Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov  
The UN Resident Coordinator  
Kabul, Afghanistan  

Date: 17 November 2021  

Re: Endorsement of Proposed Extension of the Current UNDP Country Programme Document  

I would like to endorse the proposed extension of a further year to the UNDP Afghanistan Country Programme Document (CPD). This is needed due to the impact of the 15 August crisis and the absence of a signed UNSDCF to guide programming going forwards. I note that the CPD is aligned with the draft Transitional Engagement Framework which is intended to bridge the gap between the expiration of the UNDAF on 31 December 2021, and the approval of a new UNSDCF once the situation has stabilized. In addition, the proposed extension will bring the timeframe of this document into alignment with the other three Executive Committee agencies who have also requested a one-year extension until 31 December 2022.  

Lastly, I note that since there are no changes in the proposed extension to the Outcomes and no fundamental change at the Output level, there should be no harmonization issues. Instead, it is proposed that four of the Outputs in the UNDP CPD will be refocused to meet the needs of Afghan communities better during the extension period from 1 January to 31 December 2022 better,  

Yours Sincerely,  


Dr. Ramiz Alakbarov  
UN Resident Coordinator
Request for Extension of Country Programme of Cooperation

(1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022)

Approved Country Programme Document (CPD) cycle: 2015-2019
- Previous Approved Extension: 1 year (1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020)
- Previous Approved Extension: 1 year (1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021)
- Requested Extension Period: 1 year (1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022)

1. Overall goal of the CPD: The overall goal of the UNDP Country Programme Document (2015-2019) in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IRoA) and its previous two extensions until 31 December 2021 has been to address poverty, peace and the root causes of conflict by focusing on (a) accountable governance; (b) justice and the rule of law; (c) equitable and inclusive development; and (d) social equity with special attention on women. These reflected four of the five United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Outcomes.

2. Afghanistan’s Political Change: As the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) expires in December 2021, a basis for the continued operation of the UN System in Afghanistan beyond December 2021 is needed. However, there was a sudden and unexpected power shift that took place on 15 August 2021. A Common Country Assessment (CCA) had been produced, and a new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) had been drafted in July for 2022-2025, the previous Government had not signed this before 15 August 2021. The UNSDCF had also been drafted to meet a very different set of priorities and operational context. The international community has not yet recognized the de facto administration, and so to fill the gap, the UNCT is drafting a new short-term framework document, the UN Transitional Engagement Framework (TEF), which recognizes that the current crisis context poses significant obstacles to routine UN functioning in the country. This document which responds to the new operational context and priorities is designed to prepare the way for a new UNSDCF once the international community are able to officially recognize a new Government in Afghanistan.

3. Impact on Achieving the Agenda 2030: Despite some progress made over the last few years, the country faces significant challenges in its attempts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially given the setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and now the impact of the 15 August power shift. These shocks will amplify the existing socio-economic challenges and are expected to further derail progress towards the goals on poverty eradication, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality in particular.
4. **Justification for a one-year extension:** Based on the change in the context described above, a further one-year extension to the CPD is now being requested for three main reasons.

i. **Response to the 15 August Crisis:** In response to the crisis, UNDP has developed the Area-based Approach for Development Emergency Initiatives (ABADEI) Programme. Until December 2022, this will focus mainly on immediate support such as access to, maintenance and enabling the delivery of essential services such as health, water, education and electricity in an equitable manner, to meet short-term ‘development emergency’ needs, while providing temporary basic income, safeguarding people’s livelihoods and promoting social cohesion. These interventions are designed to reduce the need for continued humanitarian support as rapidly as possible. The aim will be to protect the gains made over the last 20 years by exploiting the linkages between development and humanitarian interventions to support rapid socio-economic recovery, and in the process, contribute towards greater community resilience to future shocks. Given the current emergency context in Afghanistan, UNDP will, therefore, refocus its work under each CPD Output on those issues that will enable the most rapid socio-economic recovery and help to build resilience at the community level: food security, water, energy, health, employment.

