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Resilient nations.*

A man in a yellow shirt is riding a bicycle across a body of water. The bicycle is carrying a woman in a colorful sari and several large bags of goods. The scene is set against a cloudy sky and a calm body of water. There are some geometric overlays on the image, including a large triangle on the right side and a smaller one on the left.

RESILIENT BANGLADESH

UNDP Bangladesh Annual Report 2013 | 2014

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Since 1966 UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

UNDP embarked on its journey in Bangladesh in 1973. Since its inception, UNDP and its partners in the country have accomplished key results in the areas of governance, poverty reduction, climate change and disaster resilience, as well as achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). UNDP is engaged with various government agencies and partners to strive towards a common goal of the economic and social development of Bangladesh.

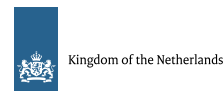
RESILIENT BANGLADESH

UNDP Bangladesh Annual Report 2013 | 2014



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Resilient nations.



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PREFACE

The Government of Bangladesh is entering its fourth decade of partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is only opportune for us to commemorate our valued partnership through a publication that showcases the results we have achieved through our common vision to make measurable differences in the lives of poor and marginalized women and men in Bangladesh.

Despite many challenges in 2013, Bangladesh continued to demonstrate its resilience in meeting development challenges, maintaining over 6 percent growth in gross domestic product despite the global economic recession and managing immediate shocks in the ready-made garment sector due to the Rana Plaza factory collapse. Bangladesh continues to work towards empowering women, achieving universal primary enrolment and maintaining food security. A notable achievement was development of the first National Social Protection Strategy, which will fundamentally reshape the country's social welfare system. The Strategy is based on a vision of inclusive social protection that will address and prevent poverty and rising inequality and will contribute to broader human development. We thank UNDP for its strong technical and capacity-building support that was essential to the Strategy's development.

Other far-reaching development achievements are substantially improving the lives of the poor and those who have long been underserved. Capitalizing on UNDP technical support, Bangladesh invested in building a digital nation, resulting in radical transformations in how government services are applied for and delivered.



Bangladesh used UNDP contributions to formal and informal justice mechanisms to strengthen poor women and men's access to justice and legal rights. Notably, UNDP helped Bangladesh make extraordinary improvements to its disaster early warning systems—over 88 million people now have two additional days of lead time to prepare for impending floods. In addition, UNDP-supported improvements to disaster preparedness and response were fundamental to the country's successful response to tropical storm Mahasen.

I would like to congratulate UNDP, its development partners and the government ministries involved in the results highlighted within this report. As Bangladesh moves towards Vision 2021 to attain middle-income country status, we count on UNDP support in realizing our Vision of a just and prosperous Bangladesh.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mejbahuddin'.

Mohammad Mejbahuddin
Secretary
Economic Relations Division
Ministry of Finance
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

FOREWORD

2013 was a year of opportunities and challenges in Bangladesh. Political unrest over the conduct of the 10th National Parliamentary Elections and the War Crime Tribunals led to violence and disruptions to public life. Furthermore, the unprecedented Rana Plaza factory collapse caused over 1,100 deaths and nearly 2,500 injuries. Encouragingly, the confidence of global buyers in the ready-made garment sector was restored as the minimum wage was increased and global retailers and the government agreed to improve working conditions. Further, tropical storm Mahasen, which hit the country in May 2013, tested Bangladesh's disaster preparedness efforts—although 8 million people were at risk in the affected districts, the evacuation of 1.1 million people to nearly 3,300 shelters within 24 hours minimized loss of life. The country rose to these challenges and emerged as a responsive and resilient champion of development.

This report presents a snapshot of the development results that we have achieved with our partners and with the government and people of Bangladesh. The results provide evidence that UNDP Bangladesh is well-aligned with the new UNDP Strategic Plan 2014–2017 thematic areas and approaches.

Innovation was at the heart of our assisted interventions. UNDP technical support, in strong partnership with the government and development partners, helped set up novel e-government services, which enabled over four million people per month to access such services, decreasing average wait times from seven days to one hour and reducing average travel distances from 35 to 3 kilometres. Furthermore, working closely with the government and development partners, village court pilots helped 30,500 poor people receive local, efficient and inexpensive access to justice—a 154 percent increase over 2011 levels. We are heartened that the village courts have been identified as a best practice and by the



government's commitment to scale them up. Notably, we worked together with the government and other partners to help Bangladesh address disaster through a full-cycle approach from improved and well-coordinated humanitarian responses to building back better and promoting resilience.

