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UNDP IN TOGO

Togo is located in West Africa, with a population of about 7.5 million, and currently in the list of Least Developed countries. After a long history of post-independence crises, the country has embarked on a number of reforms in the last ten years and has achieved important progress. However, major challenges remain in Togo, with a human development index of 0.487 in 2015, ranking the country 166th out of 188 countries and territories. 43% of households still had difficulty meeting the food needs of their members in 2015. Key challenges include, among others, weak basic infrastructures, unemployment and underemployment, particularly among women and youth. The country has important natural resources which remain poorly exploited and threatened by climate change.

Since 2008, UNDP’s country programme in Togo has focused on governance and sustainable human development. In 2016, the Government launched a three-year Community Development Emergency Programme, with a total planned budget of CFAF 155.15 billion (around USD 280 million), to be financed with the Government’s own funds and expected significant contribution from its partners. The programme is implemented directly by UNDP.

The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP’s contribution from 2008 to mid-2017.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2008-2016: \$130.46 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2008-2016 (% by sources):



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA EVALUATED, 2008–2016



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has consistently positioned itself as a privileged partner of the Government of Togo, a partner which remained in the country during the years of crisis and which contributed to the resumption of cooperation between Togo and other international development partners. UNDP interventions are very relevant in that they respond to government priorities and fit well within UNDP’s mandate. Overall, UNDP has a good image in Togo and enjoys a strategic position and a close and trusting relationship with the Government. It is considered the natural coordinator and leader of the dialogue between the technical and financial partners and the Government. However, some partners are concerned that UNDP’s close proximity to the Government may prevent it from performing certain roles with the necessary impartiality, which suggests that UNDP’s communication with partners needs to be improved.

During the two programming cycles (2008-2013 and 2014-2018), UNDP has developed and implemented programmes and projects to support democratic governance, peacebuilding, administrative and institutional reform, as well as sustainable human development, including the fight against poverty, job creation and entrepreneurship of youth and women, environmental protection and resilience to climate

change. Overall, UNDP’s strategy tends to embrace a broad range of interventions, including in areas where it does not necessarily have a comparative advantage.

UNDP activities have produced highly variable results depending on the areas of interventions. For example, UNDP has been one of the few partners to support the electoral process in Togo, contributing to the organization of the elections in 2010 and 2015 in a peaceful manner. UNDP has also played an important role in peacebuilding through its support to the Commission of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, even though at the local level, the local peace committees were not yet operational at the time of the evaluation mission. Some encouraging results have been achieved with UNDP’s support to the modernization of public administration but shortcomings persist and efforts to building capacity of government partners are still to be continued. Support to the decentralization process is also still ongoing. In the area of HIV/AIDS, UNDP interventions have achieved significant results in capacity building for health infrastructure, HIV/AIDS prevention and care.

UNDP provided important support to the government in improving public policies to achieve the MDGs, through the development of national strategies, MDG monitoring

reports and acceleration frameworks. At the local level, UNDP supported the development and implementation of the MDG localization and poverty reduction programme in two Millennium Villages, but the overall results remain mixed in terms of improving the living conditions of the vulnerable populations. Encouraging results have been achieved in terms of job creation and entrepreneurship, as well as disaster risk management and resilience to climate change, but the results are still fragile and need to be further consolidated. Activities related to forest resources management and biodiversity conservation have not led to significant change. The implementation of the Community Development Emergency Programme since mid-2016 has provided some concrete preliminary results, but at the time of the evaluation mission, the programme coordination team faced many challenges and will need to redouble its efforts to be able to successfully complete the programme in the remaining time.

An analysis of the procedures for executing programmes and projects as well as the implementation of the work plans reveals weaknesses that affect the quality of results. Weak understanding of UNDP's procurement and financial resources management procedures by national partners, due to their high turnover rate, and late approval of the Terms of Reference for the various activities contained in the approved annual work programme lead to delays in the disbursement of UNDP's funds and in the start-up and implementation of activities. Monitoring and evaluation was not systematically conducted and

progress towards expected outcomes was not measured in a timely manner to correct errors or gaps in order to achieve quality outputs and results. Monitoring UNDP's contractual obligations to its financing partners (i.e. progress reports for co-financiers of projects and programmes) were also not carried out expeditiously thus affecting the mobilization of additional resources.

Attention to sustainability has been limited in the UNDP programme, both in the design and the monitoring and evaluation of progress in results and impact. Most of the UNDP-supported projects are coming to an end with no exit strategy to consolidate the activities initiated and capitalize on the achievements. This hampers smooth transfer of projects to the national partners to ensure the continuation of actions, consolidate the achievements and scale up. All this tends to jeopardize the sustainability of achievements and lead national partners to continue to seek technical and financial assistance.

With regard to gender, UNDP has had numerous interventions that have contributed to improving women's involvement in income generating activities as well as their integration into legislative, political, and decision making bodies. However, given the lack of dedicated human resources, a clear strategy to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, as well as formal mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in project development, intended results were not achieved in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to maintain its privileged position, UNDP should strive to strike a balance between its leadership role amongst development partners, and its proximity to the government, and to strengthen communication with technical and financial partners.
- For the next programming cycle, UNDP should shift the programmatic approach of its interventions to better support government priorities by focusing on the priority actions within its areas of expertise, while aligning with the next National Development Plan which is under development.
- UNDP will need to improve its planning system by adopting results-based strategic planning, accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation plan for the implementation of its programme. It will have to rely on decentralized structures at the grassroots level of the government partners.
- Through its interventions, UNDP will need to further support the Government to take ownership of actions and strengthen its capacity to capitalize on the achievements in future actions through scaling up at the national level.
- To ensure transparent and effective implementation of the Community Development Emergency Programme and to meet government expectations, UNDP will need to update the situation analysis (opportunities, risks, strengths, weaknesses) and adapt intervention strategies, as well as appropriate monitoring and evaluation activities, including a mid-term evaluation of this programme. These strategies must include a programme to strengthen the operational capacities of the actors and a plan for the gradual transfer of results achieved to national structures.
- The UNDP Togo office will need to strengthen its gender expertise and continue its efforts on gender mainstreaming in all interventions of its next country programme cycle with clear and achievable goals.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP's Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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