

United Nations Development Programme



VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

A UNDP GLOBAL STRATEGY TO
STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Prepared by the
Civil Society Division/Partnerships Bureau
with Oslo Governance Centre/Bureau for Development Policy

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"Our mission recognizes a fundamental truth about democracy everywhere - that it is ultimately the product of a strong, active and vocal civil society. It is such a civil society that fosters responsible citizenship and makes democratic forms of government work."

- United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

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Executive Summary

This strategy charts a course to revitalize the engagement of UNDP with civil society and its organizations. It seeks to bring about a fundamental shift in the relationship, geared towards recognizing the evolving nature and growing influence of civil society, drawing on its strengths and capacities, and maximizing the potential of civic engagement for development.

Current trends in development have opened up new opportunities for the participation of a wider array of actors at national and sub-national levels. Increasingly, most governments accept civil society actors not only as essential programme partners but also as policy interlocutors, and see civic participation as critical to building constituencies and consensus, and to promoting inclusion and representation of the poor and marginalized. In all aspects of its engagement with civil society, UNDP sees its efforts as contributing to and supplementing its development interventions with governments.

Strengthening civic engagement for voice and accountability is linked to a number of key UNDP strategic priorities and ways of working outlined in the organization's Strategic Plan (2008-11), including:

- ☐ national ownership
- ☐ capacity development
- ☐ effective aid management
- ☐ poverty reduction and achievement of MDGs
- ☐ gender equality

To this end, the strategy proposes three priority focus areas for UNDP:

- ☐ Investing in an enabling environment for civil society to contribute to development
- ☐ Promoting and scaling up citizen action for participatory governance and development and other priority areas in the UNDP Strategic Plan
- ☐ Strengthening civic engagement in multilateralism, particularly in the context of the global financial crisis and other serious threats to MDGs and human development in vulnerable developing countries

Rationale for a New Direction

The strategy is underpinned by the following:

- ☐ First, the complex and dynamic development environment of today is characterized by new donor and aid arrangements and pressures for accountable and participatory governance to fight persistent inequality and poverty. To ensure its continued relevance as a development player, UNDP must become a more outward-looking organization that is better equipped to engage with a plurality of constituencies, including a range of civil society actors with distinct strengths. The global financial crisis, with its troubling implications for development funding, long-term planning and sustainability, not only makes this a more urgent task, it also emphasizes the case for strengthening citizen capacities for oversight of state and corporate governance.

Box 1 – Citizens and Civil Society

"The citizen is the building block of civil society. We need both good civil society and good government, and we need to create the basis for them to work together creatively to address poverty. Increasingly CSOs engage at global, national, and local levels simultaneously as they seek to influence international institutions and policy while also operating nationally and locally."

- Kumi Naidoo, Honorary President of CIVICUS
"Role of Civil Society in Enhancing Aid Effectiveness"
 (Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 2008)

- Second, civil society actors at national and global levels have evolved in capacity and influence in a number of areas to an extent that strategically and creatively *partnering with* them can help to maximize UNDP interventions with governments, crucially with respect to neglected and disadvantaged populations.
- Third, the success of development and participatory governance depends on *both a robust state and an active civil society* with healthy levels of civic engagement (**see Box 1**). Empowered and active citizenship, a critical part of social capital, is an end in itself, besides being essential for *inclusive growth and national ownership* – both guiding principles for UNDP as stated in its Strategic Plan. Specifically, civic engagement is key to the work of UNDP in strengthening responsive governing institutions and practices.

In articulating this strategy, UNDP underscores its conviction that a dynamic relationship between state and civil society can set the terms for the quality of governance. Experience in a number of countries has shown that strong human development outcomes result from synergies between the state and civil society. Contrary to common perceptions that civic engagement fills the gap left by a weak state or finds its space and scope reduced in the presence of a strong state, successful participatory governance is predicated on the existence of both a robust state and a healthy and active civil society.

Goals of the Strategy

The overall goal of the strategy is to provide UNDP with a framework to deliver on its Strategic Plan outcomes by both *empowering* and *engaging* with civil society to achieve greater accountability of all actors and enhanced human development. It proposes three priority focus areas for UNDP over the next four years:

1. Invest in civil society and civic engagement

This will target three areas: (a) facilitate an enabling environment for civil society (b) support and partner with civil society for policy impact, and (c) revitalize UN(DP) capacity and environment to engage with a fuller range of civil society actors and foster civic engagement.

2. Promote citizen action for participatory democracy and development

This will support civic engagement to (a) support democratic governance through collective citizen action for accountability, drawing on the expertise and experience of others in this arena to facilitate more productive state-citizen interactions in national processes (b) scale up community actions for local development and upstream impact.

3. Strengthen civic engagement for multilateralism and human development

The global crises in food, fuel and financial and climate change have revived debate on the quality of global governance and the role and place of multilateral institutions. Citizens and civil society networks are emphasizing principles of human development, accountability and civic engagement, and a strong UN role in solutions to the crises, as being central to the way forward. UNDP, with civil society and other development partners, will mobilize “Platform HD2010” to mark the 20th anniversary of the launch of the UNDP Human Development Report in 2010, and the ten-year anniversary of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, as a forum to develop a vision for the next decade that engages civil society for an outward looking multilateralism reinforcing civic engagement and human development.

While the objective of each priority focus area is to strengthen **civic engagement**, the strategy also emphasizes the need for UNDP to develop **synergistic partnerships** with civil society organizations with specific expertise. These can take the form of **flagship initiatives** to contribute to scaling-up and development effectiveness in each focus area. Such flagships will:

- Maximize civil society strengths and resources to advance shared goals, complementing downstream programme implementation with increased emphasis on upstream policy impact
- Support and expand civil society-led platforms that will develop consortiums of donors and other partners to scale up capacities in civil society and government
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder and cross-practice approaches and south-south cooperation
- Expand the space for national and local actors to be heard on issues of global importance

Strengthening internal knowledge and capacities to remedy the deficits in UNDP engagement with civil society is a crucial element of a strategic organizational approach. The strategy emphasizes the importance of practical and quality knowledge resources including learning modules and guidance notes, developed with a cross-practice approach and drawing on civil society expertise. While recognizing the challenges inherent in ensuring adequate financial and human resources, the strategy underscores the urgent need to creatively and incrementally address institutional arrangements, particularly the provision of advisory services to country offices by headquarters and regional centres.

"Civil society occupies a unique space where ideas are born, where mindsets are changed, and where the work of sustainable development doesn't just get talked about, but gets done."

- Former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan

Section I. Background and Rationale

A. Mandate and Country Demand

Strategic Plan – The most recent UNDP mandate with regard to civil society and civic engagement comes from the Strategic Plan (2008-11). The Strategic Plan also emphasizes civic engagement in the context of promoting inclusive participation, responsive governance, inclusive growth and national ownership. In practical terms, the Plan endorses opening knowledge networks to CSOs, strengthening civic engagement in local governments and organizations, and national authorities.¹ More specifically, the Strategic Plan recommends: (1) the establishment of networks, including South-South networks, to boost local entrepreneurship in at least 50 countries by 2009; (2) partnering with UNV and other national volunteers to support people's participation in development programming; (3) civil society involvement in AIDS responses and in creating responsive governing institutions.²

Box 2 – Defining Civil Society

Concepts of civil society elude commonly agreed upon definitions. One accepted consensus is that civil society is an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values distinct from families, state and profit-seeking institutions. A key feature of this definition is the concept of civil society as an 'arena,' a term used to describe the space where people come together to debate, associate and seek to influence broader society. In UNDP, the term civil society includes the full range of formal and informal organizations that are outside the state and the market – including social movements, volunteer involving organizations, mass-based membership organizations, faith-based groups, NGOs, and community-based organizations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively.

- See, e.g., **UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: A Policy of Engagement (2001)**; **Global Civil Society. Vol. 2. Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector**, Lester Salamon, Wojciech S. Sokolowski et al (2004).

General Assembly – UNDP also derives its mandate to engage with civil society from a variety of UN agreements and bodies, including the United Nations Charter and the Millennium Declaration (2000). Current reform efforts geared towards "Delivering as One" call for more understanding and outreach to local actors including civil society to help countries achieve development objectives. Recent General Assembly resolutions have made specific reference to UNDP and civil society, especially as a convener for multi-stakeholder partnerships (2008), fostering democratic governance assistance programmes (2007), and enabling national ownership of development programmes (2005).³

Country Demands – UNDP has a longstanding record in engaging with civil society (see Box 2 on definitions) at the country level in a range of issue areas. While civil society thus contributes in essential ways to the joint task of achieving national development goals, the UNDP relationship with civil society in countries complements its trusted relationship with governments, without in any way diminishing or undermining the roles and capacities of the state.

Responses from 102 country offices for a 2008 global UNDP inventory showed that the organization engages heavily in "downstream" initiatives with NGOs, especially in the area of programme delivery, channeling \$100m through them. A number of countries also cite as priorities "upstream" efforts: to support civic participation in national policy processes through dialogue and advocacy, expand the space for government-civil society interactions, and strengthen networking and technical capacities.⁴

¹ Of the 36 country programme documents approved by the Executive Board at its January 2007 session, all but four include provisions that fall within the area of civic engagement. The Regional Bureau for Africa is implementing a regional civil society strengthening programme (2006-2008) and a similar programme is being piloted in the Regional Bureau for Arab States.