Bangladesh's gains testify to the solid partnership and tireless efforts of many actors. These results belong to many contributors, without which the results would not have been achieved. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the government and all our development partners, whose collaboration we deeply value and for their guidance, trust and support. We remain committed to continuing to support the Government of Bangladesh as it continues to lead the way not only in reaching middle-income status, but also in becoming a model of sustainable human development.

Pauline Tamesis
Country Director
UNDP

Neal Walker
UN Resident Coordinator/
UNDP Resident Representative



Introduction

Identified as a rising star in the 2013 Human Development Report, Bangladesh made impressive progress over the past decade.

Bangladesh has made impressive progress in human development in the last decade. Identified as a rising star in the 2013 Human Development Report, Bangladesh has either attained—or is on track to attain—the vast majority of Millenium Development Goal (MDG) targets. For example, Bangladesh performed strongly in halving extreme poverty and it achieved gender parity in primary education (only the environmental indicators lag behind targets). Bangladesh's 2013 Report on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda reaffirmed the country's commitments to achieving pro-poor, inclusive and sustainable growth, including a targeted focus on good governance and gender equality.

However, 2013 was also defined by civil and political unrest over the conduct of the 10th National Parliamentary Elections. Furthermore, the unprecedented Rana Plaza factory collapse threatened socio-economic progress and stability and resulted in widespread worker protests.

For one out of three working days in 2013, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Bangladesh had to work in a business continuity mode. Despite these challenges, Bangladesh continued to prove itself a resilient nation and achieved major development results in promoting sustainable development pathways, inclusive and effective democratic governance and managing risk for resilience.



Sustainable Development Pathways

In 2013, UNDP, in partnership with the government and development partners, helped improve the lives and livelihoods of over 6 million poor people (nearly half of them women) across Bangladesh. UNDP-supported initiatives took a targeted approach, prioritizing those most in need (the urban poor, women and vulnerable communities in rural post-conflict regions) and maximizing cross-sectoral effects. For example, in the post-conflict Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region, UNDP capacity-building support helped improve lives and livelihood opportunities for the region's underserved and marginalized communities. School enrollment in programme-supported areas increased to 90 percent in 2013 (compared to only 49 percent in 2009). Sixty-four percent of households in programme-supported areas of the region had access to potable water (a 106 percent increase over 2008 levels). This is particularly notable when compared with households in non-programme supported areas. At the policy level, culminating years of on-the-ground experiences to improve social welfare systems and people's lives, UNDP and its partners' combined approach of advocacy, technical support, strong government partnership and South-South cooperation resulted in preparing the country's first National Social Protection Strategy (now termed as the National Social Security Strategy).

Inclusive and Effective Democratic Governance

UNDP's innovative reforms helped strengthen the government's efforts to enhance MDG-based service delivery, thereby increasing accessibility and delivery of public services to reach underserved and marginalized citizens faster. UNDP, in strong partnership with the government and development partners, supported novel e-governance services, which provided over 4 million people per month with online access to public services (e.g. land records, birth certificates). A national survey found that these services reduced average wait times from 7 days to 1 hour and reduced average travel distances from 35 to 3 kilometres. UNDP-assisted programmes also led to significant improvements in access to justice.

The pilot village courts helped 30,550 poor people receive local, fast and inexpensive access to justice. The village court system achieved a 154 percent increase in the number of concluded cases over 2011 figures. UNDP and its partners' evidence-based advocacy and testing of innovative approaches were instrumental for the expansion of the village courts' powers and the requirement that at least one woman sits on each panel. A midterm evaluation identified the village courts as an example of an international best practice and a model for national scaling up.



