**COMMENTS ON THE UNDP DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FOR GEORGIA (2021-2025)**

*First regular session 2021*

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| **Comments by Austria** | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the feedback from Austria and are grateful for the strong partnership we enjoy in implementing the UNDP programme in Georgia, particularly in the field of local economic development. The UNDP Georgia CPD has been revised to reflect your comments, along with additional feedback received from the Czech Republic, the EU, Germany and Sweden. The text you received had already benefitted from multiple reviews by Georgian Government counterparts, UNDP technical experts and national stakeholders, and had received an official sign-off from the Government. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received from member state delegations. However, the 6,000-word length limit is very strict; we have had to omit or distil many details and issues to respect this limit. Where we were unable to introduce new text or make major revisions, please rest assured that your feedback will be addressed during programme implementation.  |
| * UNDP has a broad portfolio of activities on a vertical and horizontal level. In the area of agriculture for instance, UNDP provides support at the “grass-root level” as well as at the policy level.

The key question is the coherence between the different projects/portfolios, as well as their sustainability and long-term effectiveness, those aspects should be made clearer in the strategic document. We also recommend that the strategic document focuses on the concrete impact, rather than on the data/figures, that already appear in the results/outcome framework.  | The coherence and sustainability of the programme are of crucial importance to us and are issues that we sought to address in paragraphs 19-23, including in particular through our emphasis on integrated solutions. While redrafting is not possible at this stage, modest adjustments (including paragraph 17 and new paragraph 27) have been made to the text to make this clearer. On the second point, the data in Part I of the CPD respond to guidance that the UNDP Country Office should “specifically state those groups left furthest behind” and to “specify how women and different marginalized groups – particularly those identified through the CCA – are affected and are affected differently by development challenges.” This presentation is then matched by the programmatic priorities outlined in Part II.  |
| **Comments by Czech Republic**  | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the feedback from the Czech Republic and are grateful for the strong partnership we enjoy in implementing UNDP programmes in Georgia. Our work with the Czech Embassy has been an impulse to innovation in many areas. The UNDP Georgia CPD has been revised to reflect your comments, along with additional feedback received from Austria, the EU, Germany and Sweden. The text you received for review had already benefitted from multiple reviews by Government counterparts, national stakeholders and UNDP technical experts, and was formally approved for submission by the Government. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received from member state delegations. However, the 6,000-word length limit is very strict; we have thus had to omit or distil many details and issues to comply. Where we were unable to introduce new text or make major revisions, please rest assured that your comments will be taken into account and addressed during programme implementation.  |
| * While the priorities and goals are clearly set in the second chapter, a clear connection to the analysis carried out in the first chapter is lacking.
 | In our view, the challenges outlined in Part I map directly to the priority programming areas in Part II. While major redrafting is impossible at this stage, the text has been modified slightly (in paragraph 8 and 26) to make this connection between analysis and programme more explicit. |
| * In several points, the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU plays important role and its explicit mention might be considered in paragraph 24: interconnection of the AA and SDGsparagraph 26, points A (ii, iii) and C: mentioned activities will be carried out in alignment with the AA
 | A specific reference has been added to paragraph 24. Please note that the importance of the EU alignment and specifically the mutually reinforcing nature of the AA and SDGs are mentioned in paragraphs 1-3 and reiterated in paragraph 24.  |
| * In paragraph 29, regarding the role of the UN in conflict-affected areas, extra mention might be added about the coordination with other development partners in these areas.
 | The issue of coordination applies more broadly, so a new paragraph has been added on partnerships in Part II (responding also to similar comments made by other member state delegations). The added language in new paragraph 27 includes UNDP’s commitment to coordinate in conflict-affected areas.  |
| **Comments by the European Commission**  | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the positive feedback from the EU and are grateful for the exceptionally strong partnership we enjoy in implementing the UNDP programme in Georgia. Whereas your comments did not require amendments to the CPD draft, the text has been revised to reflect additional feedback received from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Sweden. The text you received had benefitted from multiple reviews by Georgian Government counterparts, UNDP technical experts and national stakeholders, had received an official sign-off from the Government. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received. However, the 6,000-word length limit is very strict; we have had to omit or distil many details and issues to respect this limit.  |
| * The analysis and priorities outlined in the draft CDP are adequate and demonstrate how closely the EU works with UNDP. This close relationship is also demonstrated in the fact that UNDP is implementing a considerable number of EU funded projects (European Neighbourhood Programme on Agriculture and Rural Development, programmes with civil society, Parliament and on VET, media, human rights).