² UNDP Strategic Plan (2008-2011): see paragraphs 17, 28 (e), 63, 83, 86, 89, and 104.

³ See resolutions A/RES/62/208, A/RES/62/150 and A/RES/59/250.

⁴ The **UNDP Country Office Engagement with Civil Society: A Global Inventory (2008)** elicited 102 responses from country offices, and supplemented this data with additional information from regional advisors. The inventory contains data obtained through a global survey

The growing extent of “upstream” demands is further confirmed by regional centres and practices (**Annex A**).

The priority focus areas proposed in this strategy are a response to these aggregate demands.

Specifically, the first priority focus area (invest in civil society and civic engagement) addresses demands related to capacity of and environment for civil society. These include regulatory frameworks, NGO national platforms, civic participation in democratic transition, and a range of capacity initiatives to promote the MDGs.

The second priority focus area (promote and scale up citizen action for development) addresses country demands related to capacity development of indigenous peoples, civic engagement in local governance and public services, and community adaptation strategies to climate change.

The third priority focus area (strengthen civic engagement in multilateralism) is an effort to forge a corporate response to the current global governance crises, in strategic partnership with civil society and citizen networks at local and global levels. This initiative seeks to strengthen UN reform and presence in the global arena and harness civil society goodwill and trust in the United Nations as the heart of the multilateral system.

Country context will doubtless influence the implementation of the proposals contained in the strategy. The nature of civil society and the immediate environment, including relations with the state and ability to function in public life, vary considerably across the world, with particular challenges in fragile, post-conflict states and emerging democracies. UNDP must evidently be mindful of the context and the fluidity of engagement with civil society, and adapt the proposals to different country situations. It may be necessary, for example, to allow for a scale of evolving possibilities while pursuing new forms of partnerships and consultative mechanisms. A UNDP role may be especially valued in expanding the space for state-citizen peer and other review mechanisms, which look at the role of UN(DP) in countries and help to keep the organization on its toes and relevant.

While understanding the importance of different strategic approaches that need to be taken, by different actors, the strategy consistently recommends that country offices take steps to pro-actively engage with diverse civil society partners in diverse arrangements to strengthen development outcomes – always bearing in mind that the UNDAF and DEX/NEX remain the underpinning frameworks and instruments.

B. UNDP imperative to work with civil society

Constituency and Partner – Civil society contributions are key to the alternative vision and policy choices that UNDP seeks to offer governments. A world characterized by increasingly complex development challenges makes it essential for UNDP to broaden and deepen engagement with multiple civil society actors, in both supportive and strategic ways, to complement the work of the United Nations with governments, adapt to new voices, and remain a relevant player in a dynamic development landscape.

MDGs and Inclusive Development – Equitable and inclusive strategies to pursue MDG-based development call for active involvement of all local actors, especially those representing marginalized groups and indigenous peoples (**see Box 3**) and for actions at sub-national levels to adapt the goals and targets to meet lo-

Box 3 – Civic Engagement, Volunteerism & MDGs

The opening up of new channels for civic engagement offers enormous potential in helping to meet the MDGs. Volunteerism is an important channel for citizens to engage in development. While governments in many industrialized countries have long sought ways and means to promote all forms of voluntary action, developing countries are now also putting in place policies that expand opportunities for civic engagement in national development through voluntary action. Civic engagement through volunteerism yields many dividends in fostering inclusion, ownership and sustainability, and particularly in ensuring efficiency and accountability in service delivery.

- United Nations Volunteers (2008)

of country Offices carried out between November 2007 and March 2008 on: *contracting modalities; volume of engagement; sectors of engagement; current advisory and support services on offer to country offices*. (Oslo Governance Centre/UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, in collaboration with the Civil Society Division/Partnerships Bureau).

cal realities. Critically, the MDGs are benchmarks for public scrutiny of national policy: the goals and targets provide civil society with a standard of measurement of development performance.

Alongside local actions involving government authorities and citizens, civil society advocacy globally is key to ensure more and better aid, more equity in international decision making, and to work towards globalization that benefits all, as agreed in the Millennium Declaration. It is crucial that UNDP sustain and expand its efforts to support civil society at national and global levels to accelerate progress towards the MDGs.

Civic Engagement for Voice and Accountability – Civic engagement can be defined as actions freely undertaken by citizens on an individual or collective basis to identify and address matters of public concern. These actions can take many forms – directly addressing an issue, working with others in a community to solve problems, or interacting with the institutions of representative democracy. Accountability and voice mechanisms that foster sustained civic engagement in national policy and budget dialogues are critical to the success of national development and poverty reduction strategies.⁵ Participatory governance through civic engagement today focuses on creating inclusive and responsive democratic institutions and increasing opportunities for citizen voice.

While citizen or civil society-led initiatives are increasingly seen as critical for accountability and transparency, it is equally important to focus on ‘both sides of the citizen-state equation’ to facilitate accountability – i.e., also supporting the capacity of governments to respond to citizen demand.⁶ The success of democratic governance depends on the existence of both a robust state and a healthy and active civil society.

Human Development Paradigm – The promotion of civic engagement facilitates the creation of an environment conducive for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to be able to pursue their needs and interests to lead productive lives.⁷ Human rights and human development share a common vision and a common purpose—to secure, for every human being, freedom, well-being and dignity. Human rights are an intrinsic part of development and bring principles of accountability and social justice to the process of human development.⁸ Rights-based approaches are based on the recognition that real success in tackling poverty and vulnerability requires giving the poor and vulnerable a stake, a voice and real protection in the societies where they live.

C. Civil society today

Globalization and Multilateralism – Recent years have seen the remarkable rise of civil society as a global phenomenon. The forces of globalization have propelled the growth of civil society and citizen action and opened up a global public space for debate and actions; they have also contributed to creating global public opinion, which is shaping the political agenda and generating a cosmopolitan set of norms and citizen demands that transcend national boundaries. In this sense, as noted by the Cardoso panel on UN-civil society relations, civil society is as much part of today’s global governance as are governments.⁹ Non-state actors are increasingly enhancing democracy and reshaping multilateralism, and civil society organizations are also the prime movers of some of the most innovative initiatives to deal with emerging global threats.

Decentralization and Development – Trends towards decentralization, coupled with a growing recognition of the importance of civic engagement, have opened up new opportunities for the participation of a wider ar-

⁵ [“Supporting Capacity Development: the UNDP Approach.”](#) 2008. UNDP.

⁶ Bhavna Sharma. 2008. [“Voice, Accountability and Civic Engagement: A Review.”](#) Overseas Development Institute.

⁷ [“Concept and Measurement of Human Development.”](#) 1990. Human Development Report. UNDP.

⁸ [“Human Rights and Human Development.”](#) 2000. Human Development Report. UNDP.

⁹ “We the Peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global Governance”. 2004. Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. United Nations General Assembly, A/58/817.

ray of actors at national and sub-national levels. Increasingly, most governments accept civil society actors – despite issues of capacity and accountability – not only as essential programme partners but also as policy interlocutors, and see civic participation as critical to building constituencies and consensus, and to promoting inclusion and representation of the poor and marginalized. Civil society actors, in particular community and faith-based organizations, volunteer involving organizations and social movements, given their potential proximity to communities and their ability to engage grassroots energies, are seen as ideally placed to promote a “people-first” and “bottom-up” form of development, one that empowers the poor to reduce poverty, overcome structural inequality and gain access to public and community resources.

Growth in the United Nations – Civil society engagement with the United Nations has grown exponentially. At the UN alone, NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council mushroomed from 724 in 1992 to 3050 in 2007, representing an increase of over 400%¹⁰ – still only a fraction of the estimated 40,000 civil society organizations that emerged in the 1990s at local, national, and international levels.

New Challenges and Perceptions – There is a growing realization that civil society is no magic bullet and that “CSOs” often have uneven capacities and unspecified mandates. While civil society is accepted as a development partner, the euphoria of the 1990s has given way to more critical and realistic perceptions. The ability of CSOs to attract large donor funding has given rise to competition with governments in developing countries. Donor harmonization efforts, including direct budget support to governments, have restricted the policy space for civil society at the national level. Critically, while citizen mobilization on a global scale has made “corporate accountability” and “donor accountability” buzzwords in development discourse, the visibility and influence of civil society actors in governance processes have in turn raised questions about “NGO accountability” and the legitimacy of their participation in governance. These trends have led to greater introspection and attempts by civil society to strengthen their organizational capacities and legitimacy and analyze their strengths and weaknesses to position themselves better as credible development partners with governments and other actors.¹¹

D. The development environment

A number of emerging trends in the development environment are driving the emphases on civic engagement and accountability. These include:

- *The rising influence of global civil society.* This has led to new forms of civic participation and involvement in a transnational, potentially global sphere, with stronger efforts at giving ‘voice’ to those affected by old, new and emerging inequalities, and providing a political and social platform for such voices to be heard.¹²
- *The need for democracy to deliver.* There is growing pressure for democratic institutions to be seen to be delivering the goods, especially in terms of material outcomes. Citizen-led accountability mechanisms, when combined with government reforms, are seen as a way to both deepen democratic governance, and to make sure that democratic gains are translated into developmental gains.
- *The pressure to show results.* With growing resources going into aid – both through official and private channels – there is a pressure to demonstrate effectiveness through concrete results. Delivering basic services through increased accountability mechanisms are seen as one means of ensuring development effectiveness. Such pressures are only bound to grow in a development environment challenged by the current global financial crisis.¹³

¹⁰ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [NGO Section database](#).