Managing Risk for Resilience

Recognizing that Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to disaster and climate change, UNDP's focused interventions, in strong partnership with the government and development partners, helped strengthen the government's efforts to reduce risk and promote resilience. In 2013, Bangladesh made extraordinary improvements in revamping its disaster early warning systems. Over 88 million people living in low-lying flood plains now have two additional days of lead time to prepare for impending floods; 112 million people are able to receive and access early warnings and disaster-related information. The revamped disaster management system's effectiveness was evidenced in the response to tropical storm Mahasen, which hit the country in May of 2013. Although 8 million people were at risk in the affected districts, the storm resulted in only 17 deaths. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other actors commended the government's preparedness, noting that it saved "countless lives." The joint needs assessment was ranked second best of 88 analyzed globally. Local initiatives provided tailored improvements to disaster resilience plans and strategies.

UNDP supported approximately 2,000 small-scale, community-led risk reduction initiatives that helped to reduce vulnerabilities to disasters and climate change impacts. Though individual schemes were small in scale, their cumulative reach improved the disaster resilience of over 3 million people (45 percent women) in the most hazard-prone areas of Bangladesh. They helped reduce the most vulnerable districts' risks in the areas of infrastructure, livelihoods, water and sanitation, core shelter and early warning services.

UNDP's long-term advocacy, solid partnership with the government and development partners, institutional building and community empowerment support in the CHT region led to notable results in promoting sustainable peace and development. In a 2013 Household Survey, communities reported increased confidence in their ability to enjoy basic human rights (e.g. 65 percent reported they could move outside of their village confidently, compared to 35 percent before the Peace Accord). Programme interventions, such as incorporating traditional leaders into local government committees and ensuring greater representation of ethnic minorities in the CHT police force, were critical for these successes.



Police reaching out to vulnerable persons to provide needed services.

Approaches

UNDP utilized various approaches to ensure that interventions were innovative, targeted, multidimensional, ‘fit for purpose’ and firmly grounded on national ownership, gender equality and partnership, including South-South collaboration.

INNOVATIVE: UNDP approaches and interventions were centred on innovation. For example, a programme that combined green economic development with climate change adaptation and mitigation provided local communities with diversified livelihood options, regenerated fallow land, improved access to land rights and enhanced safeguards against disasters. In 2013, Rare and The Nature Conservancy acknowledged the programme’s successes and UNDP’s contributions with a global award.

Public service providers transformed government service delivery by institutionalizing and expanding another innovative pilot initiative, e-governance systems. Every month, over 4 million formerly underserved citizens are now able to access public services much more quickly,

effectively and efficiently; average wait times have been reduced from 7 days to 1 hour and average travel distances have been reduced from 35 kilometres to 3 kilometres. Another pioneering approach led to the introduction of the first innovative model of land tenure security for poor urban communities in Bangladesh.

TARGETED: By conducting needs and risk assessments to identify the most vulnerable peoples and communities, UNDP-supported programmes targeted the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable women and men who experience the greatest inequalities and exclusion. Recognizing the increasing levels of urbanization and urban risk in Bangladesh, UNDP, in partnership with the government and development partners, continued to help 3 million urban poor to lift themselves out of poverty. The communities themselves developed action plans and managed contracts for delivering services to meet their specific needs. In the CHT region, the UNDP-supported programme, in partnership with the government and development partners, targeted the poorest, vulnerable rural communities and ethnic minorities to address gaps in overall socio-economic conditions and to protect and promote their human rights.



NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY: UNDP anchored all its interventions in government institutions. The government's numerous policy commitments and decisions to scale up many UNDP-supported programmes provide strong evidence of its ownership and buy-in. This report highlights many examples, including the passing of the Village Courts Act and budgetary commitments to nationally scale up the pilot village courts programme. Further, UNDP's approach to piloting and demonstrating energy-efficient brick-making technologies led to the self-sustained replication of 52 additional brick making enterprises, leveraging over \$50 million from the private sector. UNDP's long-term support to national institutions and solid development partnerships has helped the government to proactively address disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation on a national scale; all 14 line ministries have integrated disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into their plans and budgets. In the CHT region, following UNDP and its partners' long-term policy advocacy and capacity-building support, 42 schools were nationally financed; government ministries have committed to sustaining these local services.