 | We appreciate this assessment and are grateful for the close and fruitful partnership we enjoy with the EU. As detailed in the CPD, we see the Association Agreement and the SDGs as two complementary agendas that signpost a clear development pathway for Georgia.  |
| * The matrix outlined in the draft CPD is very well done and again very much aligned with priorities and conditions under ongoing EU programmes. Some indicators would require further clarification as they are rather vague.
 | We appreciate the comment. All the outcome indicators in the matrix are derived from the UNSDCF, so here we can only replicate, but we will strive to provide greater clarity on all indicators during implementation.  |
| * Draft CDP appears quite strong on gender equality. All indicators should be followed-up sex-disaggregated (broken down by sex).
 | We appreciate this comment. Gender equality was meant to underpin the programme. We have sought to use sex-disaggregated indicators wherever possible, but in some cases we face limitations in terms of data availability. |
| **Comments by the Government of Georgia**  | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the feedback from Georgian Mission to the United Nations and are grateful for the strong partnership we enjoy in implementing the UNDP programme in Georgia. The UNDP Georgia CPD has been revised to reflect your comments, along with additional feedback received from Austria, the Czech Republic, the EU, Germany and Sweden. The text you received had benefitted from multiple reviews by Georgian Government counterparts (including detailed comments from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and UNDP technical experts, and had received an official sign-off from the Administration of the Government of Georgia. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received. However, the 6,000-word length limit for the text and annex is very strict; thus we have had to omit or distil many details and issues to respect this limit. Where we were unable to introduce new text or make major revisions, please rest assured that all comments will be addressed during programme implementation.  |
| * The Government of Georgia would kindly ask to reformulate the sentence in the paragraph 2 as follows: “… ***including through voluntary national reviews presented at the United Nations High-Level Political Forums on Sustainable Development in 2016 and 2020***”.
 | Done. |
| * The Government of Georgia would like to clarify what is meant in paragraph 29, under the terms "subregion" and "subregional trade". If the "subregion" here means "conflict-affected areas", then we would like to propose the following wording, which would be more relevant to the Georgian context:

“***29. United Nations organizations are likely to face continued constraints in operating in conflict-affected areas. Transparency and strict adherence to humanitarian principles will help mitigate this risk. Contingency plans will be prepared to address potential scenarios on the ground, while continuing to seek chances to reap benefits from the trade across the divid***e”.​ | In fact, “subregion” refers here to the three South Caucasus countries, and not strictly to Georgia’s conflict-affected areas. But to avoid any ambiguity, this sentence has been deleted.  |
| * The Government of Georgia would kindly ask to add “***The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia***” to the relevant graph of the Annex -MAJOR PARTNERS / PARTNERSHIPS, FRAMEWORKS, Page 17
 | Done. |

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| **Comments by Germany** | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the feedback from Germany and are grateful for the strong partnership we enjoy in implementing the UNDP programme in Georgia. The UNDP Georgia CPD has been revised to reflect your comments, along with additional feedback received from Austria, the Czech Republic, the EU and Sweden. The text you received had already benefitted from multiple reviews by Georgian Government counterparts, national stakeholders and UNDP technical experts, and had received an official sign-off from the Government. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received from member state delegations. However, the 6,000-word length limit is very strict; we have had to omit or distil many details and issues to respect this limit. Where we were unable to introduce new text or make revisions, please rest assured that your feedback will be addressed during implementation.  |
| * General comment: Good local governance, sustainable urban mobility, improvement of IDP-living conditions, forest sector, sustainable environmental resource use and protection, climate change, vocational education and training, as well as support to SMEs are focal areas of German technical cooperation in the context of sustainable economic development. Close coordination with the German Development activities is hence important when designing and implementing UNDP programmes.
 | We recognize the huge contribution that German development actors are making in the fields you mention in Georgia, and we acknowledge the need for close coordination in designing and implementing UNDP programmes. Unfortunately, we do not have space in the CPD to enumerate development partners or collaborative activities; however, we have added a general paragraph on partnerships (new paragraph 27) to underline the importance we attach to good cooperation in all phases of our programming.  |
| * Chapter 1 paragraph 10: it should be mentioned that high level of subsistence farming is, on the other hand, a resilience mechanism for global pandemics like SARS-CoV-2, which almost brings national and international value-chains to a halt.
 | This is an excellent point and it is now mentioned. |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, B: to be precise it should be mentioned that the nationwide multi-hazard early warning system is co-funded by the GCF, Sida and SDC.
 | Owing to the rigorous length restrictions in the CPD, we have unfortunately not been able to clearly specify funding sources for any of our projects or programmes. We remain grateful to the donors mentioned, as well as the wide range of other development partners that support UNDP in Georgia. |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, A: There is no focus on justice system and the rule of law principles, while there is increasing dissatisfaction and decreasing trust among the public towards the courts and prosecutor office. This system is especially discriminatory towards LGBTQI community which is outlined as a separate sub-priority (iv) under the same paragraph.
