



# **Taking Care of Business**

**A Five-Year Perspective**

**UNDP Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific**

**Bangkok, Colombo and Suva**

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## **I. Overview: The Beginning – and Where We Are Now**

Over the past ten years, UNDP has been progressively transforming itself into a more knowledge-driven and globally networked organization. Regionalisation of certain functions and services has formed part of this approach and five years ago, the Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific was established.

The Centre integrates human and financial resources from multiple sources and provides a platform for the provision of services to countries and country offices. The vision is to address the very diverse needs of the region's more than 700 million poor people across the 37 countries covered by the Centre. While rapid progress had been made in many countries toward the Millennium Development Goals, others – notably the 14 Least Developed Countries – have fallen behind. Even now, no country in the region is on track to achieve all eight Goals by 2015.

Five years ago, UNDP's work at the regional level was not sufficiently coordinated, leading to fragmentation, lack of clarity and loss of impact. Regional Programmes entailed heavy project implementation costs and were scattered across countries, sometimes managed by UNDP Headquarters or regional institutions such as the Association of South East Asian Nations. Sub-Regional Resource Facilities, or SURFS, played an active role in policy support to Country Offices – but with Regional Programmes and SURFS each managed by different parts of the organization, linkages were few.

As this five-year perspective will illustrate, the Regional Centre, with offices in Bangkok, Colombo and Suva, has worked to break down the silos that characterized the earlier division of labour. In so doing, we have tried to balance what is strategic at the regional level – multi-disciplinary policy expertise, knowledge sharing, research services, and development of regional public goods – with high-quality, direct country support services.

We offer a network of regional “communities of practice” that has engaged hundreds of development practitioners. We offer capacity development not only to regional and national partners, but also to UNDP's Country Office staff, so they can deliver better services to their counterparts. We offer, in short, a concentration of expertise.

We have addressed all this through the creation of regional teams in UNDP's four core areas: (1) Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the MDGs, including HIV/AIDS; (2) Democratic Governance; (3) Crisis Prevention and Recovery; and (4) Environment and Sustainable Development. Recently, we have added support to United Nations coordination through the undg Asia-Pacific as an important element of our service. Throughout, we have forged strategic development partnerships, including with other United Nations Agencies, bilateral donors, international financial institutions, regional intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

Our country-specific work aims to be as demand-driven as possible and we regularly consult with Country Offices, government authorities and other partners. Priority is generally given to Least Developed Countries, as well as to opportunities for learning from potential innovations and applying this knowledge elsewhere. Between 2007 and 2008 alone, our country programming support grew by 27 percent, totalling 687 advisory missions and 4,825 person-days.

Regional resources are allocated on the basis of emerging issues and of a “regionality” test, where common solutions can be provided for several countries. We have mobilized hundreds of millions of

dollars for initiatives across the region – in environment alone, our advocacy since 2006 has resulted in US\$167 million from international donors. Also notably, our Access to Justice Programme in Indonesia has seen the ratio of partner funding rise to US\$23 million per US\$100,000 of UNDP investment. Our Pacific branch has been particularly successful, raising some US\$20 million between 2006 and 2009, nearly tripling its core funding.

When the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated the region in 2004 – only weeks after the Regional Centre was formally established – the Centre became a staging area for UNDP’s first “surge”-type response to natural disasters. Our Crisis Prevention and Recovery team was first on the scene after the tsunami and extensively involved in assisting the transition from emergency to development. The South-South team quickly mobilized expertise from other developing countries to fill key assistance gaps, while the Management team helped enhance management capacity in affected Country Offices on gap analysis, business process documentation and strategic operational support, enabling the absorption of a record US\$250 million in development assistance that was channelled through UNDP. The Governance team worked to establish a critical aid tracking system in record time, ensuring that these resources could be accounted for transparently. Crisis Prevention and Recovery also later contributed to a pioneering regional tsunami early warning system, as well as the building of end-to-end national early warning systems in the most affected countries.

In other areas, we emphasize the linkages between democratic governance and poverty reduction, and between poverty and environment – and we ensure that gender equality and capacity development are integrated into all our work. Many of our initiatives have been cited as global best practices, such as our piloting of a regional network that promotes capacity development of indigenous women in public decision making. A snapshot of our key achievements includes:

- Responding to climate change by contributing to the reduction of 962 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions and protecting nearly 3 million hectares of forest
- Provision of immediate support in response to sudden crises, including drought, earthquakes, cyclone, floods and landslides in China, Bangladesh, Philippines, Myanmar, Viet Nam, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Bhutan, Samoa, Tonga and Thailand.
- Assistance in the building of end-to-end tsunami early warning systems in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand and India.
- Delivery of financial literacy training to nearly 23,000 rural people in Fiji, another 20,000 rural people in Solomon Islands, Tonga and Samoa.
- Shaping a development policy and intellectual agenda that both supports and goes beyond the Millennium Declaration, through delivering high-impact regional public goods such as the award-winning Asia-Pacific Human Development Report *Trade on Human Term*, co-production of documentaries on Discovery Channel and BBC World Service, and Public Service Announcements on CNN and national broadcasters on issues including corruption, recovery after crisis, climate change and gender equality.

- Bringing countries closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, through development or rollout in 10 countries of a unique integration of national Goal-based costing, planning and financing strategies; in addition, confronting HIV via a range of approaches, including facilitating high-level roundtable discussions on HIV vulnerabilities of migrant women
- Building effective coalitions to fight corruption, such as through development of mechanisms to ensure health sector integrity in Mongolia.

Yet these achievements have not come without substantial challenges. It has been difficult to serve different missions and mandates, simultaneously delivering Country Office support and regional programming. A strong need has existed to better understand and gauge the demands of the Country Offices, and more so now with the global financial shock. Although this has been increasingly addressed over the years, some services are still perceived by countries as “supply-driven,” and in an era of fiscal discipline our regional advisors often remain overstretched.

Many resources were locked into multi-year programme and project activities. Increased attention has been necessary to develop performance indicators, to recognize the importance of advocacy and communications, and to improve the quality and impact of regional publications.

Our clients have pointed to the following services as particularly strong:

- Objective and internationally grounded quality policy advice and technical support that costs less than market prices and is available on short notice
- Programme formulation capacity, based on both our familiarity with UNDP and our detailed knowledge of donor requirements
- Emergency response to crises
- Support for Country Office staff capacity development
- Expert rosters and referral services
- Advocacy and financial support
- Sharing of good practices and lessons learnt, with particularly useful information gained from regional knowledge networks

We are available and accessible. We respond rapidly and strategically to clients and partners alike. As one key partner, the New Zealand International Aid and Development Agency, has put it:<sup>1</sup> “We have an extremely positive relationship [with the Regional Centre]. We’ve learnt a lot. It’s very unusual – we weren’t quite sure of the engagement. We asked for a Ford, and they gave us a Mercedes.”

Find out for yourself as you read this five-year perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> NZAID Pacific Centre Monitoring Report 2007

## II. Impact: Our Core and Cross-Cutting Work

### a) Democratic Governance: Promoting Universal Values

Progress toward democratization and good governance across Asia and the Pacific has been highly volatile. The Regional Centre has focused its interventions on overcoming multiple deficits in the democratic order, including debilitating religious, ethnic and social conflicts, corruption, weak state institutions, communal politics, and the persistently limited influence of women, indigenous peoples and minorities over public decision making. The global food, fuel and financial crisis, and consequent shortfalls in development aid flows, has increased the risk in many countries of a reversal of democratic gains. Remedies most needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals have been prioritized, primarily involving the promotion of participation of all social groups in policymaking and implementation, and of international norms against corruption, and for human rights and aid effectiveness.

