

UNDP Results

Civil Society



Approach

Civil society is both a vital resource and a critical constituency for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in a world characterized by increasingly complex development challenges. These challenges include conflict within and between states; obstacles to deepening democratic governance; growing economic inequality within society; the spread of HIV and AIDS; and rapid depletion of the natural resource base on which future livelihoods depend. UNDP works with a range of civil society organizations around the world in order to reduce poverty, advance human development and democratic governance and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Civil society – any non-state, voluntary organization, from community civic groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to academia, think tanks, professional associations and trade unions – has emerged as a key development participant. As such, engaging with civil society is crucial to UNDP's development work of bringing about concrete, sustainable change at all levels of society.

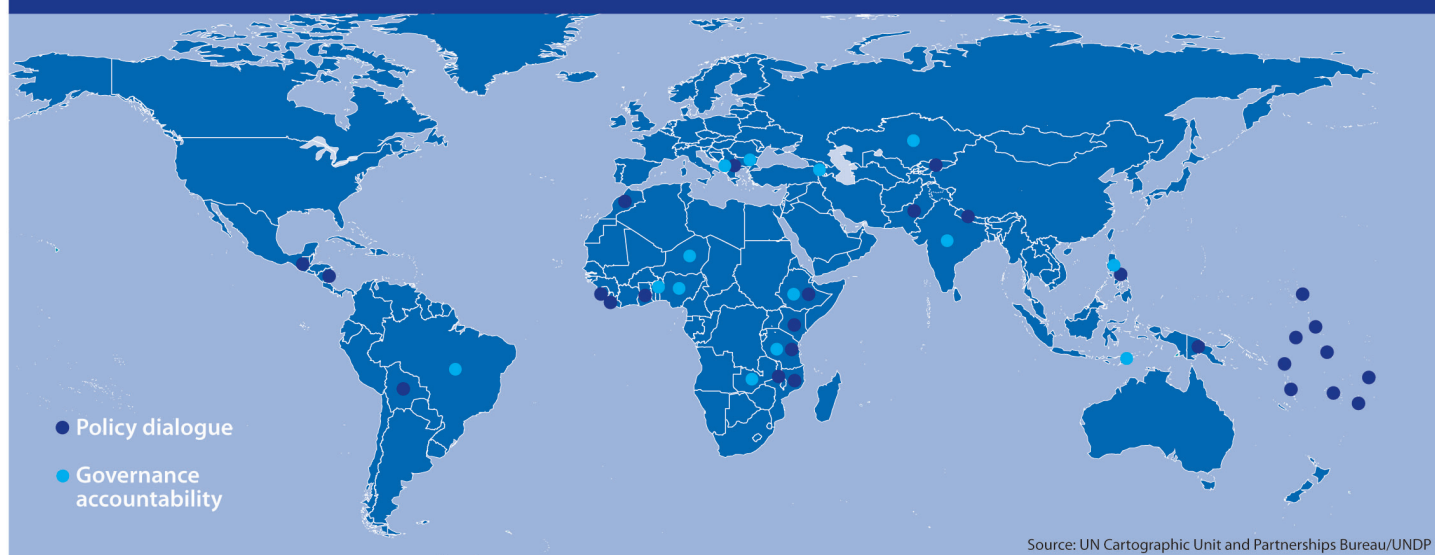
RESULTS

Strengthening policy dialogue with the UN

Civil society is vital not only to national development efforts but also to the formation of development policy. By the end of 2009, UNDP had created 13 national civil society advisory committees in countries where both UN and civil society signaled a need for such dialogue. As a result:

- In the **Philippines**, the UNDP-supported civil society advisory committee became a critical forum for the UN Country Team to discuss national UN development effectiveness with people who truly represent the ultimate beneficiaries.
- In 2010, the UNDP-supported civil society advisory committee in **Tanzania** was invited by the Government to join a group to independently guide, manage and monitor an evaluation of the One UN approach. In 2009, the committee was asked to provide systematic advice and inputs to the UN's joint-agency programmes in Tanzania and on the upcoming UN Development Assistance Plan (2011-2015).

UNDP Civil Society Activities, 2010



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Appears without prejudice to the question of sovereignty.

Supporting government accountability through civic engagement

Governance is one of the main factors affecting the delivery of basic services such as health care and education. UNDP believes that citizens, and not just state institutions, have a role to play in governance that works for poor and marginalized people. UNDP promotes work that brings the State and citizens together for such efforts as human rights legislation, anti-corruption initiatives and MDG achievement. Highlights include:

- In **Timor Leste**, UNDP helped the Government to organize a nine-month consultative process to draft a law that would improve access to justice. The process, which ended in 2009 and was done in partnership with the UN Mission in Timor Leste, involved 800 people including ordinary citizens in addition to judges and lawyers.

The consultation resulted in a draft law recognizing and institutionalizing traditional and local customs for conflict resolution. It included proposals to bring legal services to remote areas of Timor Leste not covered by local justice institutions. UNDP is now working with the Ministry of Justice to provide mobile legal clinics to these communities.

- In **Zambia**, where gender-based violence is a major problem and a driver behind the HIV and AIDS pandemic, UNDP promoted inclusion of civil society organizations in the review of draft legislation against gender-based violence. As a result, the organizations were able to contribute to the Bill which the Government framed according to international standards.

- In 2009, UNDP worked with the Ateneo School of Government in the **Philippines** to tackle the problem of leaks in school buildings. With UNDP's support, school heads, parent-teacher associations and leaders from the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts received training in the use of specially designed checklists that allow them to monitor bidding and construction for their school building. They then report back to a government watchdog.

As a result, this critical government process has been more transparent and contractors were required to operate at high standards. Overall, the initiative helped to improve 30 school building projects in Manila and four provinces.

- In **Brazil**, UNDP, in partnership with civil society organizations and UNICEF, launched an MDG monitoring website in early 2009. The website, www.portalodm.com.br, provides an online overview of disaggregated data for all 5,565 municipalities in Brazil. It presents comprehensive and detailed information on MDG facts, achievement and advocacy for each municipality. UNDP helped to train more than 9,000 people to use the system.

As a result, citizens, civil servants and locally elected officials have accessed and used the information on the website in public hearing debates, to influence budget bills and public investment plans and to influence other important local-level decisions.

- In **Nigeria**, UNDP has been engaged in efforts to strengthen citizen anti-corruption coalitions and movements since 2009. Through the country's Independent Corrupt Practices Commission and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, UNDP is supporting the National Anti-Corruption Coalition, a Government education and mass mobilization programme. UNDP has also helped to develop the ability of civil society organizations to monitor development projects and to forge partnerships between citizens' groups and government agencies.

As a result, citizens now regularly file petitions about corrupt practices involving local government and other state officials. Such petitions provide anti-corruption institutions with the necessary information for investigation and prosecution.

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