more explicit in articulating how benefits will be realized beyond pilot project boundaries. UNDP should also seek to build on the success of its GEF international waters model, establishing more multi-phase projects working on the same geographic areas and sites, especially in cases where benefits can only be expected to become evident over longer time frames.</p>				
<b>Management response:</b>				
<p>UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that this shift is already in progress. The UNDP adaptation portfolio is consolidated under its specific <a href="#">CCA offer</a>. The offer reflects the globally accepted definition and application of adaptation strategies and solutions across the key domains, including agriculture/food, water resource management, coastal resilience, ecosystem-based adaptation, and climate information/early warning. Emergent domains include urban resilience, resilient infrastructure, health, and climate security. Moreover, UNDP domain expertise across adaptation is strong and has not only a track record of success in programming (combined resources, including co-financing, of about \$4 billion mobilized, supporting over 90 countries) but also a reputation as thought leader on the global stage.</p> <p>Adaptation finance, under the UNFCCC mechanism, as well as that channelled through bilateral donors, is primarily project-bound. Over the last few years, with adaptation finance and related mandates maturing towards scale, the UNDP adaptation offer has evolved to support transformative, high-impact, at-scale programming by countries and communities. Since 2015, there has been a deepening of the adaptation portfolio's scope, scale up/replication, paradigm shift and transformation. UNDP is increasingly building on pilot projects that laid out foundational capacities and generated an evidence base for further replication and upscale (through GCF and leveraged finance).</p> <p>UNDP has partnerships across the United Nations system and with multilateral development banks and is working together with them to advance adaptation action, exemplified by joint programming with ADB, EIB, FAO, UNEP, UNICEF, WFP, and the World Bank, among others. Furthermore, UNDP is exploring regional and programmatic approaches to adaptation, in collaboration with a variety of partners, with strong emphasis on integrated approaches to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals through adaptation action.</p>				
3.1 Develop regional and programmatic approaches for integrated solutions on adaptation	Q4 2022	BPPS		

3.2 Consolidate and communicate adaptation offers in key domains (agriculture, food, water, ecosystems)	Q4 2021	BPPS		
<p><b>Recommendation 4. UNDP should improve the technical underpinnings of its adaptation service offer in each sector, with special attention given to strengthening capacities in disaster risk reduction.</b></p> <p>Given the importance of DRR for adaptation efforts, steps should be taken to strengthen UNDP capabilities in this area, capitalizing on the growing allocation of official development assistance to DRR associated with climate change adaptation.</p> <p>The need for concerted efforts to address climate change and associated extreme weather risk has been well integrated into UNDP programming on water governance and UNDP global efforts to protect biodiversity, prevent deforestation, and reinforce climate adaptation objectives. With respect to agriculture and food security, a clearly articulated set of UNDP programme objectives and guidelines would help bring greater strategic coherence to the organization and its regional and country offices, given its comparative advantages. Opportunities include increasing coordination with United Nations specialized agencies and non-United Nations agricultural organizations to help governments design adaptation solutions and facilitating multistakeholder collaborations to generate more transformative innovations for adaptation.</p> <p>UNDP should seek to increase the rigour of its evaluation techniques across its adaptation portfolio, capitalizing on lessons in applying impact evaluation techniques in its portfolio of recently established UNDP GCF projects. UNDP should seek to systematize engagements with academic institutions at the global and regional levels to strengthen scientific underpinnings when considering climate risk in the design, implementation and evaluation of UNDP projects and when providing iterative feedback on how to strengthen them.</p>				
<p><b>Management response:</b></p> <p>UNDP partially accepts the recommendation and recognizes the complementarities and potential for synergies across the CCA and DRR domains. A coherent, joint effort is being advanced to ensure UNDP DRR and CCA work complement each other in support of a shared objective of integrated risk management and vulnerability reduction for greater impact. These efforts will build on existing joint efforts related to the application of risk information across time-scales in risk assessments, loss and damage accounting, early action and early warning, strengthening the coherence of DRR/CCA policy instruments, and fostering institutional coordination arrangements. Emerging work on its risk-informed development offer, which includes the DRR/CCA mainstreaming strategy tool, will facilitate better coordination and cohesiveness in implementing DRR/CCA considerations in development planning, programming and budgeting. UNDP will also develop a resilient recovery offer as part of its DRR portfolio that will integrate considerations around climate mitigation and adaptation within country offices' support to affected governments' efforts to build back better, smarter and greener.</p> <p>In relation to the recommendation that UNDP develop clearly articulated programme objectives and guidelines for agriculture and food security, UNDP considers that its climate change adaptation programmes in agriculture and food security follow globally advocated, country-driven approaches focused on adaptive capacities, climate risk management, resilient technologies/practices, access to finance/markets, and planning incorporating climate risks. The UNDP approach to agriculture/food security explicitly targets the most vulnerable smallholder producers, subsistent farmers, herders and fishers. It takes a food system, farm-to-fork approach to help achieve food and nutrition security in the face of climate change and reduce risks of losses across all stages of complex food systems. UNDP supports cross-sectoral work (beyond the ministries of agriculture and sectoral actors) and a whole-of-government approach both horizontally and vertically (linking national actors and national and local actors). UNDP has strong partnerships with FAO, IFAD, UNEP, WFP and others to advance collaborative adaptation action across this domain.</p> <p>UNDP will continue to expand its impact evaluation efforts initiated under the GCF portfolio, including in collaboration with academic institutions, highlighting recent efforts in collaboration with Columbia University, Tufts University, the University of Cantabria and others.</p>				