#### Our Results

Governance results are in three categories: (1) Providing regional public goods that assist countries in strategically shaping and addressing politically sensitive issues such as human rights, gender equality, accountability and transparency; (2) Capacity development that strengthens national, regional and global governance discourse; and (3) Long-term policy advice on democratic governance. This has included:

- Working closely with Country Offices to overcome unprecedented challenges to coordinated response and recovery posed by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The Regional Centre helped to ensure that record levels of resources targeted the most urgent needs and could be accounted for transparently, establishing a world-class aid tracking system in record time and in partnership with four Country Offices and Asian Development Bank. This system in **Indonesia**, the Recovery Aceh-Nias Database, went on to win the Innovative Government Technology Award at the 2008 FutureGov Summit for its groundbreaking contribution to aid accountability.
- We have undertaken a number of high-profile initiatives to curb corruption and promote integrity in the public sector. In one pioneering initiative, the Centre has partnered in **Mongolia** with Country Office and the Ministry of Health to strengthen ethics in the health sector since 2006. Building on the development of a National Programme for Combating Corruption, specific results include replication of health sector benchmarks on accountability and transparency across the public sector. Other tangible changes in policies and management have led to a more than doubling of salaries for health sector employees – and less interest in under-the-table payments.
- The Centre has led or mobilized resources for the development of major post-conflict programmes on local democratic governance across the region, including **Afghanistan** (US\$67 million), **Nepal** (US\$180 million – see also Capacity Development), **Sri Lanka** (US\$6 million) and Aceh in **Indonesia** (US\$27 million). Comparative analysis and continued technical backstopping by the Centre has delivered a key contribution to a series of policy changes, such as helping **Afghanistan** to clarify the mandate of the new Provincial Councils elected in 2005, or **Maldives** to develop a policy for newly elected local governments in 2009.

- A two-year partnership between the Regional Centre Governance and Capacity Development teams and the Country Office has contributed to **Indonesia** becoming a middle-income policy pioneer. This has included the development and signing of the Jakarta Commitments by the Government and 21 development partners, setting out a strong aid policy. To implement these commitments, the Country Office established a Government-led, multi-donor Aid for Development Effectiveness programme, which has attracted contributions of more than US\$1.4 million.
- The Centre established a Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness Facility with Asian Development Bank, World Bank and the Government of Japan. This has facilitated **South-South collaboration**, as well as between governments and donors, on challenges such as establishing effective mechanisms for reviewing joint accountability for development results in **Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Timor-Leste** and **Viet Nam**. The facility has provided opportunities for **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Samoa** and **Sri Lanka** to influence international policy processes such as those led by the UN Development Cooperation Forum and the OECD.
- As an increasing number of countries recognize that strengthening all citizens' voice is critical to fostering participation of the poor, the regional initiative on Communication for Empowerment in Asia has begun to focus on indigenous peoples as one of the most marginalized groups. Working in **Nepal, Lao PDR, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh** and **Cambodia**, more indigenous peoples have access to government information through improved information flows and strengthened community media, such as community radio.

### **Our Biggest Success**

The Regional Centre has promoted a human rights-based approach to access to justice in country programmes, balancing capacity development of justice institutions with empowerment of the poor. This has carved out a specific, innovative niche for UNDP, which has inspired a movement across Asia and the Pacific. More than a dozen rights-based access to justice country initiatives have been started, in **Indonesia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Timor-Leste** and **Viet Nam**. On average, for every US\$100,000 invested by UNDP, we have raised at least an additional US\$1,000,000 in partner funding.

In **Indonesia**, the ratio has risen as high as US\$23,000,000 per US\$100,000 of UNDP investment, with our work leading to the first comprehensive access to justice assessment in the country, piloted in five provinces and targeting the poorest and most disadvantaged groups. This formed the basis for an initiative between UNDP and the Ministry of National Planning for legal empowerment and assistance for the disadvantaged, placing access to justice firmly on the agenda of Government and donors. Later, it supported development of the National Access to Justice Strategy incorporated into the Government's 2010-2014 Mid-Term Development Plan. Public complaint mechanisms and dialogues have empowered Indonesians to channel grievances related to service provision and to hold public officials accountable.

## b) Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: At the Core

Asia's dynamic development and spectacular economic growth rates have been marred by high levels of accompanying poverty and hunger. One reason for this disjuncture is rapidly rising inequalities. Policy shortfalls also account for relatively disappointing progress against poverty.

The central objective of UNDP's regional poverty reduction work is to analyze and help to address such policy gaps. MDG objectives provide a practical framework for sustainable development that includes all social groups. The Poverty Reduction Team examines the role of both economic and social policies for achieving the Goals. Resource allocation priorities are defined by two processes: The primary determinant is Country Office demand and country priorities. The other important feature is to undertake regional work that allows sensitive national policy reform to be discussed in a neutral international framework.

### Our Results

UNDP in Asia and the Pacific has built a strong reputation as an organization that helps address the central developmental challenge of poverty reduction, growing inequalities and advancing human development for the continent with the majority of the world's poor. Specific results include:

- Assisting governments to respond strategically to the social and economic impacts of the global food, fuel and financial crisis, through providing technical expertise on monitoring and assessment. In **India, Indonesia and Viet Nam**, together with our partners, such as UNICEF, we have supported periodic quick-impact surveys and prepared 14 country case studies, as well as a regional synthesis study, that are allowing more strategic responses. Our regional advocacy on the crisis to senior government officials has highlighted the human and social costs. During 2010, 10 country-level dialogues have been planned to assist countries with recovery from the global economic shock.
- In the area of trade, evidence-based policy recommendations in more than 20 countries have led to the design and implementation of innovative, high-impact projects in **Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, Mongolia, Cambodia and China**. Our aid-for-trade approaches, for LDC and low-income countries in particular, provide a basis for trade capacity development projects by donors. The poverty reduction programme has contributed substantively to building the trade capacities of **Bhutan, Cambodia, Nepal, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Samoa**, allowing them to maximize their gains from globalization.
- The South Asia Economic Summit, which we helped conceptualize, has led to substantive engagement on regional trade integration in South Asia, with specific proposals being taken note of by the Secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. **South-South** trade cooperation has been strengthened through use of an expanded knowledge analytical base built in cooperation with UN and multilateral partners.
- A pioneering campaign to reduce inequality and hunger was led by the Regional Centre with active involvement of partner UN agencies. Some 40 members of parliament from across the region have signed a resolution containing policy reform measures to follow up at national level;



regional media and academia have provided significant support by highlighting the need for urgent action in countries such as **Nepal, Pakistan, India, Cambodia** and **Bangladesh**.

- Lastly, the Regional Centre brought international good practices on poverty reduction to the attention of Asian policymakers. Practical information on conditional cash transfers, for example, has been provided by Latin American experts who designed and implemented these schemes. We have advocated such practical measures for security for the poorest since 2006, and several Asian countries have adopted such programmes.