 | This is not currently envisaged as a focus area for UNDP programming, owing to funding constraints, though we acknowledge the relevance of the issue. The challenge is now mentioned explicitly in Parts I and II (in paragraphs 4 and 26.A.vi), and it will be incorporated into the UNDP programme if sufficient resources can be secured. |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, A iii: There is no mention of regions with ethnical minorities that also face significant issues in terms of promoting good local governance. Probably this deserves special attention because of high recent tensions in the region. Peaceful coexistence of Armenian and Azeri communities in certain municipalities could serve as an example of peaceful coexistence in the region.
 | This is an excellent point. A paragraph on national minorities was deleted from Part I owing to length constraints. The UNDP local governance programme is already active in areas with large minority populations, and this will continue to be a focus under the new country programme. While space unfortunately does not allow for more detail, a mention of this challenge has been added to the relevant paragraph in Part II (paragraph26.A.iii).  |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, A v: the paragraph starts with the following formulation: ‘Work with UN partners to advance gender equality in three main areas…’. Unless this formulation means that basically everyone is UN’s partner globally, probably the formulation should state clearly that the work should be done in cooperation with other development partners active in this field. E.g. German Development Cooperation (GIZ) has done a lot in terms of promoting women’s political participation and will continue to do so after 2021 elections.
 | The reference here to “UN partners” was meant to convey partners in the UN system (i.e. UN Women and UNFPA), and not to cover all partners of the UN, since this is an area where the UN in Georgia has a strong tradition of joint programming. The sentence has been reworded to make this clear. UNDP recognizes the important contributions made in this area by GIZ and other development partners, and will continue to cooperate with all the actors active in this area in Georgia in 2021-2025. |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, B: The programme focuses more on climate change adaptation (disaster prevention) and management of protected areas. UNDP will continue to support GoG to reduce carbon emissions across all sectors, but there are no further details on this topic and the transport sector is not mentioned
 | Unfortunately, we do not have space to specify all activities across all priority areas, so we have focused on the two – disaster prevention and protected areas – where we already have significant programming under way and are confident about future funding. As noted in the CPD, we expect to focus on energy efficiency and renewable technologies, as well as waste management, recycling and circular economy. |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, B: The programme states that it will continue to assist Georgia to fulfil its commitments on climate change and reduce GHG emissions across all sectors […] and promote renewable technologies and energy-efficient solutions […] and support concepts such as the circular economy. However, the core focus of the environmental work is on vulnerability analysis and adaptation to climate change. What the focus of UNDP’s efforts in the other areas (climate change mitigation, (renewable) energy, circular economy or protected areas) are, is not clear.
 | Again, we simply do not have sufficient space to provide a detailed presentation of all planned activities. In some cases, these are developing areas where specific activities will be developed during the 2021-2025 programme period. As the focus becomes clearer, UNDP will keep partners informed.  |
| * Chapter 2 paragraph 26, C: Although the paragraph starts with the statement to bridge the urban-rural divide, the focus is entirely on rural areas, while small urban areas seem to be omitted. The situation in small urban areas, however, might not be any better than its surrounding rural areas.
 | This is a good point and is well noted, even if not mentioned in the CPD. UNDP aims to support small urban areas in becoming job-creating magnets for villages in their vicinity.  |
| * Annex, Output 2: Under major partners: The German Development Cooperation is an active partner/supporter for MEPA as well. As an additional partner along with the Caucasus Nature Fund, the Eco Corridor Fund – a financial instrument aimed to preserve large, sustainably used landscapes - should be included in the list.
 | This point is well noted. However, the partners listed here are not meant to include all entities active on the issues covered, but rather to indicate those with which UNDP has a financial or contractual relationship. In this case, the CNF is an implementing partner for a GEF-funded project.  |
| * Annex, Output 2: The Climate Action Plan and NDC are mentioned - two policy documents where GIZ has provided support over the last 5 years. Synergies and cooperation opportunities may exist with the programme “CDCPIII - Capacity Development for Climate Policy in the countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia, Phase III” regarding capacity development of the public sector, to promote climate change mitigation measures/plans/policies/strategies.
 | UNDP is keen to develop synergies and build cooperative links. We are in close contact with GIZ and will explore all possible options for collaboration with the programme mentioned and others. Again, the space constraints of the CPD do not allow us to enumerate all the actors active in our focus areas, but please know we maintain regular contact.  |
| * Annex, Outputs 1.1-4.2: Synergies with the GIZ-programme “Economic and social participation of vulnerable displaced and local population in the Caucasus” in the following areas: C- Unlocking the potential of rural areas/D - Improving living conditions for conflict-affected people should be ensured:
* Outputs 1.1/1.2: Synergies and cooperation opportunities with EPIC regarding capacity development of the public sector, in particular the host communities, to promote the economic and social participation of vulnerable displaced and local population.