4.1 Articulate a resilient recovery offer under DRR that integrates green and adaptive considerations, linked to UNDP climate change adaptation offer.	Q2 2021	CB (Crisis Bureau)/BPPS		Initiated November 2020
4.2 Design joint programming and normative guidance for DRR/CCA projects	Q2 2022	BPPS/CB (Crisis Bureau)		
4.3 Design programmatic investments for agriculture/food security in collaboration with other partners, including United Nations system organizations	Q2 2022	BPPS		
<p><b>Recommendation 5. UNDP should expand its adaptation support in small island developing states.</b></p> <p>Recognizing the specific vulnerabilities and high costs of operating in SIDS, UNDP should prioritize its climate change adaptation support to these countries. This should include giving priority to SIDS in the allocation of existing flexible funding mechanisms; amending resource allocation policy to enable increased core resource allocation for SIDS; and revising the policy governing funding of differentiated physical presence to reduce expectations about SIDS local office contributions. Such measures are important both in recognition of existing vulnerabilities and in anticipation of growing vulnerabilities, given the risks posed by global warming.</p> <p>Action taken on these fronts would be consistent with Executive Board decision 2020/15 on the evaluation of UNDP development cooperation in middle income countries (DP/2020/21) conducted by IEO and in line with the views of the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/75/79-E/2020/55) that the United Nations development system should explore new multidimensional ways of assessing country needs that go beyond country typology and national income and take into account vulnerability aspects.</p>				
<p><b>Management response:</b></p> <p>UNDP accepts the recommendation and recognizes the special challenges of SIDS alongside the real potential to turn the most pressing challenges into opportunities and SIDS' collective commitment towards transformational change and global action. Through its SIDS offer, UNDP has committed to expand its support to multipliers that accelerate progress and build on its comparative advantage in enhancing support to SIDS through a combination of integrated action over the next 10 years. These include climate action, developing blue economies, and promoting digital transformation. This climate action pillar particularly enhances climate change adaptation and resilience support to SIDS governments by incorporating risk reduction and planning for short, medium and long-term risks in combination with the advancement of a whole-of-island and ridge-to-reef approaches to development planning and policy-making.</p> <p>In relation to the recommendation that UNDP should consider increasing regular resource allocations and revising its policy governing funding of differentiated physical presence (to reduce expectations about SIDS local office contributions), UNDP notes that, in line with the management response to the evaluation of UNDP development cooperation in middle income countries (DP/2020/22), these are decisions for the Executive Board to take; UNDP will factor these elements into its engagement with the Executive Board on the integrated resources plan and integrated budget, 2022-2025, and its mid-term review.</p>				
5.1 Support design and implementation of at least five (5) adaptation projects focusing on SIDS by mobilizing public and private sector finance	Q4 2022	BPPS		
<p><b>Recommendation 6: UNDP should establish clear priorities for private sector engagement on climate change adaptation.</b></p> <p>Private sector engagement and scaling up private finance has a critical role to play in adaptation, and UNDP can benefit from a prioritized strategy for strengthening its engagement in the area. Deepening engagement with the private sector will require significant investment, strong prioritization, careful</p>				

choices, and clear metrics to assess impact.<sup>2</sup> Limitations in the availability of technical and financial resources implies the need to focus on a limited number of priorities, which can be addressed well, and provide the basis for progressive expansion.

**Management response:**

UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that it has been steadily increasing private sector engagement in adaptation and framing its adaptation efforts to support a range of private sector actors, including MSMEs, value-chain actors/businesses, and crowding-in financial/capital providers, including around insurance and other areas of risk informed financing. UNDP has also been developing a structured approach for engaging the private sector in climate change adaptation, informed by a new framework focused on de-risking private sector investments in the adaptation space..

UNDP has launched a flagship project (jointly with FAO) to develop a climate risk-informed, gender-sensitive value-chain development toolkit to support market and value-chain development in the agriculture and food sector. UNDP has also been advancing support to MSMEs, access to finance, and broader adaptation innovation through its portfolio support on water access and resource management, agriculture and food systems, ecosystem-based adaptation, among others, focusing on livelihoods and enterprise development. UNDP FACS has likewise prioritized greater engagement with the private sector in the agricultural sectors, including on adaptation.

UNDP aims to deliver risk finance solutions, including insurance to vulnerable countries and communities, and align and leverage the work of its insurance and risk facility (being set up as part of the UNDP Finance Sector Hub) with its adaptation-related work.

UNDP will continue to accelerate private sector engagement in its adaptation work and scale up innovative approaches, including through the deployment and use of recently updated policies such as on-granting, performance-based payment, and guarantee policies.