GENDER EQUALITY: Guiding all UNDP's interventions, gender equality has been both a means to promote inclusive and sustainable human development and a goal itself. For example, the urban partnership for poverty reduction programme empowered poor women by integrating them into community structures, providing apprenticeships and grants, enhancing their leadership skills and expanding their opportunities to participate in governance. As a result, 90 percent of local community structures' elected leaders were women. Further,

23 urban poor and extreme poor women ran for city offices (nine were elected). A series of UNDP-supported programmes contributed to addressing gender-based violence, including enabling the Bangladesh police to increase the number of Victim Support Centres from two to seven (four of which are now funded within the government police budget). At the policy level, following gender analysis and consultations with women's groups facilitated by UNDP, provisions that promote gender equality and women's rights were included in the new National Social Protection Strategy, the Village Court Act, the Brick Manufacturing Act and the Bangladesh post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

PARTNERSHIPS AND SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION: All UNDP programming interventions were implemented in strong partnership with the government and development partners. In 2013, the implementing government counterparts included the:

- Prime Minister's Office;
- Bangladesh Election Commission;
- Bangladesh Police, Ministry of Home Affairs;
- Department of Disaster Management, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief;
- Department of Environment, and Department of Forest Ministry of Environment and Forests;
- Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance;
- General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Planning Division, Ministry of Planning;
- Ministry of Public Administration;
- Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and



- Parliamentary Affairs;
- Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs;
- Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-Operatives;
- Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and Hill District Councils;
- Ministry of Women's and Children Affairs;
- National Human Rights Commission;
- Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources; and the
- Standards and Testing Institute, Ministry of Industries.

In 2013, UNDP continued strong partnerships with its development partners: the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; the European Union; the Government of Denmark; the Government of Norway; the Government of Sweden; the Kingdom of the Netherlands; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; the United Kingdom Department for International Development; and the United States Agency for International Development. In addition, partnerships continued with the Global Environment Facility, the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, and the Spain/UNDP Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. UNDP also worked closely with civil society, the private sector and other UN agencies.

UNDP supported the Government of Bangladesh to engage in South-South exchange across various areas, as both a model recipient and provider of knowledge and expertise, such as with

China, India, Nepal and South Africa. South-South partnership, for example, helped Bangladesh draw on other countries' successes for preparing its National Social Protection Strategy. UNDP supported the Representative of Economic Relations Division to participate for the first time in the Global South-South Development Expo held in Nairobi, Kenya.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACHES: UNDP Bangladesh interventions pursued an integrated, cross-disciplinary approach. For example, UNDP's support on disaster risk reduction addressed climate change, poverty, livelihoods, urban poverty and governance. UNDP work in the CHT region helped build capacities for improved service delivery, economic livelihoods, expanded governance and human rights dimensions and, overall, helped promote peacebuilding in line with the Peace Accord. UNDP also worked to turn climate change challenges into economic opportunities for the poor and to address critical issues such as natural resource management and economic governance.

FIT FOR PURPOSE: UNDP Bangladesh, in partnership with the government and development partners, achieved major, sustainable delivery of both resources and results by fostering robust delivery methods supported by solid monitoring and evaluation methodologies and regular and satisfactory audits, verifications and internal and external reviews. These surveys and reviews recognized UNDP as a key development partner, effectively and efficiently managing both results and resources.



THIS CYCLONE-AFFECTED FAMILY IS
USING HOMESTEAD GARDENING TO
RECOVER THEIR LIVELIHOOD.



1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

Bangladesh made encouraging progress towards achieving the MDGs despite its challenging environment. With fewer than 500 days left before the MDG target date, the country has either already attained—or is on track to attain—the vast majority of indicator targets. The main exception is the environment goal, which remains off-track with sub-par performance.

Bangladesh's Human Development Index continued its upward trend, rising to 0.515 in 2013 (a one percent increase from 2012) and reaching a rank of 146. Bangladesh's Gender Inequality Index was even better at 0.518, with a global ranking of 111. However, Bangladesh's Multidimensional-Poverty Index was static and high at 0.292, with a headcount ratio of 57.8 percent (one of the highest in the region).

According to International Monetary Fund reports, economic growth in 2013 is expected to have slowed to around 5.5 percent from a trend rate of around 6.5 percent over the last few years. This is below the target of 7.5 percent annual growth, the target that the government set to move Bangladesh to middle-income status by 2021. Inflation has remained moderate at 7.1 percent (5.6 percent for food items). These inflation trends tend to balance the growth impact on poverty.