ii. **Alignment of the CPD with the Transitional Engagement Framework and the new UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025):** There is no need for a formal reformulation of the ongoing CPD as the focus and strategies laid out in the UNDP Country Programme (2015-2019) have remained essentially unchanged. However, given the 15 August power shift, there will need to be an increased emphasis over the next year overarching goal of the Country Programme - which is to address poverty, promote greater social cohesion and hence the root causes of conflict, and build community resilience through greater self-reliance. This is in line with the emergency development interventions planned under the TEF, which focus on leaving no one behind (LNOB) by promoting a rapid socio-economic recovery and building greater resilience at the community level to future crises and shocks. It is also in line with the focus of the emphasis in the new UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025) on integrated approaches, understanding and managing risk, and updating programming arrangements to fit the new context, the central themes of the new ABADEI Programme.

iii. **Alignment with Ex Comm agencies:** An extension is needed to ensure that UNDP’s CPD aligns with that of the other three Ex Comm Agencies (UNFPA, UN Women and UNICEF). The other three Ex Comm agencies have also submitted a request for an extension to their existing CPDs for consideration by their respective Boards in January/February 2022.

5. **Emphasis going forwards:** Due to these recent developments, some areas of the existing work plan will be strengthened, including:
Response to the Crisis:

Cross-Cutting Parameters: To respond to the crisis, the ABADEI Programme will pay particular attention to the four cross-cutting parameters identified in the CPD, which were: 1) Area-based approaches for better targeting of beneficiaries, 2) Scalability of results and use of multidisciplinary approaches, 3) Partnership building, 4) Use of national systems and ‘Serving as One’ through joint work plans and more integrated programmes with other agencies. However, given the impact of the 15 August crisis on human rights, a particular emphasis will be placed on improving women and girls’ access to healthcare, justice, education and social services, and on youth unemployment.

Outputs: An analysis of the Outputs listed under each of the four Outcomes in the CPD shows that while most outputs are still highly relevant, it is no longer feasible to provide direct support to the Government until such time as the de facto authorities have been recognized by the international community. Accordingly, in the absence of an approved UNSDCF and in alignment with the new UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025), four of the CPD Outputs will need to be refocused as follows: Output 1 (inclusive governance) will refocus on ensuring that political processes are more inclusive at the local level. Output 4 (National Institutions) will refocus on local-level governance mechanisms. Output 5 (Access to Justice) will refocus on support for local level institutions such as Shuras and Jirgas to ensure access to justice due to the ongoing collapse of national justice delivery. Output 9 (Implementation of international commitments impacting women) will refocus on supporting women and girls’ access to healthcare, justice, education, and social services through civil society engagement.

Strengthening the development-humanitarian continuum: In refocusing the CPD as described above, the aim is to exploit the linkages between development and humanitarian interventions to support a rapid socio-economic recovery, and in the process, contribute towards greater community resilience to future shocks. The renewed emphasis on maintaining basic services and related infrastructure can positively impact the humanitarian crisis in contributing to the early recovery aspect of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Also, by supporting the ongoing humanitarian effort through development emergency interventions, the aim is to reduce the need for continued humanitarian support as rapidly as possible.

More inter-sectoral collaboration: This is particularly important to achieving the desired programme results. In response to the crisis and in line with the design of the TEF, inter-sectoral collaboration is particularly required in several areas, such as health care, social protection and regional connectivity and trade inter alia. More collaboration is also needed between the programmes and the advocacy and communication programme to help leverage resources, especially those by donors who contribute on a bilateral basis to the Government to ensure that the programme results for which UNDP is striving are high on their agenda.

6. CPD timeframe: The other three Executive Committee (Ex-Comm) agencies [The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)] are all
applying for a similar one-year extension to their CPDs which will now expire on 31 December 2022.

**Summary Budget Table for the Extension Period (January 2022 - December 2022)**

The indicative resources per Outcome for the proposed one-year extension, are summarized below

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<th>Outcome</th>
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