* Outputs 3.1/3.2: Synergies and cooperation opportunities with EPIC regarding employment promotion, support of small enterprises and capacity development of the public sector in both fields targeting vulnerable population groups in particular.
* Outputs 4.1/4.2: Synergies and cooperation opportunities with EPIC regarding participation of civil society, resilience and self-reliance especially for youth and women as well as regarding support in advocacy for vulnerable population groups.
 | These potential areas for information-sharing, synergies and cooperation are well noted, and UNDP Georgia will pursue collaboration with all the programmes identified here.  |
| **Comments by Sweden** | **Response by the Country Office** |
|  | **General comment:** We appreciate the feedback from Sweden and are grateful for the strong partnership we enjoy in implementing the UNDP programme in Georgia, where Sweden is a key donor across all areas where we work. The UNDP Georgia CPD has been revised to reflect your comments, along with additional feedback received from Austria, the Czech Republic, the EU and Germany. The text you received had already benefitted from multiple reviews by Government counterparts, national stakeholders and UNDP technical experts, and had received an official sign-off from the Government. Every effort has been made to address all the comments received from member state delegations. However, the 6,000-word length limit for the text and annex is very strict; thus we have had to omit or distil many details and issues to respect this limit. Where we were unable to introduce new text or make major revisions, please rest assured that all comments will be considered carefully and addressed during programme implementation.  |
| * The link between Heading 1 (UNDP within the UNSDCF) and the content is not consistent. The first 16 out of 23 paragraphs is pure Georgia country context analysis.
 | The brief for Part 1 is broader than the heading suggests. The guidance for Part 1 of the CPD asks the Country Office to “specifically state those groups left furthest behind” and to “specify how women and different marginalized groups – particularly those identified through the CCA – are affected and are affected differently by development challenges.” To meet this requirement, the text identifies in brief the challenges that the programme (presented in Part 2) is meant to address, while also defining UNDP’s role within the UN system and under the UNSDCF. We appreciate the assessment (in your second comment) that the context analysis is “relevant and concise.”  |
| * The context analysis is relevant and concise. However two political key challenges significant for the proposed strategy are not identified: the lack of judicial independence and integrity and the opposition's long-standing boycott of parliament.
 | UNDP has focused on the issues that the programme aims to prioritize in the 2021-2025 period. While judicial independence and the opposition boycott are obviously highly relevant to the realm of democratic governance, UNDP is not at this time directly engaged in their resolution. That said, we have adjusted the language in Part 1 (paragraph 4) to highlight these challenges, and added a mention of judicial reform to Part II priorities (paragraph 26.A.vi). |
| * Heading one could elaborate further on the role UNDP could play in advancing aid effectiveness and as a convener and process manager for transformative change.
 | While not using exactly this language, we have aimed to capture this idea in paragraphs 19-23 and by emphasizing the “integrator” role for the SDGs assigned to UNDP. |
| * Under Heading 2 (Programme Priority and Partnerships) there is no mentioning of partnerships. Priorities could be made clearer, specifically under C. Unlocking the potential of rural areas. Some of the proposed areas are probably better covered by other development partners e.g. Private sector competitiveness will be improved by applying approaches such as value -chain strengthening and clustering.
 | Language on partnerships was deleted during the editing process and has been reinstated. As to the priority areas, all of these align with programming that UNDP is already implementing or has firm funding commitments to implement. This includes private-sector competitiveness, where UNDP is now managing an EU-funded programme focusing on the packaging value chain (with important implications for recycling and environmental protection). We see this as a good complement to our work aimed at diversifying the economy away from excessive reliance on agriculture and creating jobs. That said, we are committed to working with other development partners in this area, in line with our resolve to focus on where we best add value.  |
| * Monitoring and evaluation: The ICPE evaluation recommended e.g. a) more thematic or outcome evaluations, b) continue tracking the implementation of pilots beyond the end of a project’s lifetime and c) UNDP should develop a long-term resource mobilization strategy. The document would benefit for some more concrete direction related to these recommendations
 | The ICPE was crucial in shaping the formulation of our new country programme. These specific recommendations, however, were not among those we found most appropriate. We have opted against planning more thematic or outcome evaluations for UNDP since we will be conducting these together with the UN Country Team under the UNSDCF. The other two recommendations, while apt and helpful, seem too narrow to spell out in a strategic document like the CPD, where space is so limited. They are nonetheless recommendations that we commit to follow.  |

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