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Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Situation analysis.....	2
II. Past cooperation and lessons learned.....	3
III. Proposed programme.....	4
IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation	5
Annex Results and resources framework for Belize (2013-2017).....	7



I. Situation analysis

1. The Government of Belize continues to put the primary focus of its strategies on the fight against poverty. In addition to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Belize has identified several development priorities, namely, through key strategic documents such as Horizon 2030, including a focus on democratic governance through a transparent and accountable government machinery, capable of improving citizen security and access to justice; education for life and lifelong learning; building a resilient economy for healthy citizens, with care for the natural environment.

2. The economy of Belize is a small and essentially a private-enterprise economy, grounded primarily in tourism and petroleum. The long-term growth performance of Belize has been positive (according to the Government of Belize, in the period 2001-2008: 4.5 per cent on average; 2009-2011: 1.9 per cent). However, inequality remains high as the Gini coefficient increased from 40 per cent (2002) to 42 per cent (2009). Belize is not on track to achieve MDG 1 as the population living below the poverty line has increased to 41.3 per cent in 2009 (baseline: 33.5 per cent (2002) despite its positive trending gross domestic product (GDP); target: 16.8 per cent by 2015). A crucial factor associated with backslides against the poverty MDG is the country's high unemployment rate of 23.1 per cent (women recorded twice the unemployment rate of men (in the age group 15-24 unemployment was 28.4 per cent in 2010). The influence on food security is also worrisome as national figures indicate that the proportion of the population with less than minimum dietary consumption also continues to increase (2009 figures suggest almost 16 per cent of the population). High levels of poverty and weak institutional capacity within the criminal justice system are also thought to be at the core of the country's deteriorating citizen security. In 2010 an alarming 42 murders per 100,000 inhabitants was recorded, placing the Belize among the 14 most violent countries in the world. Low school enrolment of young males and lack of opportunities, as well as exogenous causes, as Belize is a trans-shipment point and can become a full-fledged route for illicit drugs are all cited as contributing causes to the deterioration. Lags in advancing the MDGs are linked with a weak public sector, both in terms of a dearth of qualified human resources and inadequate business processes for planning, procurement, financial management, audit, monitoring and reporting, which make the civil service susceptible to political influence. Weak organizational capacities also have implications for the irregular reporting on human rights treaties and limited human rights-based policy planning.

3. The human development index (HDI) of Belize was 0.699 in 2011, which places the country at 93 out of 187 countries with comparable data. Belize is on track to achieve most of the health-related MDGs, owing mainly to a strong emphasis on evidence-based planning and response, but it is unlikely to achieve the education and gender MDGs. The latter is chiefly related with very low levels of political participation of women – 0 per cent of elected female (Members of Parliament (MPs) – and high female unemployment. As it relates to MDG 7, the country has invested in the creation of an enabling environment accommodating the sound management of its natural resource base. The present structure is characterized by the existence of legislative and regulatory frameworks as well as state/non-state partnership networks. The effective integration of sustainable development principles across all sectors of the economy of Belize, however, is thought to be lagging. Belize is ranked 8th among 167 countries as being most vulnerable to climate risk (World Bank). With such a large part of the national economy dependent on the health of the natural resource base (tourism, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, among others), vulnerabilities to natural disaster and climate change more broadly, have been moved to the centre of the national agenda. While climate change is predicted to increase the population's exposure to natural hazards, the presence of unsustainable management practices, such as unchecked land conversion, the expansion of agriculture onto inadequate terrains or marginalized soils and the concentration of people in highly exposed areas, increases both the risk and impact of climatic variation.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

4. Between 2007 and 2012, the UNDP has concentrated on the three UNDAF main thematic areas, i.e., poverty, HIV/AIDS and sustainable development.