### **Our Biggest Success**

The Regional Centre provided the substantive research that led to development and global adoption of a simple but robust macroeconomic framework that assists policymakers in assessing the economic impact of scaling up public expenditures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. This is critical if governments are to formulate credible Goal-based national development plans, which has now occurred in **Bhutan, Mongolia** and **Nepal**. The Centre was the first regional programme in UNDP to emphasize the need to involve United Nations Country Teams as a whole as an instrumental partner in training government counterparts in Goal-related needs assessment methodologies and institutionalizing Goal-consistent macroeconomic frameworks, as well as in technical backstopping for sectoral strategies. The success of our macroeconomic modelling tool provided a new programming niche for UNDP Country Offices and has complemented a unique integration of costing, financing and policy advice that we offer to our partners. The latter has focused in countries such as **Maldives** and **Lao PDR** on supporting national policymakers' examination of how to secure and leverage additional donor funding for poverty reduction; these plans will be presented to donors during 2010.

## c) Crisis Prevention and Recovery: Tackling Risks

The region's vulnerability to natural hazards and armed conflict is on a rapid upswing, with more than 50 major disasters affecting millions of people just since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. At the same time, capacities to manage disaster risks are lagging. The Regional Centre mobilizes funds and provides cutting-edge technical expertise to crisis-prone countries, relying on regular consultations with key government authorities and detailed needs assessment and analysis. Its work focuses on (1) regional and multi-year disaster risk initiatives to address common issues; (2) demand-driven and country-specific technical support and funding; and (3) emergency support to countries at high risk of recurring natural and manmade crisis.

### Our Results

The Regional Centre helps to make risks more visible before they occur and promotes deeper understanding of the linkages between poverty and disaster risk. We also work to ensure that disaster risk is sustainably integrated into national development policies, plans and programmes under the global Hyogo Framework for Action. Our results include:

- Building risk knowledge at regional, national and local levels, particularly given that the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami came as a tragic surprise. We have helped to establish and implement nationally owned disaster loss databases in **Sri Lanka, Indonesia** and **India's** Tamil Nadu state to analyze disaster trends and impacts, based on 30 years of history. These processes have been consolidated into policy guidelines shared across the region, with the methodology extended to **Nepal, Iran** and **Pakistan**; Data are being used to influence numerous decisions, plans and budget allocations; for example, the Disaster Management Centre in **Sri Lanka** has used the loss database to prioritize and budget district preparedness and mitigation initiatives and associated budgeting.
- The disaster loss databases we established have been groundbreaking globally in assessing the relationship between natural hazards and poverty, underpinning the fact that 85 percent of disaster mortality risk is concentrated in lower-middle-income countries. Replication of the methodology is planned in **Indonesia, Viet Nam** and **Philippines**. Analysis by the Regional Centre in countries such as **Iran, India, Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** also has shown that over a long period of time, losses from largely unnoticed "extensive events" – low-intensity but high-frequency occurrences, such as flooding or heavy rains – have as much impact on lives and livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable as do high-intensity but low-frequency "intensive events" that capture the most international attention (earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones).
- We have provided critical technical support, training and policy advice to the development of new disaster risk management laws, legal frameworks and institutions in **Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India** and **Thailand**, with work continuing in **Maldives, Cambodia** and **Philippines**. Such laws lay the foundation to ensure the safety of risk-prone communities and implementation of pre- and post-disaster actions. In **Indonesia**, for example, we helped to establish a national "surge" capacity that has responded quickly and effectively after disasters such as the September 2009 earthquake in West Sumatra. In **Philippines**, joint work with the Environment team has resulted in approval of a new law to address climate change. Disaster risk reduction also is being integrated into the secondary education curriculum in **Philippines, Cambodia** and **Lao PDR** as a result of our mobilization of external resources for training modules for teachers.

- Since the 2004 tsunami, UNDP has perfected its rapid and coordinated response time in emergencies to between 24 and 72 hours after the disaster. This has been put to the test in response to 54 natural disasters across Asia and the Pacific since 2005, with the Regional Centre leading efforts to establish sustainable recovery systems, processes, standard operating procedures and funding mechanisms. In turn, this helps to re-establish livelihoods, community infrastructure and income-generating opportunities for disaster-affected people. In 2009 alone, **China, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Myanmar, Viet Nam, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Bhutan, Samoa, Tonga** and **Thailand** were provided with immediate support in response to sudden crisis, including drought, earthquakes, cyclones/typhoons, floods and landslides.
- In peace-building, the Regional Centre was requested to provide urgent assistance to conflict-ridden **Timor-Leste** during a political crisis in 2006 that saw the resignation of the Prime Minister, the formation of an interim government, and renewed international peacekeeping assistance. Crisis Prevention and Recovery and Governance teams from the Centre were deployed rapidly and provided technical assistance to cash-for-work programmes for unemployed youth, economic recovery for displaced persons, support to the Ministry of Justice to help it deal with increased crisis-linked caseloads, and initiatives to promote dialogue and reconciliation. A Women in Self-Employment programme, established in partnership with the Secretariat of State for Vocational Training and Employment, has created market-oriented job opportunities for nearly 800 women entrepreneurs. Overall, stability has been restored, and Timor-Leste has not relapsed into conflict.
- In **Pakistan**, the Regional Centre focused on civilians caught in the crossfire during the Government's action against Taliban militants in NWFP in 2009, which resulted in the displacement of some 2 million people. US\$200,000 emergency funding was provided for needs assessments and improved coordination, ensuring efficiency and avoiding duplication for return and reintegration strategies. We also mobilized seed funds of US\$2 million for a comprehensive peace building and recovery programme, on the basis of which the Country Office was able to mobilize a more than a further US\$12 million.

### **Our Biggest Success**

Following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami tragedy, the Regional Centre has been proactive in the formulation of numerous effective short- and long-term disaster responses. One was in pioneering a common approach for assessing tsunami risk in the Indian Ocean, in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System and UNESCO. This has now been officially adopted by all 28 member states of the warning system. Critically, we also helped build end-to-end tsunami early warning systems in **Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand** and **India**, designed to prevent a recurrence of the overwhelming loss of life in 2004. In so doing, we have trained senior disaster management, academic and meteorology officials from 14 countries in Asia and **Africa** to apply and sustain the region-wide standard operating procedures.

As a result, when a major earthquake occurred off Sumatra in **Indonesia** in September 2009, the national tsunami warning agency was able to issue a tsunami warning within five minutes of detecting the quake. A month later, a total of 18 countries and coastal communities successfully tested the new early warning system in the first tsunami warning exercise around the Indian Ocean. This will become an annual event to assure continued readiness of vulnerable communities.

## d) Environment and Energy: Contributing to Quality of Life

The Environment and Energy work of the Regional Centre encompasses ecosystems and natural resources, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy, ozone layer protection and chemicals management. It is driven by demand for our services, as articulated at country level, and also by opportunities that emerge through dialogue with Country Offices and partners. Since 2006 we have mobilized US\$167 million in environmental finance for initiatives across the region, from sources such as the Global Environment Facility, Least Developed Country Fund and Special Climate Change Fund.

### Our Results

The Regional Centre assists national and regional initiatives that transform, influence and develop markets for energy efficiency, renewable energy and low-greenhouse gas-emitting technologies. Many interventions create enabling policy or regulatory frameworks; programmes also expand electricity access to households and help address local and national environmental issues such as urban air pollution and acid rain. These benefits are vital to improving the quality of life of people across Asia and the Pacific.