The National Social Protection Strategy



Ensures that pregnant women are well-nourished and that they receive high quality prenatal care



Ensures that infants and children are well-nourished, healthy and educated



Facilitates youth's access to the labour market



Provides people with the economic security to increase their productivity and to take economic risks



Ensures that in later life, those with limited assets have access to a social pension

With UNDP and other partners, Bangladesh made significant progress towards achieving sustainable development in several areas, including:

BANGLADESH DEVELOPED THE COUNTRY'S FIRST NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGY.

Culminating years of UNDP's on-the-ground experiences, the Strategy (once endorsed), will improve the social welfare system and people's lives. UNDP-facilitated South-South exchange helped Bangladesh model the Strategy on other countries' successes.

IN 2013, UNDP SUPPORT, TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH AND OTHER PARTNERS, LED TO IMPROVEMENTS IN THE LIVES AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF OVER 6 MILLION PEOPLE. UNDP-supported initiatives followed a targeted approach, prioritizing the most in need—the urban poor, women and vulnerable communities in the disaster-prone coastal belt and rural post-conflict regions. Results from a 2013 UNDP Multi-dimensional Poverty Index showed a 33 percent reduction since 2009 in programme supported towns. Further, a 2013 Household Survey in the CHT region provided evidence that enhanced basic services (e.g. health, education, food security and access to water)

improved the lives of marginalized and rural women and men. For example, school enrolment in CHT Development Facility-supported areas increased to 90 percent, compared to 49 percent in 2009; similarly, 64 percent of households in programme-supported areas had access to potable water (a 106 percent increase over 2008 levels).

UNDP'S INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS COMBINED GREEN DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION EFFORTS TO PROVIDE LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS, REGENERATED FALLOW LAND, EXPANDED ACCESS TO LAND RIGHTS AND IMPROVED SAFEGUARDS AGAINST DISASTERS. With support from UNDP and other partners, Bangladesh made progress towards inclusive and green development, including integrating the linkages between poverty, climate change and disaster into national planning processes; introducing energy labelling and standards; and passing legislation to curb greenhouse gas emissions. UNDP successfully helped demonstrate the benefits of alternative business models for brick manufacturers and coastal forest management.



**ROB MOLLAH, AND THOUSANDS
LIKE HIM, ARE FARMING FISH,
GROWING FRUITS AND AT THE SAME
TIME PROTECTING THE TREELINE
THAT SERVES AS THE FIRST LINE OF
DEFENSE AGAINST CYCLONES**

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL



The sources of risk are also in flux. For example, climate change impacts will exacerbate pre-existing threats, including cyclones, floods and saline incursions. Further, Bangladesh is still reeling from the 2008 global food and financial crisis, and its growing engagement in world trade has heightened the population's exposure to global economic shifts.

Developing a social protection strategy

In 2013, the Government of Bangladesh developed the country's first National Social Protection Strategy, which has the potential to fundamentally reshape the country's social welfare system. The Strategy is based on a vision of an inclusive social protection system that addresses and prevents poverty and rising inequality and that contributes to broader human development.

Towards middle-income country status

To continue moving towards achieving middle-income country status, Bangladesh will need to make major social protection reforms that will ensure inclusive growth and maintain ongoing reductions in poverty and undernutrition. Social protection schemes build resilience, reduce vulnerabilities and ameliorate risks. The approach must be responsive to Bangladesh's rapidly changing context and its increasingly complex needs, including the inherent problems of rapid industrialization and the spread of extreme poverty in both urban and rural areas.

This is a significant step forward for the country. The current social protection system is fragmented across various sectors and geographical areas; it is further challenged by having 95 social safety net programmes implemented by 21 different ministries. The existing safety net costs an estimated \$2.9 billion per year, approximately 2.2 percent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product. Consolidating these programmes will increase their coherence, introduce proven innovations, scale up the most successful programmes and realize cost savings by eliminating duplicated efforts.



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Lifetime protection

The modern National Social Protection Strategy will extend social safety nets and build poor people's resilience over their entire lives. The Strategy begins with ensuring that pregnant women are well-nourished and have access to high-quality prenatal care. It then ensures that infants are well-nourished and that children are healthy and educated. It facilitates youths' access to labour markets, and provides people with the economic security to increase their productivity and take economic risks. Finally, it ensures that in later life, those with limited assets have access to a social pension.