5. **Poverty/Governance.** UNDP support in this area focused on the reform of local government through the adoption of the National Policy on Local Government and development of capacities to promote programme-based budgeting. Capacity development for decentralization was found to be necessary for the grounding/localization of the MDGs. Belize as a pilot of the Millennium Acceleration Framework (MAF) initiative unearthed governance bottlenecks in water sector management and recognized key “way forward” lessons, including the need for a stronger multisectoral approach to good governance, and the need to strengthen the institutional framework in which Village Councils operate having strong emphasis on transparency. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) review recommends continuity of programmed support for reporting on international human rights treaties, given that the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/12/4, para. 7) notes that “Belize has a strong commitment to the normative human rights framework, but faces challenges in its full operationalization”; as well as supporting the establishment of development coordination mechanisms, confirmed by the early successes of the coordination groups on security and gender.

6. **Poverty/Gender.** In addressing critical issues of gender inequalities, which influence national development, national partners with the support of UNDP successfully launched a 16- member platform for the analysis of gender and politics in Belize, resulting in the implementation of a renewed advocacy strategy responding to structural, social and cultural issues that prevent women from successfully engaging in electoral politics. UNDP also assisted with the preparation of the 5th and 6th combined reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and in carrying out a capacity assessment of the Women’s Department as a means of facilitating its transition to the Gender Affairs Services. Lessons emerging from these interventions include the need for greater coordination among United Nations agencies and stakeholders groups.

7. **Sustainable development/disaster risk reduction.** UNDP focused its support on improving the country’s institutional capacities for sound management of its natural resource base as well as for preparedness and resilience to climatic changes and natural disasters. Support to national response strategies in the areas of biodiversity, sustainable land management, rural development, integrated water resource management, sound chemical management and adaptation/mitigation strategies to climate change contributed to the country’s overarching goal of protection of its natural resource base. An UNDAF evaluation identified United Nations support (e.g., UNDP technical, financial and advocacy support) as highly relevant for Belize in its development of policies and plans associated with the internalization of the three United Nations Rio Conventions and the country’s sustainable development agenda. In-programme evaluations (e.g., from Global Environment Fund (GEF) projects) identified the need to invest in interventions targeting national responses to climate change, particularly the need to advocate for its integration across ministries. Evaluation also pointed out limitations within the national structure owing primarily to the absence of a formalized strategy for national sustainable development. The UNDAF evaluation noted that the joint United Nations support to the Government’s capacity to conduct full disaster assessments has been very effective. The same evaluation also includes the need to direct future support to vulnerability mitigation and risk reduction efforts at the local/community level; and the redirection of interventions towards vulnerability mitigation and risk reduction efforts.

8. **HIV/AIDS.** In supporting national efforts to reduce the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate (Government data show that the number of new HIV cases have not increased during the UNDAF period), advocacy and technical assistance provided jointly with other United Nations agencies contributed to strengthen the national response (namely, by improving its information system and formulation of health-related policies), improving the coverage and quality of care services. This included HIV-related prevention and care services, which UNDP has supported in the Belize and Stann Creek districts as the progress report of the

Global Fund Round 9 project indicates. The UNDAF evaluation also points out the need for vigilance and continuous support, particularly important in ensuring that Belize meets the health-related MDGs.

9. At an operational level, lessons learned (through reviews of internal processes) include improving coordination between the El Salvador and Belize offices (e.g., country action plan (CAP)) while within the office there is a need to improve cost recovery to increase reserves to an optimal level and increase capacity of staff in the use of new Policies and Procedures, International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), Atlas, Intranet and Teamworks. As to programmatic capacities, the office invested in drawing on its networks at the regional and subregional levels to increase and develop staff members' knowledge and awareness of policy discussions.

III. Proposed programme

10. The outline of the proposed UNDP Belize country programme 2013-2017 is directly derived from the Belize UNDAF 2013-2017, which in turn draws from the Government's priorities, as captured in strategic documents such as Horizon 2030. The implementation strategy remains based on downstream interventions and upstream policy advice and advocacy, taking fully into consideration the UNDP MDGs Breakthrough Strategy, and will focus in the four areas described below.