- Through 39 market interventions, UNDP's has helped 15 countries in Asia-Pacific to reduce 51.19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to Sweden's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2006. **China** accounts for three-quarters of the total emission reductions achieved. Across the region, we have supported commercialization of 21 clean technologies, such as wind, biomass, solar and hydro; energy-efficient technologies for buildings (including lighting and appliances) and industrial processes; and sustainable transport measures. An important aspect of our work is the linkage to sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation: Recently completed initiatives in **Iran** and **Bhutan** have introduced alternative sources of income and mobilized communities to manage natural resources by either sequestering carbon or reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Also with regard to climate change, we have developed an approach for "climate-proofing" United Nations programmes, followed by sensitization of Country Offices in how to apply the approach. Initial screenings of key Country Programme documents have been carried out in **Maldives, Viet Nam, Indonesia, China** and **India**, among others. These have then been used as a basis for identifying entry points that can strengthen overall resilience to climate-related risks. Our thematic priorities for climate adaptation include coastal zone management, freshwater resources, health, agriculture and forestry, and disaster management. Geographic priorities are set on the basis of vulnerability to, and economic impacts of, anticipated climate change impacts, as well as country leadership and our comparative advantages in capacity development.
- Creating or strengthening national parks or protected area networks to secure critical ecosystem services such as groundwater supply also represents a crucial element of our work. The Regional Centre has helped to bring more than 6 million hectares of critical ecosystem landscapes – an area larger than Thailand – under sustainable management in **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia** and other countries.
- We are demonstrating sustainable management of croplands across more than 100,000 ha in **India, Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka**, addressing the unsustainable land management practices that

are destroying croplands, devastating livelihoods and exacerbating desertification and dust storms in arid and semi-arid areas of the region. Our demonstrations are helping farmers and agricultural extension systems to improve agricultural productivity and livelihoods while reducing the loss of crucial land, on which many poor and marginalized communities depend.

- In **Bhutan**, Regional Centre advocacy and technical expertise linking poverty reduction and environmental issues resulted in an increased allocation of Government funds for pro-poor environmental activities such as climate adaptation by local governments. We supported the Department of Public Accounts to undertake an environmental public expenditure analysis to determine the major trends of Government spending on the environment; it found that while Bhutan has relatively high spending on environment and natural resources, this has declined in recent years.
- To address the overfishing that is devastating global tuna stocks, the Regional Centre supports the Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency in bringing together 15 governments of the Central Western Pacific to coordinate management of the world's largest remaining stocks. The introduction of sustainable, science-based management of fish and their habitats in **Kiribati, Tonga and Solomon Islands** has resulted in improved flow and quality of fisheries data; new analyses of environmental impacts on yellowfin and bigeye tuna; and comprehensive estimates of catch levels. This has successfully strengthened the capacities of Pacific Island states to sustainably develop their oceanic resources in an area of very high significance for global food production and marine biodiversity.

### **Our Biggest Success**

A Regional Centre-supported Solar Photovoltaic programme in **Malaysia** has been making strong progress since 2005 in mitigating climate change. The main goal of the programme, which was included in the 9<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector as well as the long-term cost of photovoltaic technology, which converts solar radiation into direct-current electricity. It has transformed the local photovoltaic market, contributing to energy security and offsetting a significant percentage of conventional peak energy requirements. Moreover, it has reduced by 19 percent the cost of Building Integrated Photovoltaic systems, which are built into the roof or walls of a structure.

Thus far, the programme has already reduced carbon dioxide emission by 550 tonnes, about half of the targeted total, and has more than doubled its targeted capacity of installed Building Integrated Photovoltaic systems, at 1,065 kilowatt-peak. The Centre led the conceptualization and design of the programme, facilitated access to financing from the Global Environment Facility, and provided technical backstopping and monitoring services as well as administrative support. A major offshoot has been the launching of the National SURIA 1000 Programme in 2006, Malaysia's pioneering financial incentive scheme for solar energy; the programme provides attractive financial discounts for homeowners wanting to install photovoltaic technology in their homes, with the goal of allowing anyone in the country to have their own photovoltaic system to generate their own electricity.

## e) HIV and Development: Integrating Responses

The UNDP Regional HIV and Development Programme is guided by the global division of labour among UNAIDS co-sponsors as well as the strategic priorities of UNDP at the global and regional levels. Thus, the Regional Centre seeks to address the human development, governance, human rights, gender and trans-border challenges of HIV and AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. We work in close partnership with UNAIDS and its co-sponsors; other United Nations organizations such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Organization for Migration; national governments; civil society and community-based organizations and their regional networks; and regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

### Our Results

The Regional Centre focuses attention on integrated and multi-sectoral responses to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. We address the vulnerability of sexual minorities, marginalized communities and mobile populations, as well as the empowerment of people living with HIV, particularly women. Capacities of communities and civil society organizations are enhanced for their meaningful participation in policies and programmes. This has resulted in:

- Creation of a joint initiative on HIV/AIDS in Southeast Asia and southern **China** that brought together governments, civil society and the United Nations to promote universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for mobile and migrant populations. This has been recognized as a global best practice by the European Union and UNAIDS. In addition, high-level advocacy has brought migrants' right to health, including HIV services, to the forefront.
- A pioneering seven-country study on the HIV vulnerabilities of Asian migrant women in the Arab States region, conducted with United Nations and civil society partners, has led to programme interventions in **Philippines** and **Sri Lanka**. Action is proposed in **Bahrain** and the **United Arab Emirates**.
- The Centre, linking the HIV/AIDS and Poverty/Millennium Development Goals teams, developed a model regional tool to help governments and others estimate short-, medium- and long-term resources needed for comprehensive HIV responses, as well as per-unit costs. The tool, developed in consultation with UNAIDS, Asian Development Bank and the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy, has significantly broadened the approach of costing beyond the health sector only. It has been used in **Mongolia, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka** and **Papua New Guinea**.
- Two innovative, high-level Courts of Women, organized by the Regional Centre, have brought the critical HIV-related issues of inheritance/property rights and human trafficking to a wider regional audience through powerful testimonials by HIV-positive women, analysis by leading experts and statements by an eminent "jury." Policy outcomes have included legal steps in **Nepal** on women's inheritance and property rights and moves in **Indonesia** to address trafficking and HIV. Important partners in introducing the Courts have included the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Development Fund for Women, Asian



Women's Human Rights Council, Asia Pacific Network of People Living With HIV, and Yakeba, a leading civil society organization in Indonesia.