¹¹ CSO voluntary codes of conduct tailored to missions and activities are now a rising trend. There are also joint codes or standards to demonstrate a broader agreement on principles of operation and transparency, i.e., [INGO Accountability Charter](#). 2003.

¹² *Global Civil Society*. 2003. Centre for Civil Society and Centre for Study of Global Governance, London School of Economics and Political Science.

¹³ [Innovations in Accountability and Transparency through Citizen Engagement: Role of Donors in Supporting and Sustaining Change](#). Summary report from workshop at Bellagio, June 16-20, 2008. DfID and Open Society Foundation.

- *The aid effectiveness agenda:* Linked to the pressure to show results, the Paris Declaration and discussions at the Accra high-level forum have concluded that accelerating progress on aid effectiveness will require major reforms on three fronts: (1) strengthening of country ownership over development (2) building more effective and inclusive partnerships, and (3) delivering and accounting for development results.¹⁴ Taken together, they will necessitate a broadening of country-level policy dialogue on development, civil society-led multi-stakeholder processes, enhanced civil society accountability for results and improved information on civil society activities. More accountability and transparency to the public for development results will need mutual assessments that draw on citizen scrutiny.
- *The importance of transparency over revenue use.* In several developing countries, economic growth or the extraction of oil and mineral resources produce enormous revenues. Yet such revenues sometimes fail to reach the poor, either due to lack of institutional capacity to deliver, corruption or misuse. There is growing pressure to ensure transparency of budgets and revenue flows, by which citizens can demand services from governments.

The rise of new forms of philanthropy, with ambitious global agendas matched by large resources, is increasingly attractive to governments and civil society actors. However, for a number of bilateral agencies and CSOs, UNDP remains a preferred multilateral partner, given its global country presence, trust and convening capacity with diverse stakeholders. UNDP can maximize this advantage, provided it adapts to the new thinking, demonstrates the continuing importance of its human development mission, and brings civic engagement to the frontline of this mission.

E. Strengthening corporate frameworks

The focus areas and initiatives proposed in this strategy have the potential to complement and strengthen those in other recent and emerging corporate frameworks. These include:

- The **new directions paper** being developed by the **Special Unit for South-South Cooperation**, with its overall emphasis on the need for more extensive consultations with key stakeholders. The paper notes the need to “strengthen and further leverage the capacities and resources of UNDP to promote awareness of, access to and support for South-South cooperation, as indicated in a recent UNDP evaluation ... Policy development has been based largely on consultations with governments rather than civil society organizations and the private sector.” The civil society strategy could help strengthen the results in the three priority areas of the Special Unit: Policy, Dialogue & Development; Public-Private Partnership; and Southern Development Knowledge Exchange.
- **Capacity development of staff** is a central proposition of the **Human Resources Strategy (2008)**.
- The **Learning Strategy (2008-11)** emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and access to learning products and services for staff, government counterparts and civil society.
- The specific relationships between the priority focus areas of the civil society strategy and the outcomes of the **Strategic Plan (2008-11)**, the **Global Cooperation Framework (2009-11)** and the **Gender Equality Strategy (2009-11)** are detailed in Annex B. The Strategic Plan promotes the mainstreaming of gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout its programmes as an important means to achieve the MDGs in accordance with national development strategies. The Gender Equality Strategy therefore is complementary and is linked to the Strategic Plan. It has broadly the same structure, and addresses the same four overarching goals and key result areas.

¹⁴ “[Accra Agenda for Action](#).” 2008. The World Bank, the Government of Ghana, and the OECD-DAC Secretariat.

Section II. Vision, Goals and Expected Impact

A. The baseline

The **global UNDP inventory on engagement with civil society** gathered data through a global survey of country offices to illustrate the depth and breadth of such engagement, and challenges and opportunities at the national level (*see Annex B*).¹⁵ Responses came in from **102 country offices** (72%). Overall the results indicate a high volume of partnerships and strong levels of engagement with civil society. But most lack a long-term strategic focus, and 'downstream' service delivery efforts are greater than 'upstream' policy participation. While country offices are active in capacity development, few report measuring the results of such efforts. The survey also highlights the need for greater institutional resources, including staff capacity, advisory services, and tools to support civic engagement.

Strengths	Weaknesses
High volume of partnership arrangements and collaboration across all practices and regions: Programme implementation by NGOs in all sectors in 102 responding countries estimated at over \$100m of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over 1,000 contractor agreements, estimated at \$33m - Up to 2,400 grant agreements, estimated at \$30m - Over 1,500 NGOs implement/execute agency agreements 	BUT: Partnerships are usually short-term (project-based instead of CPAP-based), ad-hoc and defined and led by UNDP only: Over 40% of country offices said it was all or mostly short-term, while 18% said engagement was mostly long-term
Recommended action: Facilitate longer-term, strategic civil society partnerships on an equitable basis, collaborating with other UN agencies, and strengthening policies and mechanisms, in line with UNDAF/CCA, to sustain them.	
Widespread use of South-South exchange: Half of all country offices reported using South-South arrangements strongly or occasionally	BUT: South-South arrangements are not being used in a systematic and integral manner: One-third of country offices reported using South-South arrangements rarely or never. Information exchanges mostly takes place through workshops and study tours and less through 'Southern' technical assistance
Recommended Action: Improve quality of exchanges in South-South arrangements with active involvement of civil society actors that have the requisite regional/country expertise in issue areas.	
UNDP advice and support increasingly sought in supporting legal/regulatory framework for civic participation in public affairs: 60% of country offices in Africa and Europe-CIS reported strong involvement in supporting legal frameworks	BUT: Low awareness of the importance of supporting civil society legal frameworks. Low profile and leadership by UNDP in three regions: Almost half of country offices in Asia-Pacific, Arab States and LAC regions reported little or no engagement in this area
Recommended Action: Include assessments of enabling environment for civil society in CCAs and explore opportunities for UNDP engagement, in partnership with CSOs and governments, in supporting progressive legal frameworks to facilitate civic engagement for human development.	
Considerable investment in civil society capacity development: 50% of country offices channel more than \$100,000 each through CSOs for capacity development	BUT: Little investment in 1) developing capacity assessment and development tools for civil society organizations and 2) measuring capacity development efforts: Activities not always focused on clear goals or tailored to gender priorities, only 25% of country offices measure success
Recommended Action: Develop appropriate guidelines to measure results of capacity development efforts, and support efforts to strengthen institutional /organizational development, including CSO accountability.	

¹⁵ In November 2007, with follow-up in January 2008, an online survey was sent to resident coordinators, their deputies, country directors and civil society focal points in 142 country offices. The Gender Team in the Bureau for Development Policy supplemented this information with a questionnaire to gender focal points in country offices.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Increasing attention to civic engagement in policy processes: 70% of country offices in Africa projected increase in civil society engagement in policy arena	BUT: Linking service delivery with policy impact and expanding civil society engagement in policy arena is still insufficient: One-third of country offices reported little or no involvement with civil society in policy initiatives, such as PRSPs
Recommended Action: Pro-actively increase state-citizen interactions and civic engagement in policy initiatives, working with CSOs with expertise, to scale up efforts to increase capacity development efforts	
Increasing awareness of the importance to consult with civil society at policy levels: About half of country offices report having consultative mechanisms with civil society, i.e., advisory committees	BUT: Consultations are largely being carried out on ad-hoc, informal and reactive -rather than proactive-basis: Only 13 national civil society advisory committees to UN Country Teams have been established to date
Recommended Action: Invest in and incrementally expand consultative mechanisms with civil society at the national level, bearing in mind differing country contexts.	
Investment in regional advisory services have had great impact in country offices' engagement with civil society Satisfaction with regional advisory services strongest in regions with regional advisory services (Europe-CIS and Arab States)	BUT: Little investment in and lack of strategic use of the capacity of country offices' staff members Low staff capacity in HQ, regional centres and country offices; about 40 UNCTs have appointed civil society focal points 82% of country offices have no written civil society strategy 10% of country offices report collaboration with UN agencies
Recommended Action: Improve internal capacities to initiate and sustain civic engagement, providing staff with tools and resources to expand knowledge and advisory services, and generate synergies to 'Deliver as One.'	

B. Overall vision and goals

The strategy envisions reinvigorated efforts by UNDP to empower and engage with civil society to achieve 'downstream' local development results and 'upstream' policy impact. This requires significant increase initiatives to foster an enabling environment and strengthen capacities on the ground, while simultaneously and pro-actively establishing synergistic partnerships with civil society at global and regional levels to support and scale up country-level efforts. The strategy also recommends that UN(DP) engage actively with a plurality of civil society actors and communities in policy and dialogue settings, and to facilitate such interactions with governments. Greater organizational and programme coherence in relation to civil society work, in particular going beyond a "silo approach" between practice and cross-cutting areas, and promoting UN-wide efforts for greater coordination and impact at the country level, must underpin the overall vision articulated in the strategy.