Government takes the lead

Taking the lead, the General Economics Division of the Planning Ministry is coordinating the process with government ministries and external partners. The Strategy

culminates years of UNDP's on-the-ground experiences to improve the social welfare system and people's lives. From the start, UNDP supported the Strategy's development by putting in place the necessary mechanisms, by helping with resource mobilization and by building a unified approach.

UNDP-facilitated South-South exchanges helped Bangladesh draw on the experiences of other countries (Lesotho, Nepal and South Africa). UNDP support also included advocating for change, establishing high-level national interest and leadership for the process, coordinating research and bringing partners in for a unified approach. As lead convener of the UN Theme Group on Social Protection, UNDP helped create a UN common vision on the Strategy. UNDP and its development partners are preparing to assist the government to roll out and implement the Strategy.

South-South Collaboration on Social Protection Systems and Strategies

Bangladesh's Sixth Five-Year Plan envisaged drawing on proven international practices in developing a coherent and integrated social protection strategy. To that end, in 2013 UNDP arranged for high- and mid-level government officials to make exchange visits to Lesotho, Nepal and South Africa. The deep impression that the South African and Nepalese rights-based, life-cycle approach to social protection made on the visiting Bangladeshi policymakers is reflected in the formulation of Bangladesh's strategy.

Bangladesh intends to emphasize child support grants for human capital impacts that will last long beyond childhood. The Nepal and South Africa practices helped shape a proposed expansion of allowances for senior

citizens, a particularly necessary element in the face of an ageing population.

Recognizing the inefficiencies and other problems associated with its fragmented social safety net (over 20 ministries are involved), Bangladesh has proposed to establish a national-level agency modelled after South Africa's Social Security Agency, which provides strong central coordination. The use of information and communications technology in transfers is another inspiration from South Africa. As an overall outcome of this South-South interaction with South Africa and Nepal, Bangladesh government officials brought back a personal vision for the future of social protection in Bangladesh.

3 MILLION
urban poor improved
their living conditions
and livelihoods

33% reduction in
poverty across health,
education and living
standards in seven towns

23 urban poor women ran
for election; nine were
elected

LADDERS OUT OF URBAN POVERTY

Increased fluxes in migration exacerbate urban poor communities' risks. Urban poor community members are best placed to establish their priorities and to determine who needs support the most. Through the Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Programme, UNDP, in partnership with the Local Government Engineering Department, Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Co-operatives, UKaid and UN-Habitat, supported improvements in the lives and livelihoods of over 3 million urban poor women, men and children. UNDP support included mobilizing these women and men into community structures and providing the technical support necessary to enable them to form community-based savings and credit groups, to provide apprenticeships and to develop micro-enterprises. In total, 400,000 poor households have organized themselves to manage their savings and to successfully implement a membership-based credit scheme that is backed by their nearly \$5 million in collective assets. This initiative, rooted in community banking, fills a major gap in the urban poor's access to finance; despite Bangladesh being the home of micro-finance, this represents many households' first opportunity to access credit.

UNDP's poverty reduction efforts have had measurable impacts and have been widely recognized by the international community. For example, the 2013 multidimensional poverty index, which tracks poverty across the health, education and living standards domains, showed a 33 percent reduction in poverty since 2009 in



the seven towns supported by the UNDP urban poverty programme. In 2013, the UKaid Annual Review highlighted the Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction as a sustainable model of poverty reduction.

Innovative models of land tenure for urban poor communities

Tenure security is fundamental to progressively integrating the urban poor into their cities. Among other benefits, tenure security alleviates poor families' fear of eviction and helps them increase their income through investment and business opportunities. UNDP support led to the creation of the first model of land tenure security for poor urban communities in Bangladesh. This was tested through the innovative Gopalganj model, where UNDP provided



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UNDP helped organize 1.4 million urban poor—mostly women—into 500 representational groups that gave voice to women's concerns within their communities.

assistance to 24 very poor families who had been living for more than 30 years as contract-less tenants, paying rent to live in a waterlogged, highly polluted area with no toilets and no potable water. With UNDP assistance, the families negotiated with the landlord to improve the settlement, offer them twenty-year leases and allow them to readjust the slums' physical locations on a planned layout within the same land. This innovative approach provides a fine model of land tenure security for poor urban communities. UNDP is focusing on scaling up this model throughout other urban areas.