**“On behalf of the Indonesian Government, I would certainly support any kind of means to follow up the commitment of the forum in advocating [for] women with HIV/AIDS and combating human trafficking.”**

*Meutia Hatta, Minister for Women's Empowerment, following participation in the Court of Women at the 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, August 2009*

- To address the vulnerability of men having sex with men as well as sexual minorities, the Centre has helped to initiate strategic interventions for these groups, built capacity to reduce stigma and discrimination, and mobilized key financial and technical resources for regional and country-level interventions. We have supported **Indonesia** and **Philippines** in designing and implementing specific relevant programmes, and have been instrumental in establishing the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health and forming national networks of men having sex with men.
- The Asia-Pacific Community of Practice on HIV, Gender and Human Rights is an interactive, dynamic regional knowledge network of nearly 200 members. It was initiated by the Centre's HIV, Governance and Gender Equality teams along with UNAIDS, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Asia-Pacific Network of People Living With HIV. To complement its first regional e-discussion, it has provided country-level support with UNAIDS and the United Nations Development Fund for Women for national studies on the issue of HIV and intimate partner transmission in **Sri Lanka** and **Nepal**. This has provided evidence that is being integrated into national programmatic actions.
- Based on a large-scale study in **India** led by UNDP, the Regional Centre has developed a methodology for assessing the socioeconomic impact of HIV at the household level and is supporting Country Offices and governments in finding ways to mitigate such impact. The need for further such assessments has been acknowledged and is being used for large-scale studies in **China, Cambodia** and **Indonesia** as well; related technical support is being provided to **Viet Nam**. The Centre also is engaged in helping to mitigate the impact of the external shocks such as food, fuel and financial crisis on people living with HIV and their households.

### **Our Biggest Success**

Using creative advocacy, research, high-level policy discussions and capacity development, the Regional Centre has been able to raise a number of highly sensitive HIV-related issues across the region, including trafficking, migration, human rights, men having sex with men, violence against women, and inheritance and property rights. This has created an enabling environment for such issues to be addressed at national levels, through joint United Nations programmes and civil society interventions alike. Policy or programmatic action on one or more of these has directly resulted in countries including **China, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives** and **Bangladesh**.

## f) Gender Equality: Strong Partnerships

Women constitute 70 percent of the poor in Asia and the Pacific. Moreover, during the current food, fuel and financial crisis, and with the acceleration of climate change issues, the development vulnerabilities for women have only been exacerbated. In the face of these dynamics, the Regional Centre has built momentum by working across various development disciplines, connecting people and leveraging the diverse knowledge of not only UNDP but also our partners to work toward gender equality.

### Our Results

Knowledge management, capacity development and expanded partnerships, both internal and external, represent the Regional Centre's three pillars for gender equality. Our partners have included GTZ, the Asian Institute of Technology and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, among others; these entities have specifically requested our assistance in harnessing cross-country experiences to enrich the development agenda in the region. Other achievements include:

- From 2005, the Regional Centre's Gender Equality team began partnering with others from the Centre, including the Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme and the Democratic Governance team, to maximize impact through capacity development and joint events. This led to the convening of an Asia Young Leaders in Governance programme, which has provided a platform for young women identified as potential leaders in government, civil society, media and the private sector to receive relevant training and share experiences. This initiative supported pilots in **China, India, Philippines and Bangladesh**, and has since had several offshoots at national and sub-national levels. We also have paired the Gender Equality and Capacity Development teams to produce a package of sustainable capacity development initiatives that ensures the integration of gender into government strategies and plans; this will be rolled out in 2010 in **Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Timor-Leste**.
- In **Cambodia**, as in other Country Offices, our sustained assistance to both programme and policy work has resulted in a gender-sensitive national household survey and questionnaire, as well as the gathering of sex-disaggregated data, that have allowed important national development tools to reflect gender concerns more effectively. Our technical expertise also enabled development of a "road map" to set up the first cross-party caucus of women parliamentarians, an important step in ensuring women's meaningful participation in public affairs.
- Associations formed through the Regional Gender Community of Practice have enabled the Centre to connect countries with corporate thinking on gender equality, and to support them in integrating gender in national-level policies. To review a proposed capacity development package on gender integration, for example, a regional working group formed through the Community of Practice has inspired seven countries to express interest in rolling out the full package in 2010.



### **Our Biggest Success**

Citing virtually evidence of reduced violence against women across the region despite decades of work by the international community, UNDP's Asia-Pacific Regional Gender Steering Committee in 2006 challenged the Regional Centre to explore the following questions: (1) What else could be done to prevent violence against women in the region? What is innovative and can complement existing work? (2) What is the value addition of a regional programme on this topic? and (3) What should be UNDP's role in supporting this process?

In response, the Centre spent 18 months conducting broad-based consultations with leading United Nations partners, including the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women and United Nations Volunteers, as well as with governments and non-government organizations. What we came up with was the Partners for Prevention programme, an influential joint regional initiative for gender-based violence prevention that addresses the strategic niche of deeply engaging men and boys as allies with women. The programme offers cutting-edge technical assistance in **Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam**, selected by criteria of combined government, civil society and United Nations demand. Programme resources are used in a catalytic fashion to spur longer-term national-level support; UNDP's contribution is US\$1 million over four years. We consolidate the four United Nations partners' various areas of work, using new media such as Facebook and Twitter to build awareness of gender-based violence with young people and building capacity by convening sub-regional groups of expert trainers. In 2009, the programme helped form the Asia-Pacific Standing Committee of Male Parliamentarians, which is committed to addressing violence against women and in Asia and the Pacific. We plan a number of regional policy dialogues in 2010 based on consolidated evidence.

### **g) Capacity Development: The Heart of UNDP's Mandate**

Capacity development is the "how" of making development work better, and represents the heart of UNDP's mandate. Without supportive policies and laws, well-functioning organizations, and educated and skilled people, countries lack the foundation to plan, implement and review their development strategies. The Regional Centre's Capacity Development Team provides strategic and on-demand services to all our core areas as well as to Country Offices, whether focused on elections, poverty reduction strategies or climate change adaptation. We bring to our clients a more systematic approach to understanding, analyzing and investing in change that transforms and sustains the capacities of individuals, institutions and their communities to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals and broader people-centred development. We offer diagnostics, change management and learning tools, capacity development indicators and trackers, quality assurance, and global as well as regional knowledge of what works.

## Our Results

Among our initiatives toward institutional reform, access to global knowledge and learning systems, and support to strategic planning and leadership, our notable results have included:

- Facilitating a “twinning” agreement whereby Government officials from **India** coach and advise their counterparts in **Afghanistan**, resulting in enhanced Afghan civil service capacities and institutional strengthening, as well as the establishment of effective new rules, systems and procedures.
- In **Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, Lao PDR** and **Philippines**, institutional change and capacity development strengthening for national disaster management agencies has allowed the smoother implementation of national disaster management plans and strategies under the Hyogo Framework for Action.
- In **Malaysia**, we assisted the Human Rights Commission to establish internal procedures and processes, coordination mechanisms and accountable decision-making processes, backed by standardized monitoring and evaluation policies and mechanisms. Support came not only from our Capacity Development and Democratic Governance teams, but also from UNDP Malaysia, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.
- In **Nepal**, we have helped to formulate a system of performance-based grants that have been institutionalized in national policy and provided to all districts for local-level development (see also Democratic Governance). The public is made aware of the funds that their District Development Committee has received, thereby enabling them to hold officials accountable. The public also is informed of whether their local government has met specific performance criteria to receive bonus funds.

### Our Biggest Success

Globally, much of the work on climate change adaptation and mitigation has been largely at the technical level, focused on climate change science. But at the Regional Centre, we have been influential in recognizing the increasing urgency to address the institutional capacity development needs that also must be answered in order to effectively tackle climate change challenges.