11. Advancing human rights with equity. In addition to efforts to mainstream the human rights-based approach and gender considerations within ongoing programmatic works (design, implementation, evaluation), UNDP will support reporting on human rights treaties, with a special focus on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The programme intends to create enhanced levels of awareness and application of human rights standards in policymaking and to establish solid foundations for improving the use of human rights information in the articulation of national development strategies. Through ongoing collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and other United Nations agencies, the programme will seek to strengthen the institutional and technical capacity of the national entities involved in human rights education and monitoring. In that regard, and following the capacity assessment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP will support the Ministry in its role of monitoring reports and implementation of recommendations, building inter-ministerial collaboration and use of human rights-related data in policymaking.

12. Promoting economic and social well-being, citizen security and justice. Prioritizing interventions that contribute the most to off-track or slow progress MDGs, the UNDP approach to addressing social and economic well-being includes the promotion of agriculture and associated value chain-related enterprises as vehicles for poverty alleviation and the attainment of national food security goals. The execution of such a programme requires strategic partnering with the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Interventions aimed at planning for and building national capacities within social and productive sectors to respond to predicted impacts of climate change are integral to the attainment of the desired impact of social and economic resilience. UNDP will work with national and international development partners in the promotion of small and medium enterprises for employment creation, particularly among marginalized female and youth populations. Youth empowerment programmes will focus on the enhancement of youth's work skills and on job creation, while strengthening capacities for the implementation of the rule of law and promoting mechanisms to facilitate access to justice. The proposed programme will also support the strengthening of capacity of the country coordinating mechanism of the Global Fund and the National AIDS Commission, including through the United Nations theme group on HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, in partnership with PAHO and other United Nations agencies, UNDP seeks to expand its support to the Government's health initiatives beyond HIV, to encompass most-at-risk populations,

tuberculosis and discrimination in access to health services, as well as strengthening the health system.

13. Environmental and natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and climate change mainstreamed into public policies and development processes. UNDP will focus on strengthening national capacities for effective land and water resources management and on the creation of poverty and environmental linkages within national medium- and long-term planning and policymaking processes. A specific objective of the proposed programme of work is to align the management of the country's natural resource base to the economic development needs of the country. UNDP has as a central supporting initiative the formulation of an overarching/comprehensive sustainable development strategy that investigates the possibility of the country's transition towards a green/low carbon economy. It is expected that the recent elaboration of the National Energy Policy will create additional opportunities for support actions targeting specifically energy sustainability and national energy security. Proposed intervention within this programmatic theme includes efforts supporting improved water and land resource governance, the protection of environmental services and the sustained productivity of the resource base as well as the promotion of sustainable livelihoods particularly within the context of rural development. Efforts aimed at improving regulatory frameworks which support the integration of multilateral environment agreements will continue, with an emphasis on the creation and maintenance of cross-thematic synergies, highlighting the poverty-reducing potential of sound natural resource management practices. As climate change is still seen as a technical subject, rather than a cross-ministerial challenge, UNDP will support national assessment exercises aimed at determining existing capacities for integrated climate change management as well as national efforts aimed at creating a climate change office within the Government of Belize, with primary responsibility for the coordination of climate change planning and response and the mainstreaming of climate change considerations across national sectors. In the area of disaster risk reduction and following the UNDAF evaluation, UNDP will support mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction considerations in planning response mechanisms, focusing on local/community capacities.

14. Democratic governance, capacity development, effectiveness and responsiveness enhanced. UNDP will support the Government's efforts to strengthen key public administration functions and enabling systems for effective service delivery, thus improving transparency, political participation of women and excluded groups, citizen security and aid coordination. As it relates to development coordination, UNDP will work closely with the Ministry of Economic Development, supporting efforts for development aid management and tracking. UNDP will contribute to improvements in public sector accountability and transparency in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (ratified by Belize in 2002), providing technical/financial support. An underlying effort will be to contribute to the further separation between political and administrative public administration functions, also through support to public oversight of executive functions (by media and non-governmental organizations). UNDP programming agenda also includes continued advocacy for political participation and strengthen capacities of civil society groups, including women, youth, people with disabilities and minorities in national governance. Finally, UNDP will support implementation aspects of the Government's citizen security strategy (i.e., 'RESTORE Belize') and support donor coordination in this area, promoting an articulated response to the Government's priorities in addressing crime.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