6.1 Refine the climate change adaptation strategy for private sector engagement, including deepening engagement in private sector financing for adaptation	Q2 2021	BPPS		
6.2 Scale up support for MSMEs/community-scale organizations to promote enterprise development	Q4 2021	BPPS		
6.3 Develop risk finance and insurance for both standalone and integrated initiatives as part of an expanded adaptation engagement with the private sector	Q4 2021	BPPS		

**Recommendation 7. UNDP should strengthen the gender equality dimensions of its policy and capacity-related support in adaptation-related programming.**

Attention to strengthening gender mainstreaming should focus on weaknesses in policy and capacity-related support in the environmental protection portfolio. Practical, well-researched objectives should be established in adaptation programming to improve gender equality results. Adopting context-sensitive gender approaches and strengthening the resilience of women to negative impacts of climate change on ecosystems are crucial to the success of environmental programming.

<sup>2</sup> See [impact assessment](#).

**Management response:**

UNDP accepts the recommendation and notes that it has made strong progress and built solid results in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through its adaptation-related programming and will continue to strengthen efforts. The current UNDP portfolio of projects financed by the environmental vertical funds applies gender analysis and action plan requirements across the entire portfolio to ensure that gender considerations are included during project design and development stages. UNDP has developed specific guidance and templates for ensuring a consistent approach to developing project-level gender analysis and action plans and ensures full compliance with these requirements, including use of specialized gender expertise to develop context-specific approaches to deliver gender equality results through its work.

UNDP will continue to enhance gender mainstreaming approaches for the current and emerging pipeline of adaptation projects and ensure that project-level gender analysis and action plans are fully compliant with requirements, including use of specialized gender expertise to develop context-specific approaches to deliver gender equality results through its work. UNDP will continue to: (a) build on the gender and adaptation work it has conducted; (b) increase the use of methodologies and tools developed; (c) increase gender capacities across adaptation interventions; and (d) document and report how adaptation projects promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

7.1 Continue to refine gender-responsive approaches to the UNDP adaptation policy and programming in the context of developing its next gender equality strategy.	Q4 2022	BPPS		
7.2 Increase visibility and promote the use of gender, climate change and adaptation methodologies and tools developed	Q4 2021	BPPS		

**Recommendation 8. To better coordinate across an increasingly complex portfolio of environment projects, including for climate change, UNDP should take steps to upgrade its information management system and avoid running separate/parallel information systems for specific programme portfolios.**

The development of a separate information system for the GEF portfolio highlights deficiencies in the mainstream UNDP project management system and suggests that the solution is not to dissolve PIMS but rather to raise the capabilities of the corporate information system. Two separate project management systems that serve essentially the same purposes is not an efficient use of UNDP resources. It also reinforces continuation of parallel business models, which potentially undermines the objective of better integrating vertical fund finance within UNDP operations.

Other potential efficiencies could be gained by increasing the efficiency of mechanisms for tracking and aggregating results across its portfolio. This will contribute to addressing a broader challenge with current UNDP systems, which is ensuring requirements are kept simple, in order to ensure there is space for more adaptive, flexible approaches to managing and accounting for results. Currently, reflecting vertical fund and internal requirements, there is a large number of indicators on which UNDP is obliged to collect data.<sup>3</sup> To the extent there is flexibility, UNDP should focus on prioritizing its core information requirements to minimize the reporting burden for staff on the ground, focusing on those indicators that best capture the value of its adaptation work.

<sup>3</sup> The UNDP integrated results and resources framework, 2018-2021, contains 13 indicators that are directly relevant to climate change adaptation results. The UNDP CCA team has developed a set of 18 indicators to standardize collection of aggregate results across the CCA portfolio, with some limited overlap with IRRF indicators. A myriad number of non-standard country level indicators is also used by country programmes as part of country-level results frameworks, a significant proportion of which have limited relevance or utility.



**Management response:**

UNDP partially accepts the recommendation. While Atlas is an ERP system for project implementation and financial and human resource management, PIMS+ is a project cycle management portal for vertical fund-financed projects, covering the project design phase (outside of Atlas) enabling users to aggregate portfolio data, store donor specific documents and data, and interact with external vertical fund portals responding to specific donor reporting requirements. Each system serves distinct purposes. As UNDP is migrating the existing Atlas platform to a new ERP cloud system, UNDP will take the opportunity to further align data points between the two systems and explore opportunities for further integration.

UNDP is in the process of developing its Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and, in designing the accompanying integrated results and resources framework (IRRF), with performance indicators at outcome and output levels, UNDP will carefully review existing indicators in the current IRRF, 2018-2021, the CCA portfolio, and those in country programme documents and projects, to identify a small set of indicators that best capture the objectives of the UNDP adaptation portfolio to minimize reporting burden for staff on the ground.

8.1 Improve integration PIMS+ data with the next generation ERP platform to improve consistency of the corporate data architecture, with dashboards that show key portfolio performance and results along different service lines	Q1 2022	BPPS/BMS		
8.2 Introduce a small number of indicators in the IRRF, 2022-2025, that best capture the objectives of UNDP climate change adaptation work.	Q3 2021	BPPS		