The overall goals of the strategy are to:

- ☐ Increase "upstream" focus on engaging civil society in policy and advocacy processes
- ☐ Increase efforts to strengthen civil society and civic engagement to better deliver Strategic Plan outcomes
- ☐ Foster participatory processes for equity, inclusion, responsive governance and achievement of the MDGs
- ☐ Strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations and networks to channel civil society expertise and experience for development impact
- ☐ Scale up community capacities and leadership for local development
- ☐ Improve institutional coordination and policy coherence to better support country offices
- ☐ Strengthen staff capacities and knowledge to maximize engagement and outcomes with civil society

C. Proposed priority focus areas

In light of the inventory findings on strengths and weaknesses, and the need to respond appropriately to the changing external environment as well as institutional imperatives and mandates, this strategy proposes three priority focus areas for UNDP over the next four years. These are (detailed in the following sections):

- 1. Invest in civil society and civic engagement**
- 2. Promote citizen action for participatory democracy and development**
- 3. Strengthen civic engagement for multilateralism**

Targeted actions for the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized peoples is a cross cutting issue of the priority focus areas and flagship initiatives, in line with the Strategic Plan, and taking into consideration the shortcomings of present engagement with them, as shown in the UNDP global inventory.

D. UNDP role and added value

The focus areas and approaches proposed in this strategy are premised on a number of UNDP comparative advantages that the organization must make the most of:

- ☐ Relationship of trust with governments, civil society, donors and other development actors
- ☐ Proven track record in promoting participatory and multi-stakeholder processes, especially involving women, poor and excluded populations, to ensure national ownership and leadership
- ☐ Presence in 166 countries and several regional centres that facilitates:
 - South-south cooperation among civil society and governments
 - An outward looking multilateralism that fosters civic engagement for human development
 - North-south partnerships and south-south exchanges to bring southern voices to bear on global issues
- ☐ Convening capacity to support innovative partnerships with influential organizations that will help:
 - Scale up activities and impact at the country level
 - Improve knowledge resources and training modules for use by development partners and
 - Extend advocacy impact into the policy-making arena
 - Facilitate cooperative rather than competitive approaches among civil society and other actors
- ☐ Ability to serve as a learning platform and provider of technical support
- ☐ Growing portfolio in private sector development, which can be built on to foster community and citizen dimensions in public-private partnerships

Further, in most countries the relationship between governments and civil society remains asymmetrical, and the private sector and civil society ‘speak different languages’ in pursuit of development. Given the growing role of UNDP in private sector development, there is large scope for facilitating a strengthened interaction between the two sectors to identify common platforms for action, especially at the local level, and ensure transparency and accountability in national policy.

Section III. Priority Focus Areas

Priority Focus Area 1: Invest in civil society and civic engagement

1A: Facilitate an enabling environment

■ Introduction and rationale

Legal and regulatory framework – A critical factor for civil society organizations to work in a country is the legal and regulatory framework allowing and governing their establishment, space and scope to function in public life. A healthy civil society benefits from the rule of law and the realization of civil and political rights, which include freedom of expression, right to association and taking part in public affairs. Adequate regulatory frameworks are inextricably linked to society's right to development and defining development paths through democratic and inclusive processes.

UNDP can play a strategic role in mediating state-citizen relations, especially in fragile democracies or countries that are consolidating democratic gains, to advocate for support and an enabling environment in which civil society can function and contribute to development. The global inventory shows that about 80% of country offices report some or strong engagement in facilitating linkages between government and civil society, with almost half reporting strong involvement.¹⁶

Participatory civil society assessments – A key obstacle faced by governments and development partners including the United Nations is the lack of thorough and independent assessments of the extent, structure and capacity of national civil society actors. In recent years, there have been more scientific efforts to understand and advance the knowledge base on this sector.¹⁷ There is a rough 50-50 split between country offices reporting support to civil society assessments and those with little or no involvement, while one-third project an upward trend in this area. One effort in promoting civil society assessments has taken shape through the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) (*see Flagship Initiative One: CIVICUS-led global consortium*).

Civil society organizational development: Country offices cite three top challenges in their work with CSOs: accountability,¹⁸ legitimacy, and capacity – all of which are inextricably linked to better internal management, self-regulation and accountability and civil society networking frameworks or platforms.

UNDP will lead a United Nations Civil Society Fund aimed at fostering existing civil society capacity assets, strengthening organizational and technical capacities and enhancing civic participation in UN-supported programmes. UNDP will also support a global initiative to strengthen NGO national platforms in several countries to facilitate the participation of civil society in developing countries in global and regional policymaking arenas.

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Enabling environment for civil society and civic engagement strengthened
- ☐ State-citizen interactions improved

¹⁶ Country offices currently supporting legal and regulatory frameworks include Belize, China, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indonesia, LAO PDR, Liberia, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Uganda, and Viet Nam. "UNDP Country Office Engagement with Civil Society - Global Inventory." 2008. UNDP. Important to note that there is no correlation between government trends to restrict civil society and UNDP on legal frameworks.

¹⁷ James Manor, Mark Robinson, Gordon White. 1999. "Civil Society and Governance. A Concept Paper." Institute of Development Studies; Lester Salamon, et al. 1999. "Global Civil Society. Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector." The Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies.

¹⁸ MDG-net hosted an [e-discussion](#) in January 2007 to address the complexity of CSO accountability in both conceptual and practical terms.

- ☐ Knowledge base on civil society sector improved
- ☐ Civil society accountability mechanisms strengthened
- ☐ Networking skills improved through national platforms, regional networks and south-south cooperation

1B: Support and partner with civil society for policy impact

■ Introduction and rationale

Empowered and active citizenship provides the link between policy intent and policy delivery. Strengthening the capacity of civil society to influence policymaking processes is critical to realizing inclusive growth, fostering national ownership and social inclusion, and securing equitable development outcomes. UNDP has a long record of working to strengthen the abilities of civil society actors at the national level to participate in poverty reduction strategy processes, advocate and campaign for the MDGs, contribute to conflict prevention, disarmament, peace building and crisis recovery, combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, manage natural resources for sustainable development, and ensure gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁹

To bring such efforts to scale and strengthen development outcomes, UNDP must draw on the innovative practices and tools in a range of areas developed by civil society and women's organizations, policy advocacy groups, volunteer involving organizations and indigenous peoples' organizations. These include citizen and gender budget advocacy, statistical literacy, poverty, environmental and social impact assessments, localizing MDGs and monitoring their implementation, equitable trade policies, climate change adaptation, food security, and gender-responsive disaster recovery and peace-building.

Particular attention is required for excluded sectors of the population such as indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants, people living with disabilities, internally displaced people, poor and disenfranchised women, afro-descendants, and people living with HIV/AIDS. The UNDP global partnership with International Disability and Development Consortium, a group of 19 international NGOs supporting disability and development work in over 100 countries, is an example of strategic collaboration with civil society for human development impact.

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Strengthened policy research/advocacy/analysis/monitoring capacity in civil society
- ☐ Civil society inputs reflected in policy processes and outcomes
- ☐ Civil society expertise and knowledge recognized and availed of by UN, government and other partners
- ☐ Strengthened networking and partnership between civil society networks in north and south
- ☐ Civil society advocacy efforts linked to government outcomes

1C: Revitalize UN (DP) environment to strengthen civic engagement

■ Introduction and rationale

The ability of the United Nations to engage systematically and meaningfully with multiple stakeholders at the global and local levels is critical to its relevance and effectiveness as a development actor. Coordinating such engagement across the UN is essential for the success of 'Delivering as One.' At the country level in particular, UN(DP) must exponentially expand efforts to interact with a plurality of constituencies, in particular civil society

¹⁹ ["Partners in Human Development: UNDP and Civil Society Organizations."](#) 2003. UNDP.

to become an outward-looking organization, connect local operational work with global goals, and emphasize participatory democracy and deeper accountability of institutions to the global public.²⁰

Mechanisms such as advisory committees at global and national levels are a means of creating consultative and dialogue spaces for civil society representatives aimed at a synergistic two-way relationship:

- ☐ The committee serves as a sounding board and early warning system, providing UN(DP) with strategic, political and substantive guidance on policies and programmes to improve development effectiveness
- ☐ UN(DP) provides the committee with a space for dialogue, engagement and influence with the government and an avenue to make the United Nations relevant to the lives of people. Together, the committee and UN(DP) help to generate dialogues on issues critical to development

Since 2000, UNDP has had a civil society advisory committee composed of 15 global leaders that advises senior management at headquarters on policy and strategy.²¹ UN(DP), as the leader of UN Country Teams, must greatly strengthen initial efforts to set up similar consultative mechanisms at the country level (*see Box 4*).

Box 4 – National Civil Society Advisory Committees to UNCT

As of January 2008, civil society advisory committees have been established by **thirteen** UNCTs: in **Bolivia, Kenya (for indigenous peoples), Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Malawi, Mozambique, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal, and Tanzania.**

Improving internal coordination, capacity and strategies for engagement with civil society partners and stakeholders is equally essential to the task of revitalizing the UN(DP) environment.