A full empowerment cycle for urban poor and extremely poor women

UNDP took a comprehensive approach to empowering poor women, focusing not only on

jobs and livelihoods, but also on building their leadership skills. To this end, UNDP helped organize 1.4 million urban poor—mostly women—into 500 representational groups that gave voice to women's concerns within their communities; 90 percent of decision-making positions in these groups were held by extremely poor urban women.

The June 2013 electoral results provide another significant indicator of urban poor women's growing confidence, empowerment and enhanced roles in civil society. UNDP supported the efforts of 23 urban poor women who were running for office; nine were elected as councillors in the cities of Barisal, Khulna and Rajshahi. UNDP has been backing these women's efforts to support their communities as they have taken up leadership positions in their neighbourhoods.

Poor Women Become City Councillors

As nine newly elected women took their oath as councillors, they expressed their dedication and commitment to carrying out their duties and bringing about change for urban poor women. Many highlighted women's lack of decision-making power, restricted movement and a lack of respect (aggravated by regular verbal and physical abuse by family members).

Jahanara Begum, a new Councillor in Barisal, said, "Before the [UNDP] programme, we were only housewives. We could not talk easily. Now we can speak anywhere, can represent in various workshops, seminars, and meetings. We can also easily mix with all kinds of people. We have received different trainings from the programme, so we have been more capable to face any situation in the community."

Hasna Hena, elected as councilor of Khulna, said, "In 2005, I was inspired by my involvement with the Baira Bazaar community group and I became interested in elections. After becoming the group's Chairperson, I devoted myself towards working for women in poverty. Gradually, people started recognizing me, which gave me the confidence that I might win the election against other competitors, if I tried. This feeling inspired me to run in the elections."

Monira Khatun, who won her seat in the Khulna City Corporation elections, explains, "In my community there are many women who are not allowed to participate in decision-making processes and some of the women are even deprived of their basic rights. As a councillor I want to bring these deprived women into the decision-making process."



1.2 months
food deficiencies in
target areas. This was
2.7 months in 2008



64%
of households had
access to potable water.
This is a 106-percent
increase over 2008
levels



95%
of enrolled children successfully
completed primary education in 300
community-run schools



1.3%
proportion of malaria
cases, a decrease of almost
13 percent from 2006 levels



23%
of women were
assisted by a skilled
birth attendant, an
increase of 12 percent
over 2008 levels

42% of schools were nationally
financed for the first time

TARGETING THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE POST-CONFLICT CHT REGION

The post-conflict CHT region remains home to the poorest and most marginalized people in Bangladesh. UNDP and its partners provided targeted capacity-building support to local communities and local governance institutions, which led to improvements in the lives of poor women and men in basic services such as health, education, water and food security. The successes were a result of UNDP's solid partnership with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Hill District Councils, Denmark, the European Union and the United States, as well as UN agencies (the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Food Programme). The CHT region has some of the

hardest to reach areas in the country—up to eight hours by foot from any major population centre in some cases. This difficulty in travelling has been one of the Hill District Councils' biggest challenges to providing primary health care in the region. Nonetheless, health in the CHT improved in 2013, largely due to a network of over 860 community health workers, 158 skilled community birth attendants and 80 weekly mobile satellite clinics managed by local Hill District councils (with UNDP technical support). Twenty-three percent of women who gave birth in 2013 were assisted by medically skilled birth attendants (up from only 12 percent in 2008). Only 1 percent of patients had malaria, a reduction from 13 percent in 2006. Over 92 percent of children have been immunized against a broad



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range of illnesses. These services are also becoming sustainable. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has committed to financing (through the Ministry's Tribal Health Plan) major components of the locally managed health services in the region: the operational costs of 863 Community Health Workers and 160 skilled birth attendants.

Education is also improving in the region. School enrolment rates in UNDP-supported areas rose to 95 percent (up from only 49 percent in 2009). This higher enrolment was facilitated by, among other initiatives, mother-tongue based multi-language education. Notably, 42 schools supported by the UNDP programme were nationally financed for the first time by the Government of Bangladesh.