15. UNDP has a strong preference to support national implementation but occasion may arise for one of the following to be used: (a) direct implementation by UNDP; (b) United Nations agency implementation; (c) non-governmental organizations implementation (either national or international); and (d) implementation by an inter-governmental organization. UNDP will continue to make efforts in promoting harmonization and standardization among United Nations agencies, by applying modalities such as the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT). In responding to the operational challenges identified, there is a

need to create a five- year road map to strategically align the capacities of operations with UNDP programmatic focus and ensure the office's sustainability. As to the partnership strategy, the programme will continue to build on its partnership with the government at all levels, with development partners, civil society, the United Nations system, civil society, private sector and academic groups, while working closely with international financial institutions (IFIs). Partnership modalities will include joint programming with other United Nations agencies and bilateral donors such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Mexico, among others. The Government may request UNDP to invoke "fast track" procedures if the need arises for rapid response to an unanticipated crisis.

16. Monitoring and evaluation. UNDP will strengthen the country office and national capacity for monitoring and evaluation. One outcome evaluation and end-term country programme evaluations are planned, with gender-disaggregated data. These evaluations will be aligned with the calendar of the UNDAF monitoring and evaluation framework, with periodic programme and project reviews at the inter-agency level and support to MDG reports. UNDP will closely monitor critical risks that may affect country programme results, including natural disasters and citizen security. Risk mitigation strategies will focus on strengthening communication with national counterparts.

Annex. Results and resources framework for Belize, 2013-2017

National priority or goal: Healthy and productive citizens throughout the lifecycle					
Country programme / UNDAF Outcome #1: By 2017, a culture of human rights with equity is institutionalized at all levels. Outcome indicator: Number of national legislative reform laws and policies enacted to meet international standards Related Strategic Plan focus areas: Poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs					
Government partner contribution	Other partner contributions	UNDP contribution	Indicator(s), baselines and target(s) for UNDP contributions	Indicative country programme outputs	Indicative resources by outcome (thousands of United States dollars)
<p>Creating a culture of human rights: Coordination between line ministries, statutory bodies and civil society to monitor and integrate human rights into national policy</p> <p>Securing basic human rights for the poor and marginalized: Assist in community efforts, facilitate system strengthening</p>	<p>(a.) Coordination and networking between line ministries, statutory bodies and civil society to enforce, monitor and integrate human rights mechanisms into national policy processes</p> <p>(b.) Assist in coordination and networking, provision of temporary assistance, and inputs</p>	<p>UNDP will assist in increasing capacity for monitoring and implementation of legislation in support of human rights</p> <p>UNDP will assist in the strengthening of capacities of state and non-state institutions for the creation of livelihood opportunities and support services</p>	<p>Indicator 1: Existence of an operational inter-ministerial human rights group Baseline: No inter-ministerial human rights group Target: Creation of an inter-ministerial human rights group</p> <p>Indicator 2: Existence of disaggregated Information systems on labour and employment status Baseline: Increasing unemployment rate among youth and female populations Target: Contribute to acceleration of MDGs 1 and 3</p>	<p>Enhanced levels of awareness and application of human rights in policymaking; Ministries' role of monitoring reports and implementation of Universal Periodic Report actions strengthened Action Plans for the removal of identified gaps</p>	<p>Regular: 0.020</p> <p>Other: 0.125</p>
National priority or goal: Healthy and productive citizens throughout the lifecycle					
Country programme / UNDAF Outcome #2: By 2017, public policies and development processes are mainstreamed with cross-cutting environmental, disaster risk reduction and climate change dimensions. Outcome indicator: Green House Gas per GDP emission; Prevalent Vulnerability Index; Environmental Performance Index. Related Strategic Plan focus areas: Environment and sustainable development					
National coordination of HIV initiatives among different institutional and non-governmental actors; institutional capacity to coordinate access to improved rural water supply and sanitation services	Support strengthening of district health systems and delivery strategies using integrated campaigns (Ministry of Health); Ministry of Rural Development leadership in improving transparency and performance of water	Advocate for and develop national capacities for decentralized management approach in the provision of sexually transmitted infections/HIV/tuberculosis (STI/HIV/TB) care	<p>Indicator 1: HIV prevalence in young people age 15-24; Baseline: 1.01% (General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS 2010) Target: 0.72% (2015)</p> <p>Indicator 2: Number of water boards with performance-based evaluation Baseline: 0 Target: 10</p>	Coverage of high-impact preventive and outreach interventions increased; Strengthen capacity of the Ministry of Health to coordinate access to rural water supply and	<p>Regular: 0.016</p> <p>Other: 2.029</p>