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Improved understanding in the UN of role of civil society and civic engagement in development
- ☐ Increased civil society contributions to policy development and thinking
- ☐ Strengthened UN relations with civil society and relationship adapted to evolving needs
- ☐ Strengthened UN role and presence in convening multi-stakeholder dialogues involving civil society

Priority Focus Area 2: Promote citizen action for participatory democracy and development

2A: Civic engagement for voice and accountability

■ Introduction and rationale

The quality of governance is now recognized as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in poor countries, affecting the delivery of the various services people need for their livelihoods. Governance goes beyond the formal institutional framework of the state to encompass the interaction between formal and informal institutions in state and market arenas, rules, processes and relationships. Citizens as well as state insti-

²⁰ Recommendations 28-37 and 164-167 in "[We the Peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global Governance](#)": Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (GA Resolution A/58/817), United Nations 2004.

²¹ The committee's functions are to provide policy advice, monitor information and advocacy efforts, and pilot joint UNDP/CSO initiatives. Its greatest contribution has been to bring new, independent perspectives to senior management and a critical analysis of UNDP's role and the implications of its policies for civil society. Specific committee contributions include advice on UNDP policies relative to information disclosure, civil society, indigenous peoples and the private sector; improved screening of UNDP partnerships with the business sector; inclusion of civil society perspectives in several Human Development Reports (HDRs) and preparation of national MDG reports.

tutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for poor and marginalized people. By expressing their views ('exercising voice'), citizens not only have the potential to influence government priorities but also demand transparency and accountability from their governments.

In recent years, there has been a burgeoning of 'social accountability' mechanisms that cover a range of actions (beyond voting) that citizens, communities and civil society organizations can use to hold public officials and institutions accountable. These mechanisms can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but are often demand-driven and operate from the bottom up. They can take the form of citizen engagement in policy dialogue, participatory and gender budgeting, public expenditure tracking, monitoring and evaluation of public service delivery, observance of elections, monitoring progress on donor commitments to advance the MDGs (Goal 8), and international obligations including reporting to various human rights treaty bodies, public commissions and hearings, advisory boards and oversight committees, and citizen juries.

As UNDP expands its engagement with the private sector for national development and global partnerships, it is critical that it actively involve civil society actors. CSO and citizen participation is vital to ensure equity, transparency, and multi-stakeholder approaches. This is especially important when partnering with large corporations in extractive industries, forest-management, water services and in countries where such development lessons affect populations of indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities.

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Strengthened multi-stakeholder approaches and mechanisms to improve the accountability of public service delivery and private sector development initiatives
- ☐ Strengthened capacity of civil society organizations to engage with state institutions in policy processes and a more widespread use of mechanisms which facilitate this engagement
- ☐ Improved responsiveness of state institutions to the voices of citizens, especially poor women and marginalized people, leading to more efficient service delivery

2B: Unleashing the power of local actors and networks

■ Introduction and rationale

A focus on local development characterizes all practice areas in the Strategic Plan. This reinforces the case for UNDP to scale up support to civic engagement and community empowerment through synergistic and cross-practice approaches, even as it strengthens local government capacities, to achieve Strategic Plan outcomes. Local actions strengthen the linkages between poverty reduction, conservation of ecosystems, provision of energy, women's entrepreneurship, responding to HIV/AIDS in ways that involve equity in care and support to livelihoods, and engagement of communities in early crisis response. They also strengthen and complement the efforts of local government authorities in all these areas. To identify models to strengthen delivery for Strategic Plan outcomes, the cross-practice work in local development can in particular build on the UNDP recognition of innovation at the local level through the Equator Initiative Award as well as the decentralized governance model of the GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP in over 101 countries across the world.

While there has been an initial shift away from top-down processes in many countries, the transformative potential of local actors and citizen engagement is yet to be fully recognized. Most development interventions still tend to see communities at the local level as beneficiaries and targets, and as 'dialoguers'. But they are also agents of change, rights-holders and entrepreneurs with capacities to innovate and identify local solutions.

With a diverse range of specialized knowledge and practical experience, local action networks²² have immense potential to achieve concrete development objectives – in areas from poverty reduction and the MDGs, participatory local governance, community and gender-based responses to HIV/AIDS and crisis recovery, grassroots women's entrepreneurship, and sustainable management of ecosystems involving women and indigenous communities (*see Flagship Initiative 2: UN-Indigenous Peoples Partnership Mechanism*).

UNDP will help to support local action networks to manage access to services; define and amplify their voices to assert their rights; negotiate, find consensus, and establish multi-stakeholder governance forums. UNDP country offices will catalyse partnerships with the public and private sector and civil society, inform and shape effective and inclusive policies; and generate livelihoods, productive employment and empowerment for local action networks.

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Improved local capacity and delivery mechanisms to expand access to energy, safe water and sanitation services, and community based adaptation to climate change
- ☐ Innovative local governance approaches scaled up policy and budgets at sub-national and national levels
- ☐ Strengthened knowledge-sharing among civil society actors for improved coordination of AIDS responses
- ☐ Strengthened women's entrepreneurship and grassroots responses to HIV/AIDS and crisis recovery

Priority Focus Area 3: Strengthening civic engagement for multilateralism

■ Introduction and rationale

The global challenges facing the world today are dramatically different from those at the time when the United Nations was born. There are close to four times as many Governments defining global priorities through their membership in the United Nations today as there were in 1945. While the intergovernmental world has become more complex and diverse, it is increasingly clear that governments, while still the paramount authorities at the national level, cannot alone resolve today's global problems. An ever widening array of actors — civil society, local authorities, parliamentarians and corporations — are seeking a role in defining priorities and contributing to solutions.²³

Not since World War II has there been such intense scrutiny and questioning of multilateralism and its institutions. Today's debate runs on four tracks: the global financial system, with the current crisis in investment, credit, and housing markets; global security arrangements, with demands for a review of the composition of the United Nations Security Council; global trade, with the collapse of the Doha round; and the global governance of climate change, with its implications for consumption among the rich, and access to finance and technology by the poor.

Poor countries and the poorest populations are the most vulnerable to the negative impact of these interconnected crises of financial instability, volatile food and energy prices, and unacceptable levels of hunger, poverty

²² Local sustainable development action networks can include local authorities and administration, community-based and managed committees, cooperatives, microenterprises, skilled workers, community volunteers, grassroots women's groups, local steward associations, private sector entities, indigenous peoples' organizations, NGOs and CBOs.

²³ "We the Peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global Governance". 2004. Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. A/58/817

and inequality. The current crisis could mean major setbacks in reducing extreme poverty, as well as in progress towards the other MDGs. There are already calls for a new multilateralism to deal with such turmoil – one that focuses attention on the poorest, emphasizes a more flexible financial network, and maximizes the strengths of public, private and civil society organizations, along with the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The United Nations is key to charting the direction of the new multilateralism: with its global legitimacy and development presence on the ground, intergovernmental nature and ability to learn from development experience, the UN is uniquely placed among multilateral institutions to pursue holistic rather than 'silo' approaches to the governance crises of today.

In the eyes of citizens and civil society worldwide, the United Nations is the primary institutional vehicle for democratizing global governance.²⁴ Civil society, whose influence in the global arena has been transformed by the forces and logic of globalization, is integral to the future vision of a revitalized multilateralism and can thus be strategic partners of the UN in this quest (*see Box 5*).

Box 5 – How Civil Society Helps the United Nations

"The way the multilateral agenda is shaped has changed. Previously, governments would come together to discuss a new issue until there was a sufficient consensus for an intergovernmental resolution, which then led to action by governments and intergovernmental organizations. Today it is increasingly likely that a civil society movement and a crescendo of public opinion will bring a new issue to global attention and that initial action on new issues will be taken through multi-constituency coalitions of governments, civil society and others. Increasingly, multilateralism includes ongoing processes of public debate, policy dialogue and pioneering action to tackle emerging challenges."

**- Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on
United Nations-Civil Society Relations (2004)**

Citizens and civil society networks are already strongly engaged in the emerging global governance debates relating to the food, fuel and financial crises today, emphasizing principles of human development, accountability and civic engagement as a way forward. UNDP, with civil society and other development partners, will mobilize "Platform HD2010" – also marking the 20th anniversary of the launch of the UNDP Human Development Report in 2010 – as a forum to develop a vision for the next decade that engages civil society for an outward looking multilateralism reinforcing civic engagement and human development (*see Flagship Initiative 3: Civic Engagement to Strengthen Multilateralism*).

■ Expected outcomes

- ☐ Grassroots involvement in issues and movements promoting global commitments
- ☐ Strengthened collaboration between UN(DP) and civil society for greater civic engagement for multilateralism
- ☐ Expanded networks of international organizations, governments, civil society and citizen movements and voluntary associations dedicated to core democratic and multilateralist norms
- ☐ Platforms for civil actors and social movements to promote democratic reform of global institutions
- ☐ Strengthened south-south cooperation to address urgent development challenges

²⁴ "Civil Society's Impact on the Multilateral Sphere: Lessons Learned and Future Directions", Report on FIM Annual Forum, March 12-13, Montreal, Canada (2007).

Section IV. Flagship Initiatives

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE ONE: CIVICUS-led global consortium

UNDP will support a global consortium led by CIVICUS to promote the Civil Society Index (CSI) to generate knowledge about civil society and strengthen the sector to contribute to change in countries worldwide. This flagship initiative is aimed at strengthening the outcomes of the first priority focus area of the strategy (Invest in civil society and civic engagement), specifically through participatory civil society assessments that will generate evidence-based knowledge about the sector through the active involvement of civil society actors themselves.