In **Philippines**, the Government is systematically assessing such needs by sector to produce capacity assessment frameworks for a range of key actors and localize climate change adaptation, such a “climate-proofing” land use, into local government plans. As the first such attempt in Asia and the Pacific, it identified line Ministries, agencies, Civil Society Organizations, academic institutions, Local Government Units and others that have functions related to climate change. Based on Government officials’ and civil society ratings, the agencies with the least capacity to adapt to climate change were found to be the Department of Health and Department of National Defence. A multi-sectoral capacity development plan to support climate change adaptation will be rolled out in 2010.

This innovative exercise also represents an important “one UN” approach in the region; in addition to UNDP, other United Nations Agencies are supporting this innovative programme, including United Nations Environment Programme, UN-Habitat, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labour Organization and World Health Organization.

## h) The Pacific: A Special Focus

Since early 2006, the Regional Centre's Pacific branch has worked with the three UNDP Country Offices as a key catalyst on behalf of 15 Pacific Island Countries, partnering governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-government agencies across the sub-region. The basis for UNDP's Pacific work is the October 2005 Pacific Plan, which promotes regional cooperation and integration and national solutions that are coordinated as well as effective. Regional Centre resources are allocated in response to emerging priorities as determined by Pacific Island Forum leaders and based on a performance review process that includes regional, national and internal UNDP representatives. We undertake targeted trans-national research, pilot initiatives and advocacy relevant to the Millennium Development Goals, focusing on pro-poor macroeconomic and human development policies, democratic governance, gender equality and crisis prevention. In all our work, we promote the role of women in development.

### Our Results

Whether it be increasing the number of women in parliament or getting governments the data they need to establish better social protection or disaster risk management measures, these programmes started with the Regional Centre educating, building consensus, creating partnerships regionally, and providing targeted technical expertise at national level to show how it is done. The team in the Pacific has raised the profile of UNDP in the Pacific while attracting substantial additional resources for key development activities. For example:

- Through stressing poverty analysis and achievement of the MDGs as key policy issues, the Regional Centre has helped introduce substantive gender-, child- and age-disaggregated poverty indicators in the Pacific. These are being used to shape targeted economic and social policies on behalf of the poor; by 2010, 12 countries had completed at least one national Millennium Development Goal Report, and nine new poverty analyses had been conducted. As a result, donors decided to provide additional budgetary support to **Tuvalu** equivalent to 15 percent of Gross Domestic Product. **Kiribati** initiated a revision of its governance, investment management and investment strategies, and **Samoa** used disaggregated data on household education expenditures to introduce new social protection measures with support from Asian Development Bank.
- Responding to the acute lack of female representation in Pacific parliaments, the Centre has worked with partners to advocate the use of temporary special measures for women, resulting in legislative reform in **Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands** and **Cook Islands**. Working with UNIFEM, the Centre also has advanced implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, through development of pioneering legislative compliance indicators for 12 Pacific Island Countries that are being adapted in South-East Asia as well.

- The Centre has promoted Freedom of Information and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption as entry points for strengthening government accountability systems. In **Nauru**, it assisted in drafting Freedom of Information provisions in a new Constitution approved by Parliament. In **Fiji**, technical advice on Freedom of Information has informed the Government of international good practices and implementation challenges. The number of Pacific Island Countries ratifying the anti-corruption Convention has risen from one in 2007 to three in 2009. The Centre has given technical assistance in **Papua New Guinea** to develop an anti-corruption strategy and will undertake corruption gap analysis in **Palau** in 2010.
- The Centre's Pacific branch has pursued a vigorous resource mobilization strategy that has yielded close to an extra US\$20 million for the period 2006-2009 – nearly triple the regular resources. Australia and New Zealand have contributed nearly half of the resources for our work in the Pacific, along with other parts of UNDP and the United Nations as a whole.
- Our advocacy on the human dimension of security issues has led to a key shift in policy by the leadership body of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat that sets the sub-regional security agenda. Pacific leaders have adopted guiding principles for land management and conflict minimization, and strengthened regional crisis response as well as dialogue with civil society organizations. Underpinning our conflict prevention approach is a focus on gender equality, which has resulted in sustained input by women's organizations into regional security processes. Technical advice to the **Solomon Islands** led to the design of a Cabinet-approved socioeconomic rehabilitation package for ex-combatants, vulnerable groups and host communities, along with legislation to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- We have mobilized US\$72 million for country-level energy and environment projects in the Pacific. Technical backstopping for biomass/biofuels, solar, wind and other renewable energy initiatives has been provided to the **Republic of Marshall Islands, Tokelau, Palau, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands**.
- Since 2006, the Centre has partnered with the Pacific Islands Applied Geosciences Commission to advocate for the mainstreaming of disaster risk management into national planning and budgeting. As a result, **Vanuatu** has made its first allocation for risk reduction – about US\$270,000 – and the **Republic of Marshall Islands** and **Cook Islands** have directed more donor support toward activities in this area. The process also has resulted in greater alignment between disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.
- Rapid support has been provided to **Tonga** and **Samoa** for early recovery following a tsunami in September 2009, and US\$800,000 was mobilized. For **Fiji**, the Centre mobilized US\$100,000 for early recovery to support the agriculture sector following major floods in January 2009. Risk reduction and early recovery efforts also have been enhanced through a newly initiated programme of cooperation between the Pacific and Caribbean regions, which has resulted in establishment of a web-based portal used as a "one-stop shop" by Government and humanitarian agencies after natural disasters.

### **Our Biggest Success**

The Centre has been instrumental in bringing financial education to the Pacific and catalysing a new, multi-donor programme to promote financial competency among children and adults. In its first month of existence, August 2008, the Centre's Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme partnered with the International Monetary Fund for a meeting of Pacific Islands finance ministers, central bank governors and donors, resulting in a written commitment to financial education for citizens. Through expert assistance, the programme also has helped central bank governors develop national regulations and policies that make it easier for low-income households to have access to savings and other financial services.

In a key partnership with ANZ Bank, the Centre has addressed the growing importance of remittances from migrant workers by delivering financial literacy training to nearly 23,000 rural people in **Fiji**, of whom 41 percent were women. Fiji also has developed a five-year financial inclusion strategy with our assistance. A further 20,000 rural people (43 percent women) have received financial literacy training from ANZ and UNDP in **Solomon Islands, Tonga and Samoa**. The Centre also helped develop a financial education school curriculum that was piloted in **Samoa**, which has led to other countries, including **Tonga**, adopting a similar approach. A business mentoring programme we designed has been institutionalized at the Pacific Islands Private Sector Organization with support from New Zealand.

The Financial Inclusion Programme approved six grants in 2009 to banks, mobile network operators and others to develop or launch branchless and mobile phone banking services across six Pacific Islands. These grantees have committed to reaching an additional 500,000 "un-banked" Pacific Islanders with financial services by 2011, of which 200,000 will be women.

## **i) Asia-Pacific Human Development Reports: Powerful Advocacy Tools**

The Asia-Pacific Human Development Report is a powerful tool for promoting the idea that development is about people rather than economic growth alone. The Regional Centre's Human Development Report Unit prepares this important Report, which has been cited as one of UNDP's best publications. The work, which addresses often-sensitive regional issues, is inherently long-term and multi-dimensional, encompassing all UNDP programme areas.