	boards.	and treatment; build planning capacity of water boards and benchmark system		sanitation services	
National priority or goal: Caring for the natural environment as the source and basis of economic and social progress					
Country programme / UNDAF Outcome #3: By 2017, a culture of human rights with equity is institutionalized at all levels. Outcome indicator: Number of national legislative reform laws and policies enacted to meet international standards Related Strategic Plan focus areas: Poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs					
(a.) Sustainable management of natural resources: Coordination across relevant ministries; capacity of human resources to implement policies and mainstream environmental, disaster risk reduction (DDR) and climate change dimensions (b) Comprehensive disaster management: Integration of national comprehensive disaster mechanism (CDM) objectives in planning frameworks; coordination of relevant ministries	(a) Coordination and networking between non-governmental organizations, private sector, civil society and other United Nations agencies; technical assistance in promoting sustainable development (SD) principles (b) Coordination and networking between non-governmental organizations, private sector, civil society and other United Nations agencies	Technical support and limited capital assistance is provided to strengthen capacity of the Government and civil society to take informed action on climate change and DDR. Assistance in development of national programmes and in national fund-raising efforts	Indicator 1: Existence of integrated national frameworks/capacities for water, land use management, and CDM); Baseline: Framework for resource management fragmented or absent; No overarching SD framework; limited capacities for local participation in CDM efforts (only 15% of coastal communities with completed vulnerability and capacity assessments; Target: 50% of coastal communities with vulnerability assessments; appropriate institutional structures for water and land use management identified and operationalized Indicator 2: Existence of national climate office to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation measures; Baseline: Climate change is currently a technical subject within the Ministry of Environment; Target: A National CC office and supporting structure defined and operational	Strengthened capacities for land and water resources; SD strategy elaborated; capacities for CDM strengthened at local levels Comprehensive National CC Policy elaborated; Sector adaptation plans supported; National framework for CC management operational	Regular: 0.1 Other: 8.7
National priority or goal: A democratic society and efficient governance systems					
Country programme / UNDAF Outcome # 4: By 2017, democratic governance, capacity development, effectiveness and responsiveness are enhanced Outcome indicator: Number of homicides per 100,000 habitants; percentage of women in the House of Representatives Related Strategic Plan focus areas: Democratic governance					

<p>Government is committed to implementing actions and complies with standards established in international obligations</p>	<p>Media, civil society and non-governmental organizations collaborate and are able to participate in initiatives pertaining to transparency, accountability and citizen security</p>	<p>UNDP will advocate for and inform debate on transparency, accountability and women political participation while increasing capacities of security organizations</p>	<p>Indicator 1: Number of institutions with budgeted workplans to implement RESTORE Belize Baseline: RESTORE Belize plans not yet budgeted Target: 10 civil society and public sector organizations implementing aspects of RESTORE Belize Indicator 2: Number of laws developed and presented to national assembly that promote transparency; Baseline: United Nations Convention against Corruption not signed; Target: Signing of Convention and implementation of its provisions</p>	<p>Access to justice and government and civil society capacities strengthened Strengthened capacities for implementation of United Nations Convention against Corruption</p>	<p>Regular: 0.1 Other: 1.95</p>
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