To date, the CSI has been implemented in more than 50 countries by CIVICUS and its country partners.¹ The CSI is at once a self-assessment tool (generates knowledge on strengths and weaknesses as well as corrective measures), action-planning tool (develops capacities of CSOs in research and policy advocacy), and comparative tool (identifies best as well as bad practices which are shared across countries). UNDP has supported CSI implementation in 19 countries since the first seed funding in 1999 and is embarked on a new phase of support in Africa and Arab States. More country offices have expressed interest in carrying out such assessments, providing funding and / or technical support and bringing in the convening powers of the UN with governments. The involvement of UN(DP) in the CSI is especially important in fragile states and emerging democracies, where civil society is in a nascent stage and state-citizen relations are still evolving.

The presence of UNDP in this civil society-led initiative will help to convene governments and other stakeholders and generate buy-ins and political investment. There is also strong synergy between CSI and the growing UNDP portfolio in supporting governance assessments and measurements. For UNDP, the value of a nationally owned governance indicator system lies in the accountability mechanism it creates for local stakeholders, especially citizens and non-state actors. Nationally owned assessment systems like CSI provide upward internal rather than external pressure for reform. It also catalyzes greater citizen engagement in democracy processes and responsive governance. It is envisioned that CSI and the UNDP Global Programme on Governance Assessments will work closely together in overlapping pilot countries.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE TWO: UN-Indigenous Peoples Partnership Mechanism

Indigenous peoples are well positioned to demonstrate the intrinsic linkage between rights, human development, conflict prevention, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability, at the heart of the human development paradigm. UNDP plays a leadership role in the United Nations system and can help reverse the situations of exclusion that indigenous peoples face. Further, UNDP can facilitate their role as pro-active agents who can contribute greatly to addressing global challenges, including poverty reduction and climate change. UNDP will follow both a targeted and a mainstreaming approach to ensure that indigenous peoples' issues are addressed across all UNDP's programmatic work. UNDP will scale up support, in line with the second priority focus area of this strategy, for community empowerment to promote principles of national ownership as contained in the UNDP Strategic Plan.

The proposed UN-Indigenous Partnership Mechanism, to be administered by UNDP through UNDP Regional Centers and Country Offices, will include: (i) a grants component for initiatives designed by indigenous peoples themselves according to their own priorities; (ii) support the capacity of governments, particularly local government units, and all stakeholders to engage indigenous peoples in policy, development planning and reporting processes, through the establishment of participatory mechanisms; and (iii) a global indigenous youth leadership component that will develop the capacities of indigenous leaders, and particularly indigenous young women, to have a strong voice in regional and international development organizations and processes. The proposed mechanism will emphasize reducing stigma and discrimination of indigenous peoples living with HIV, disabilities, among others, and the particular vulnerability of indigenous women and girls in the access to land and property.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE THREE: Civic Engagement to Strengthen Multilateralism

The transnational nature of the challenges facing the world today – from the global financial crisis, food security, as well as climate change, pandemic disease and the spread of conflict – restates the importance of credible global governance institutions rooted in multilateralism, which is enriched by greater civic engagement and civil society participation (priority focus area 3).

The year 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the Human Development Report, the ten-year review of the Millennium Declaration and the 15th anniversary of the World Conference on Women (Beijing +15). . UNDP believes that responsible citizens and civil society organizations are powerful social actors who can significantly contribute to reviving the human development paradigm, the practical use of human development indexes in shaping development policies and strengthening democratic governance. In the eyes of citizens and civil society, the United Nations is the primary institutional vehicle for democratizing global governance, and critical to solutions to today's crises. UNDP will convene **Platform HD2010: Civic Engagement for MDGs and Multilateralism** to strengthen civic engagement and engage a wide range of citizens and civil society actors in dialogues to safeguard the present and future of a human development-based multilateral system. The Platform will emphasize the importance of the human development paradigm and the impact of human development reports in local, national as well as international development processes such as financing for development, climate change talks, trade and MDGs.

Annex A – Indicative List of Country Office Demands in Civic Engagement

Indicative list based on types of demands received by regional centres and Civil Society Division/PB.²⁵ Demand measured based on following levels:

☐ Low Demand
 ☐ Medium Demand
 ☐ High Demand

Strategic Plan Focus Areas	Country Office Demands	Regional Dispersion				
		Africa	Arab States	Asia-Pacific	Europe-CIS	LAC
Democratic Governance	Capacity development of civil society for democratic transition					
	Supporting NGO platforms					
	Support for developing regulatory frameworks					
	Civil society participation in regional level decision-making by governments					
	Capacity development and mapping of indigenous peoples					
	Multi-stakeholder dialogues in partnerships with extractive industries					
	Citizen engagement in corporate social responsibility					
	Strengthen media					
	Strengthen political parties					
	Strengthen civil society activities in local governance					
	Civic participation in development planning					
	Support in implementing regional programme					
Poverty Reduction/ MDGs	Economic and statistical literacy training					
	Poverty and social impact assessments					
	PRS-MDG processes					
	MDG campaigns					
	Localizing MDGs					
	Participation of CSOs/CBOs in PRS					
	Civic engagement in MDG monitoring and reporting					
	Improving service delivery and social assistance					
	Support for capacity development indigenous peoples		N/A			

²⁵ Based on information received from Bratislava, Johannesburg, Colombo and Bangkok regional service centres, Beirut SURF, Democratic Governance Group, HIV/AIDS Group, Environment and Energy Group, Gender Team, BCPR, and the Civil Society Division.

Demand measured based on following levels:

☐ **Low Demand**
☐ **Medium Demand**
☐ **High Demand**

Strategic Focus Area	Country Office Demands	Regional Dispersion				
		Africa	Arab States	Asia-Pacific	Europe-CIS	LAC
Crisis Prevention & Recovery	Integration and empowerment of IDPs					
	Design of bi-communal development programmes					
	Civic engagement in peace-building and reconciliation					
	Developing CBO capacity in post-crisis situations					
Environment & Energy	Strengthen capacities of CSOs and their networks in environmental and energy planning					
	Share positive experiences at the community level					
	Strengthen government-civil society partnerships					
	Strengthen CSO capacity to increase visibility of women's knowledge of natural resource management in national environmental policies and strategies					
HIV/AIDS	Strengthen participation of CSOs, PLWHA, women and marginalized groups in design, implementation and evaluation of AIDS responses					
	Strengthening leadership and organizational capacity of groups and networks of PLWHA, women living with HIV and groups most at risk					
	Facilitating interfaces between civil society and governance systems to improve participation and service delivery					
	Building managerial and technical capacity of CSOs to develop and implement programmes funded by GFATM					
	Promoting rights of men and women living with and affected by HIV, and addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination					

Demand measured based on following levels:

☐ **Low Demand**
☐ **Medium Demand**
☐ **High Demand**

Strategic Plan Cross-Cutting Area	Regional Dispersion					
	Country Office Demands	Africa	Arab States	Asia-Pacific	Europe-CIS	LAC
Capacity Development	In issue areas					
	MDG monitoring					
	Human rights training					
	Mitigating crisis, conflict, and disasters					
	Social entrepreneurship					
	For organizational development					
	Capacity assessment & capacity development					
	Advocacy and networking					
	Resource mobilization to increase financial viability of NGOs					
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Enhance support to CSOs to promote gender equality and women's empowerment					
	Ensure civil society engagement in the design of national policies, plans and budgets to address the needs of poor women and men, boys and girls					
	Enhance participation of women's groups in collection, analysis, and dissemination of gender-disaggregated and relevant data					
	Enhance participation of women's groups to implement programmes that support women's equality					
	Disseminate knowledge produced inside UNDP to CSOs and vice versa					
Indigenous Peoples	Establish more consultative bodies that engage with UN Country Teams		N/A			
	Involve indigenous peoples in multi-stakeholder SGP National Steering Committees; in innovative ways for direct access to funding by indigenous peoples		N/A			
Support to Office of Resident Coordinator						
UNDP/UNCT civil society strategies						
Civil Society Advisory Committees to UNCT						
Implement CIVICUS Civil Society Index						

Annex B – Key Findings of UNDP Country Office Engagement with Civil Society: Global Inventory (2008)

This is a short summary of the global inventory of UNDP country office engagement with civil society, with data gathered from a global survey conducted from November 2007 to May 2008. This summary assesses country office responses to the online survey which sought to understand variations in the breadth and depth of country office engagement with civil society. The purpose is merely to illustrate two key points:

1. Each region has countries with high and low values, implying sub-regional variations in the depth and breadth of civil society engagement.
2. There appears to be little, if any, correlation between various indicators of economic, human, or political development, and the breadth or depth of engagement with civil society. This points to the validity of a larger, more obvious conclusion: the breadth and depth of engagement may be determined by a multiplicity of factors that are external to the social, economic, or political reality of a developing country.

Method

Numeric values were given for responses to key questions, such as whether engagement with civil society was long-term or short-term; whether there was support to enabling environments, such as PRSPs, and so on.²⁶ For example, respondents reporting “strong” involvement in facilitating linkages between government and civil society were given the number 3, while those reporting “some” involvement were given the number 2.