Because the building of relationships with internal and external experts and institutions is critical to produce an Asia-Pacific Human Development Report, a team approach is employed. Our partners include academia, think tanks, government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, the media, Country Offices, other UNDP regional programmes and teams, and additional United Nations Agencies. The Asia-Pacific Human Development Report process is highly participatory and uses expertise from within the region, promoting national buy-in and cooperation as well as building capacity to ground strategies and policy in the human development perspective.

To support Country Offices' work across Asia and the Pacific on people-centred development, we develop capacity, assist with data and statistical analysis, and provide in-depth review and feedback on human development-focused documents. Requests also come from countries in other regions,

including **Sudan** and **Uzbekistan**, and other parts of UNDP, such as the Regional Centre for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Regional Bureau and Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the global Human Development Report Office. Because the number and complexity of requests have been growing, the Regional Centre has begun to prioritize Least Developed Countries and crisis countries. Individual requests from Country Offices for capacity development training are considered together and multi-Country Office learning events organized. This also promotes experience sharing.

## Our Results

- The popularity of Human Development Reports is in itself an example of their influence. In Asia-Pacific nearly 100 Human Development Reports have been completed, including about 70 national reports, 21 state reports, 2 district reports, and one for a city government.
- With the award-winning 2006 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report, *Trade on Human Terms*, the Senior Minister of Commerce in **Cambodia** used the Report to convince other Members of Parliament to further open up the economy and consciously promote the poverty reduction and human development potential of trade. **Malaysia** brought out a companion national report.
- The 2008 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report, *Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives*, also garnered high-level attention and action to its central messages and recommendations. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of **Indonesia** specifically asked his top Government officials to read the Report for ideas; in **Papua New Guinea**, calls were renewed for the establishment of an Independent Commission Against Corruption; and in **Lao PDR**, discussions related to the Report contributed to the decision to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in September 2009. In addition, an expert panel debating the Report at the 13<sup>th</sup> International Anti-Corruption Conference in Athens, Greece, used the Report to reach out to global partners.

**"I implore all Government officials to read and analyze the [Asia-Pacific Human Development Report on corruption]. As Head of State, I also ask the same of all State institutions."**

*President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Republic of Indonesia*

- The forthcoming Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2010, *Power, Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific* already has gathered substantial attention (see Communications).
- Another human development-focused publication, *Building Security for the Poor: Potential and Prospects for Microinsurance in India* (2007), also has received much attention within and outside Asia-Pacific. This study was extensively quoted in the 2008 Report of the Committee on Financial Inclusion set up by the Government of **India**. Outside the region, in 2007 the Microfinance Unit of the Central Bank of **Sudan**, after discussions in Khartoum, agreed to take into account many of the study's recommendations for micro-insurance programmes in the country. Copies also have been requested by the Parliament of the **Federal Republic of Germany**; because of continued demand, in 2009 the study has been updated and re-printed.



- Also in 2009, requests from Country Offices for virtual support to National Human Development Reports and related work increased by more than 50 percent over 2008. Over the last five years, the Regional Centre has contributed to research for reports in **Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mongolia** and **Nepal**, as well as sub-regional reports for South Asia. Advisory services were provided to the Government of Sri Lanka Bribery Commission on behalf of the **Sri Lanka** Country Office. For **Bhutan** the Regional Centre calculated a sub-national Human Development Index for all 20 districts in the country and developed methods to calculate such indices in the presence of limited information.

### Our Biggest Success

The policy and advocacy impact of *Trade on Human Terms*, the Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2006, was considerable. The Report foresaw a number of issues that have surfaced in the current global food, fuel and financial crises: the neglect of agriculture, “jobless growth” and rising inequalities, all of which now demand solutions. It thus raised issues that are crucially important for Asia and the Pacific, with countries now beginning to address them in different ways. In addition to influencing **Cambodia’s** actions, the Report has been used to provide policy advice to the Government of **Indonesia** on grounding its trade policy within a human development framework. In the first six months after launch, the Report saw coverage through 160 print and broadcast news articles; eventually webpage downloads reached some 50,000. Demand was so great that it led to high-level presentations to the U.S. State Department and the Ambassadors’ Circle in New York.

*Trade on Human Terms* received UNDP’s award for excellence and innovation for a regional Human Development Report.

## j) Communications: Impact in ‘Real Time’

The Regional Centre has been responsible for numerous advocacy initiatives with lasting impact. The two Asia Regional Communications Advisors, based in Bangkok and New Delhi, serve as a “real-time” relay team with the Office of Communications in New York, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, and Country Offices in the region. They offer communications training to national communications officers and programme officers as requested by Country Offices, shape key UNDP messages, contact major media and provide critical outreach support to Country Offices.

### Our Results

The Regional Centre has developed a strong, lasting network of international contacts among journalists in the region and elsewhere. Advocacy opportunities are very wide and coverage of UNDP initiatives favourable, particularly through opinion articles in major regional and international news outlets that reach policymakers and influential readers or viewers.<sup>2</sup> This includes:

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<sup>2</sup> Among others, BBC, CNN, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune, Washington Post, AlJazeera, Newsweek, The Economist, BusinessWeek, Bloomberg, Financial Times, The Guardian, South China Morning Post, Straits Times, The Times (London), Bangkok Post, Far Eastern Economic Review, StarTV, and national broadcasting networks across Asia.

More than two dozen prominent editorials and letters, drafted, edited and placed by the Regional Centre, on such key UNDP advocacy topics as “Melting Himalayas,” “On Deepening Democracy in Asia” and “Climate Change and the Pacific.”

Creation of long-running commercials aired throughout the region, such as Public Service Announcements in several Asian languages on climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, corruption and gender. The anti-corruption commercial, for example, won a silver Saatchi and Saatchi advertising award for advocacy and was used as the premise for a global anti-corruption campaign by UNDP and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Interviews with UNDP senior management on the impact of the food, fuel and financial crises in Asia and regular publication of other UNDP features.

Better understanding of UNDP’s response to the region’s major natural disasters, and media outreach support such as during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami or Cyclone Nargis in **Myanmar** in 2008.

Acknowledgement of UNDP’s role in historic, free and credible elections, including in **Bangladesh** and **Bhutan**. Recently in **Indonesia**, this also resulted in coverage of UNDP’s voter education work.

Meeting of the news needs of media in Asia and the Pacific during launches of flagship global, regional and national reports. The Centre coordinated the global launch in Bangkok of the 2009 Human Development Report on migration, which resulted in widespread coverage building on a series of prominent editorials on migration placed across the region, while a 2007 report on Oil Price Vulnerabilities in Asia garnered lengthy news stories in more than 60 major newspapers.

More than a dozen video success stories from the region on YouTube and the UNDP website following Flipcam training for all national communications officers, organized by the Regional Centre.

Exposure of tens of thousands of schoolchildren, as future decision makers, to UNDP themes from global and regional Human Development Reports. Annual Mahbub ul Haq Memorial School Debates on Human Development, organized in partnership with the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, are held in more than 1,300 schools in all eight South Asian countries.



### **Our Biggest Success**

A groundbreaking regional legal partnership with the Discovery Channel is putting the organization's disaster recovery work front and centre in the first one-hour UNDP documentary to air on commercial television. For the five-year anniversary of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, UNDP and Discovery Channel produced the documentary "Anatomy of a Recovery," which is airing repeatedly throughout Asia in 2010. The legal framework for making the documentary, overseen by the Regional Communications Advisors, was the first of its kind for UNDP globally and opens up important new avenues for advocacy through production of future documentaries on commercial networks.

In addition, a two-part film produced in partnership with the Television Trust for the Environment (tv/e) reached more than 200 million viewers worldwide, illustrating the key findings of the upcoming Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2010 on gender. The film ran repeatedly on BBC World News and will be further broadcast on national networks when the Report is launched. Short "spots" using extracts from the film have been produced and will be used on YouTube and UNDP websites and for advocacy by the Regional Centre and Country Offices. The film also is being widely distributed to partners.

## **k) Knowledge Management: In Many Ways, It's a SNAP**

Ease of access to information and knowledge generated and collated by the Regional Centre is an important aspect of knowledge management.

The community of practice approach, bringing many individuals and organizations together, has proven a very effective mechanism to deliver on this priority. With Microsoft and others, the Regional Centre led the development in 2007 of the Solution Networks of Asia-Pacific Portal (SNAP), a customized portal built to meet the region's need for collaborative knowledge and information tools. SNAP has proven effective in supporting regional knowledge management and as a platform where the Centre's experts are able to perform their outreach and advisory functions more efficiently and to a broader audience. In all, SNAP has become a recognized and popular collaboration tool within UNDP, as well as for the regional United Nations community and other partners.

More than 1,500 practitioners and partners are now connected through one doorway where the rooms abound with relevant material. With SNAP, the Centre has been successful in moving practitioners toward the most current technological and organizational means of knowledge management.

## I) South-South Cooperation: A Catalytic Role

Integrating South-South cooperation – the exchange of knowledge, resources and technology among developing nations – into all UNDP programmes is the responsibility of Asia-Pacific Country Offices and the regional programmes alike. The Regional Centre highlights good practices and shares knowledge to promote this.

### Our Results

While each team at the Regional Centre can report on its use of South-South cooperation in programming, successful stand-alone South-South initiatives include:

A catalytic role in mobilizing Southern expertise for recovery after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, filling assistance gaps faced by the disaster-affected countries and Country Offices. Developing-country experts were quickly mobilized to assist in designing, implementing, coordinating and monitoring recovery projects. The Regional Centre's flexible support has been commended not only by Country Offices, but also by UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. On community-based disaster risk reduction, the Centre has brought together non-government organizations and other parts of the United Nations that had limited opportunities for sharing best practices.

Over the years, the Centre has increased its support for inter-regional exchanges, particularly with Africa or Latin America. Such arrangements usually address specific development challenges that a country or region may be working on, such as policies for promoting economic competitiveness. After these exchanges, several countries, including **Ethiopia** and **Mexico**, have gone back to finalize their work through use of the knowledge gained.

The Centre also has assisted in **Afghanistan** in recovery of the fruit drying industry and strengthening of the civil service, bringing in experts from **Malaysia** and **India** respectively.

### Our Biggest Success

The Regional Centre has partnered with the UNDP Country Office in **Thailand** and the Thailand International Cooperation Development Agency to move forward the global agenda with regard to South-South cooperation. It helped to engage the private sector, non-government organizations and academic institutions to clarify the principles of South-South cooperation and discuss these institutions' roles in Thailand's South-South strategy. At the 2009 United Nations High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, Thailand's presentation of this strategy was lauded as highly informative on how to use and implement South-South cooperation.

## m) Management and Operations Support

The Regional Centre has offered dedicated management and operations support that complements our interventions on behalf of specific programmatic themes. Although the Regional Management Practice Team was dismantled on 31 December 2009, the purpose for which it was launched remains important: providing professional advisory support to Country Offices in finance, human resources, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), procurement, project/programme management, and security.

Management and operations country missions were based on Country Office requests; specific expertise was marshalled on issues ranging from staff retreat facilitation to technical-level planning. Learning events, such as for finance managers, were consolidated from individual requests and thus responsive to similar issues in a large number of countries. Our pre- or post-audit reviews have helped to mitigate UNDP risk exposure in high-visibility countries such as **Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan** and **Afghanistan**.

We also have promoted the rollout of important corporate initiatives in Country Offices across the region, resulting in establishment of the largest regional pool of UNDP project/programme managers trained in Prince2 technology; a regional advisory committee credited by Country Offices with improving procurement feedback and accelerating delivery; and development of a prototype that will be used to ensure Country Offices use corporate ICT standards. The Centre likewise has embraced UNDP's leadership role in the United Nations reform agenda, through capacity development of United Nations Country Teams in implementing the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), a priority in support of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

### III. Does the Regional Centre make a Difference?

As our five-year results show, the Regional Centre provides a pooled source of capacity that can both anticipate and respond to emerging regional and country challenges. The core of dedicated regional policy advisors underpins UNDP's practice architecture across Asia and the Pacific, via long-term engagement with the country offices, providing policy advice and implementation support, while linking and aligning this with global corporate work.

"I think the main unique selling point for the regional advisors is that they are an integral part of the substantive policy capacity of a Country Office," states Deirdre Boyd, Resident Representative a.i. and Country Director in India. "When we want to interact with Government, donors or civil society, being able to deploy or use our own UNDP staff, albeit regionally based, enhances our credibility and substantive depth."

Looking ahead, the Regional Centre still needs to develop and evolve. We must build on the lessons of the last five years. We must align the three major dimensions of our work – Country Office support, management of Regional Programmes and regional public goods, and knowledge management – while also ensuring we can articulate the different key results. We must balance responsiveness and service orientation with the ability to identify proactively emerging trends. **Our work must evolve to take in forward-looking initiatives** on issues such as the Millennium Development Goals+10; social protection, especially in response to the global financial crisis; gender equality; and others that do not fit neatly into one of UNDP's four core areas. In particular, the impact of climate change will require priority attention and a place at the heart of the poverty reduction agenda, so that we can assist the poor to adapt and strengthen countries' capacity to benefit from a low-carbon future.

Key questions that we must address include:

**How can we introduce a broader approach to knowledge sharing, through our Communities of Practice and other initiatives?** We must place even more emphasis on bringing holistic knowledge management to the forefront. That will entail understanding yet more deeply what is going on in each of our 37 countries, what UNDP's strengths are, what country-level projects are achieving, and deepening knowledge exchange across the region.

**How do we measure results better?** For example, measurement of the impact of capacity development at regional or national levels is complex. It requires measuring progress toward implementation of new or revised policy positions, with subsequent changes in budget allocations and effective implementation; or even internal structural and cultural changes within governments, organizations or individual human behaviour. This can take time and require contributions from a range of partners and others.

And, fundamentally, **how do we organize ourselves to meet these emerging issues?** All this will require even closer collaboration among our teams to break down any remaining silos. Deepening our understanding of development in the region will involve out locating staff to deal with key sub-regional issues, closer networking with regional institutions and improved knowledge capture. The Regional Centre also has both a responsibility and an opportunity to work closely with other UN agencies to provide coherent support to UN Country Teams.

## IV. Annex

### Facts About the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific

Number of Policy Advisory Missions to Country Offices	317
Number of Capacity Building Events	187
Number of Regional Programme Technical Consultations	37
Number of Knowledge Resources/Products	52
Number of Research Services	46
Number of Access to Expertise Services	90
Regional Programme Delivery (Total – Core Resources)	US\$12.3m
Regional Programme Delivery (Total – Non-Core Resources)	US\$10.6m

*Source: Annual 2009 data*