All answers are treated with equal weight, such that 3 is given for having a CSO strategy, and 3 for using South-South arrangements, but no judgment is made as to whether it is more valuable to have a CSO strategy or to use South-South arrangements. Thus an in-depth, qualitative analysis may produce a different result than the one presented here. Also note: RBEC COs were each given 1 for “South-South cooperation” in an attempt to balance what may have been an unfair phrasing of that question.

The *breadth* of engagement

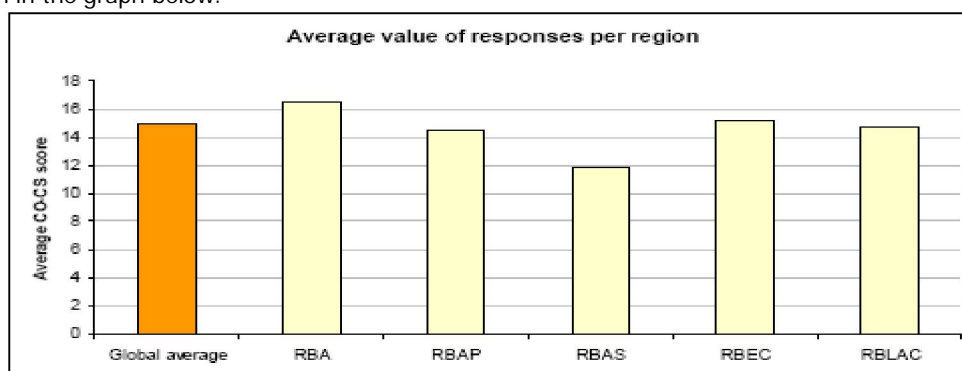
An attempt was made to map the breadth of engagement by counting the number of positive responses, i.e., the number of times a CO received *at least* 1 point. The graph below averages this number for each region, and suggests that RBAP COs enjoy the widest *breadth* of engagement. In other words, RBAP COs averaged the highest number (not value) of positive responses. Note that this analysis does not capture the breadth of engagement across sectors (governance, HIV/AIDS, etc), but merely breadth across the issues surveyed.

²⁶ Eleven questions were considered:

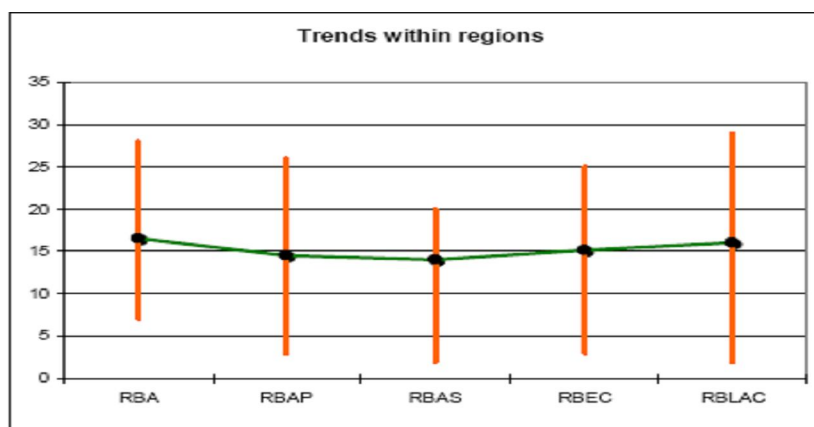
1. Whether engagement with civil society was long-term or short-term;
2. Support to policy initiatives relating to enabling environments for CSOs;
3. UNDP's role in facilitating linkages between government and CS;
4. Support to participatory civil society assessments;
5. Engaging in shared policy initiatives with CSOs, such as discussions concerning PRSPs;
6. The use of South-South arrangements when engaging with CS;
7. The existence of CS advisory committees;
8. Measurable collaboration with other UN agencies on issues relating to CS;
9. Existence of a CS Strategy;
10. Existence of CS Focal Points within the office;
11. Frequency of measuring success in capacity development work.

The *depth* of engagement

An attempt was made to assess the “quality” of engagement by asking respondents if engagement was strong, weak, non-existent, etc. Research found that all regions except RBAS tended to average approximately the same value, as shown in the graph below.



However, this masks strong sub-regional variation, as shown in the graph below. This graph shows that although average regional values (the green line) are similar, within each region there is typically a wide range of values, implying strong subregional variation in civil society engagement. In RBA, for example, values range from 7 to 28. RBA has the highest *low* value, as all other regions had countries with lower values. Interestingly, RBLAC has amongst the lowest and the highest.



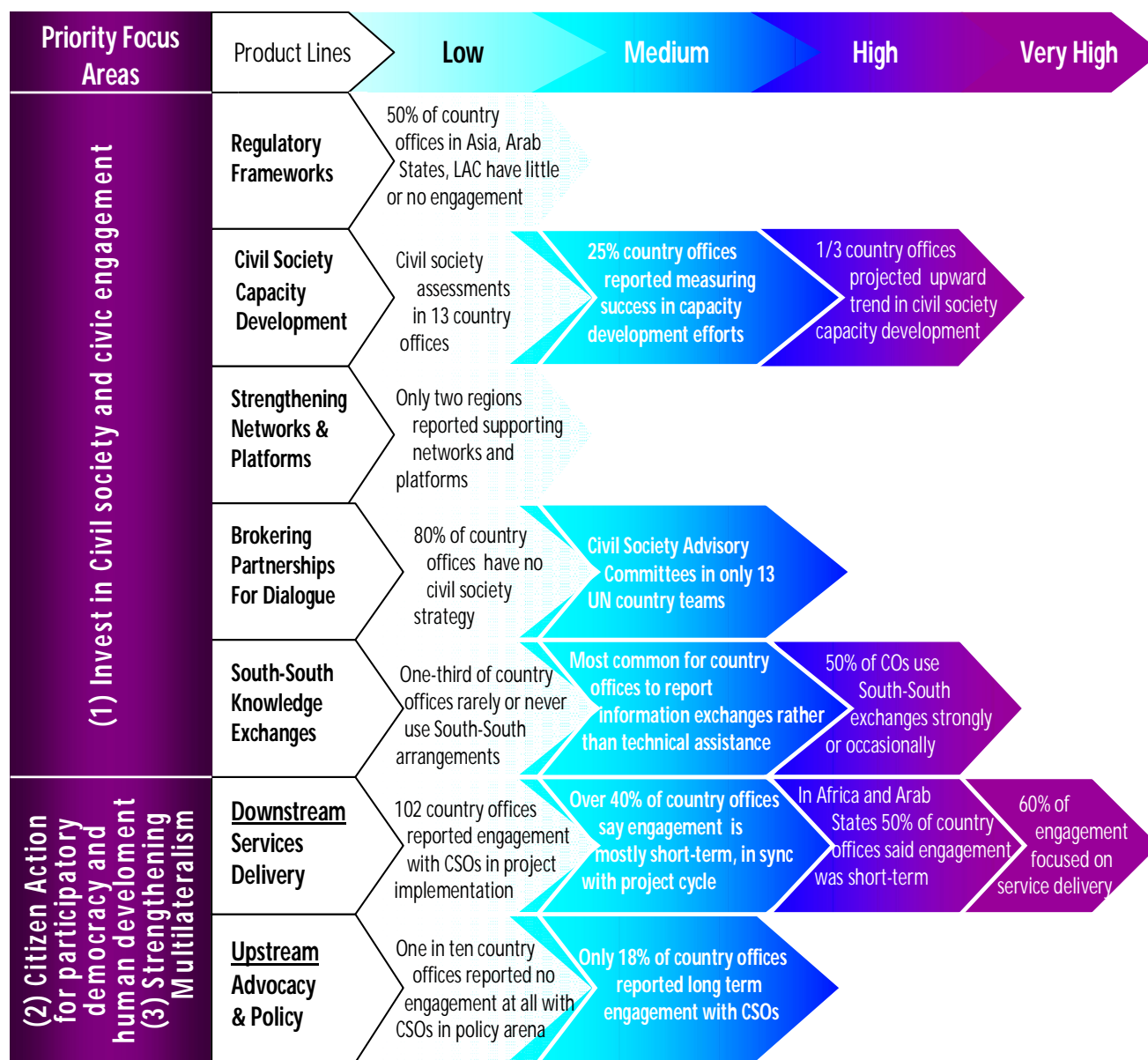
Correlating survey responses with country indicators

These findings do not correlate positively to a number of indicator sets. For example, there appears to be little correlation between a high CO-CS value and World Bank data for political stability or accountability.²⁷ This implies, for example, that the mere presence of perceived corruption has little bearing on the likelihood of UNDP engaging civil society in the area of anti-corruption in a given country, or on the likelihood of UNDP engaging in enabling environment activities. Logically, this implies that there are countries with conducive legal and/or political environments, in which UNDP is *not* engaging deeply with civil society. This is hardly surprising, however, as there are a number of factors that determine UNDP's engagement with civil society. In addition to the mere presence of a problem, such as high levels of corruption, factors such as UNDP's relationship with the government and donor interest in the country/sector have a very large bearing on where and how UNDP works, not to mention the existence of CSOs with which to work.

²⁷ Indicator sets included: UNDP *Human Development Index*, 2004; World Bank *Governance Indicators for Voice and Accountability*, 2005; World Bank *Governance Indicators for Political Stability and Absence of Violence*, 2005; Reporters Without Borders *World Press Freedom Index*, 2006; Freedom House *Political Rights*, 2007; Freedom House *Civil Liberties*, 2006; Freedom House *Status*; Freedom House *Political Pluralism and Participation*, 2007. Data taken from <http://www.iadb.org/datagob/> and [FreedomHouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org).

Annex C – ‘Heat map’ of UNDP-civil society engagement (country offices)

The following graph is based on findings of the UNDP Global Inventory (2008), which asked country offices to identify practice areas in which they engaged most with civil society (responses are an *aggregation*). Further information came from practices and regional advisers. UNDP is most successful in engaging civil society in a service delivery capacity, with over 60% of engagement focused in this area. Capacity development for civil society is another area which country offices have increased investment and engagement. While wide in scope, the success of these activities – gender budgeting, network building, technical training – is rarely assessed by country offices. Other areas in which UNDP should be engaging civil society more actively: (1) assisting governments develop effective legal and regulatory frameworks for civil society engagement, and (2) strengthening civil society networks and platforms.



Annex D: Relationship with Corporate Commitments

Figure 1 – Linking civil society strategy priority focus areas to UNDP Strategic Plan outcomes

Strategy Priorities	UNDP Strategic Plan				
	<u>Goal 1</u> Poverty/MDG	<u>Goal 2</u> Democratic Governance	<u>Goal 3</u> CPR	<u>Goal 4</u> Environment-Energy	Cross-cutting
Priority 1 Investing in Civil Society and Civic Engagement	[1.2] Enhance national and local capacities for MDGs [1.3] Policies/institutions for empowerment of women/girls [1.5] Capacity for participatory local development [1.10] Inclusive governance for AIDS responses	[2.2] Laws, processes, and institutions promote inclusive participation [2.6] Effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems [2.7] Strengthen capacities of national human rights institutions [2.9] Strengthen capacities for anti-corruption	[3.2] Disasters: Strengthen national capacities to cope with shocks [3.3] Conflict: Strengthen national capacities to cope with conflict [3.5] Post-disaster governance capacity strengthened [3.6] Post-conflict governing capacity strengthened	[4.1] Strengthen national capacities for mainstream of environment & energy [4.3] Strengthen national capacities for mainstream of climate change [4.4] Strengthen capacities to expand services to the poor	[1] UNDP projects integrate capacity development [2] UNDP projects integrate gender equality, women's empowerment
Priority 2 Citizen Action for Participatory Democracy and Development	[1.2] Enhance national & local capacities for MDGs [1.6] PPPs for small medium enterprises [1.10] Inclusive governance for AIDS responses [1.11] Multi-stakeholder approaches	[2.1] Civil society contribute MDG national planning [2.3] Access to information to support Accountability [2.4] Manage equitable delivery of public services [2.8] Mainstream gender equality in gov policies	[3.4] Post-crisis resumption of local governance [3.7] Enhance gender equality, women's empowerment in post-crisis situation [3.8] Post-crisis community security and cohesion restored	[4.2] Use of market mechanisms to support environment management	[2] UNDP projects integrate gender equality, women's empowerment (3) South-South approaches to development mainstreamed (4) UNDP country programmes support national plans
Priority 3 Civic Engagement for Multilateralism	[1.10] Inclusive governance for AIDS responses [1.11] Multi-stakeholder approaches [1.12] Strengthening national capacities through multilateral funding	[2.1] Civil society contribute to MDG national planning	[3.1] Crisis management and prevention through inclusive dialogue		[3] South-South approaches to development mainstreamed [5] UNDP meets aid effectiveness standards

Figure 2 – Linking civil society strategy priority focus areas to UNDP Global Programme outputs²⁸

Strategy Priorities	UNDP Global Programme Outputs ²⁸			
	Goal 1 Poverty Reduction & MDGS	Goal 2 Democratic Governance	Goal 4 Environment & Energy	Cross-cutting
Priority 1 Investing in Civil Society and Civic engagement	[1a] Initiatives and Programmes that strengthen multi-dimensional MDG-based national planning [3b] Strengthen partners' ability to address gender discrimination and human rights related to HIV/AIDS	[1a] Initiatives and Programmes that strengthen multi-dimensional MDG-based national planning	[1a] Initiatives and Programmes that strengthen multi-dimensional MDG-based national planning	[1] Tools, methodologies, policies and peer learning based on best practices
Priority 2 Citizen Action for Participatory Democracy and Development	[1b] Mainstreaming of local development approaches into UNDP programmes [3a] Respond to food and commodity prices by sharing good practices [5] Strengthen development solutions aligned with country typologies [6] Provide gender-responsive policy and technical advisory services	[1b] Mainstreaming of local development approaches into UNDP programmes [3] Interventions that use new technologies to strengthen inclusive participation through improved civic engagement [5] Strengthen development solutions aligned with country typologies [6] Provide gender-responsive policy and technical advisory services	[1b] Mainstreaming of local development approaches into UNDP programmes [3] Interventions cross-practice work to mainstream environment, climate-change concerns into national plans [5] Strengthen development solutions aligned with country typologies [6] Provide gender-responsive policy and technical advisory services	[2] Improved programming guidance for more results-oriented and effective programming [3] Partnerships
Priority 3 Civic Engagement for Multilateralism	[2] Support for engagement and participation of programmes in inter-governmental debates and processes. [4] Identify and develop innovative approaches and development financing opportunities	[2] Support for engagement and participation of programmes in inter-governmental debates and processes. [4] Identify and develop innovative approaches and development financing opportunities	[2] Support for engagement and participation of programmes in inter-governmental debates and processes. [4] Identify and develop innovative approaches and development financing opportunities	[3] Partnerships

²⁸ Based on the fact that the UNDP Global Programme outcomes mirror UNDP Strategic Plan outcomes, this matrix focuses on demonstrating how the UNDP Global Strategy to strengthen Civil Society and Civic Engagement reinforce specific Global Programme outputs. While helping country offices achieve Global Programme outputs, the strategy inevitably supports the features of the Global Programmes' cycle, namely: (1) "bringing global knowledge and learning to country level", and (2) "bringing country realities to global attention."

Figure 3 – Linking civil society strategy priority focus areas to UNDP Gender Equality Strategy

Strategy Priorities	UNDP Gender Equality Strategy Outcomes				
	<u>Goal 1</u> Poverty/MDG	<u>Goal 2</u> Democratic Governance	<u>Goal 3</u> CPR	<u>Goal 4</u> Environment-Energy	Cross-cutting
<u>Priority 1</u> Investing in Civil Society and Civic Engagement	(2) Policies, institutions and mechanisms that facilitate empowerment of women (3) Enhanced national and local capacities for gender responsive investments and budgets (9) Strengthen capacities to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment	(1) Strengthened capacities of political parties for women's leadership (2) Enact electoral laws that encourages women voters and candidates (4) Incorporate gender perspectives in public service reform (9) Strengthened capacities to mainstream gender equality & women's empowerment	(2) DISASTERS: Strengthen national capacities, including gender analysis (3) CONFLICT: Strengthen national capacities, including gender analysis (5) Post-disaster bolster capacities to reduce vulnerabilities, including participation of women (6) Post-conflict governance capacities strengthened	(1) Enhanced capacities to integrate gender equality dimensions into national environment and energy plans (2) Strengthened capacities of women's organizations to engage in environment & energy planning process (3) Increased access of women-led businesses and organizations to environmental finance	(1) UNDP projects integrate capacity development (2) UNDP projects integrate gender equality, women's empowerment
<u>Priority 2</u> Citizen Action for Participatory Democracy and Development	(2) Policies, institutions and mechanisms that facilitate empowerment of women (4) Enhanced capacities for gender-sensitive trade policies, and facilitate women taking part in such negotiations (6) Enhanced national capacities for inclusive participation in AIDS responses programmes	(3) Communication channels that promote government accountability on gender equality considerations (7) Integrate women's security needs and protection against violence (8) Effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems with due consideration for the poor, women and vulnerable groups	(4) Early post-crisis resumption of gender responsive local governance functions (7) Enhance gender equality, women's empowerment in post-crisis situation (8) Post-crisis, community security and social cohesion at local level restored, ending gender-based violence	(4) Increased awareness of the gendered impact of environmental finance (6) Awareness of women's role in climate change and mitigation promoted (7) Gender-responsive policies that link energy, water, and environment services with sustainable livelihoods	(4) UNDP country programmes are linked with and in support of national development plans
<u>Priority 3</u> Civic Engagement for Multilateralism	(7) Policies implemented through multi-stakeholder approaches to protect human rights of PLWHA, mitigate gender-related vulnerabilities, address impact of AIDS on women, girls	(6) Harmonize traditional and customary legal norms with international norms and standards	(1) Crisis management and prevention through inclusive dialogue among governments, civil society actors and other partners (i.e. the UN, women's networks, bilateral partners, etc.)	(5) Increased capacity of government entities and women's organizations to engage in dialogue on adaptation and mitigation strategies	(3) South-South approaches in development plans and UN work (4) UNDP meets aid effectiveness standards