Other significant achievements were the improvement of food security. The establishment of 927 rice banks, a traditional coping mechanism for food shortages in the CHT region, enabled communities to manage supply and demands of rice during lean periods. The support reduced the average food deficit months of target communities

from 2.7 months in 2008 to 1.2 months in 2013. Increases in the average per capita daily food energy intake of target households—from 1,797 kilocalories in 2008 to 2,033 kilocalories in 2013—also demonstrates progress. UNDP and its partners' support to promoting new and innovative farming techniques resulted in diversifying the livelihoods and income sources of the most marginalized farmers in the CHT region.

By engaging public and private partners, UNDP enabled pilot initiatives to support value chain development for promoting local economic growth. For example, in 2013, 1,513 farmers of 67 banana producer groups obtained new knowledge and skills, including indigenous and modern cultivation technologies and practices. Similarly, the programme supported CHT weaver groups to improve the marketing of their products. As a result, 91 percent of these groups have established linkages with CHT buyers; 38 percent have established linkages with outside buyers.



Average per capita daily food energy intake of target households has increased from 1,797 kilocalories in 2008 to 2,033 kilocalories in 2013.



170,000 green and inclusive livelihoods created (50 percent for women)



\$6.5 M

in sales of labelled energy efficient products

Reduction in energy equivalent to annual use of 100,000 households

26 % of workers in green brick enterprises are women (compared to 10 percent in the traditional brick-making industry)



880 M bricks produced in an environmentally friendly way

58,500 tons of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND GREEN ECONOMY

An inclusive, equitable and green economy is vital to achieving sustainable human development and eliminating persistent poverty. In essence, a green economy is characterized as being low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Policy landmarks

Despite its climate vulnerabilities and the challenges associated with its least developed country status, Bangladesh has made major progress in promoting green development with policies that take into consideration the relationship between its national contexts and globally accepted frameworks and protocols. UNDP's long-term advocacy and technical

support to the Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest and Ministry of Industries were critical to achieving many policy successes. For example, UNDP assistance was crucial to passing the Brick Manufacturing Act, which mandates the reductions of brick industry greenhouse gas emissions (one of Bangladesh's largest stationary sources of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution). Bangladesh also banned the use of timber and top soil from agricultural lands, which will reduce deforestation.

UNDP and its partners helped pioneer the socially inclusive, energy efficient and overall environmentally friendly brick-making technology through five pilot projects. 52 additional brick-making enterprises replicated these pilots. According to a survey, 36 out of the 52 green brick enterprises produced an estimated 880 million bricks in an environmentally friendly way. The green bricks



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**MASURA, A BENEFICIARY
OF THE COASTAL
AFFORESTATION PROJECT
IN THE BARGUNA
DISTRICT, IS HARVESTING
HER BOTTLE GOURDS**

230% increase in income



Mangrove forests are planted to protect the coastal communities from cyclones

F

Dikes confine fresh water



Timber and fruit trees are planted along embankments. The dry leaves and twigs are used for fuel

F

30%

decline in crop production caused by seawater intrusion, increasingly intense cyclones, dried up rivers and extreme weather events



Fruit and vegetables are an additional source of income for families in the region

Fish are harvested in the ditches that lie parallel to each other; ducks can also be released in the fresh water

F

demonstrated a viable alternative business model for brick manufacturing that is environmentally friendly, competitive and sustainable. They also demonstrated a model of 'decent work' by providing improved working conditions, salary, working hours, leave and other employee benefits.

Efficient use of natural resources: making coastal forests work for the people

Several UNDP-assisted innovations helped the Government of Bangladesh make notable achievements in promoting inclusive green development and efficiently using natural resources. For example, UNDP, in partnership with the government and development partners, helped combine green economic development with climate change adaptation and mitigation to provide local communities with diversified livelihood options, regenerate fallow land, improve access to land rights and provide safeguards against storms, floods and tidal surges. This exciting innovation was presented with a runner-up award

in 2013 in the global contest *Solution Search: Adapting to a Changing Climate* sponsored by Rare and The Nature Conservancy.

The centrepiece of this initiative, the Forest Fruit Fish model (the 'Triple F' model) was also supported by the Global Environment Facility. The model provides a new way to make ostensibly barren coastal land productive. By building mounds and ditches, high-yielding vegetable crops can be planted among fruit and timber trees (on the mounds and banks of the ditches). The raised nature of the planting model provides protection from tidal surges and storms and greatly improves fish cultivation. The model can be replicated in areas that are protected by coastal mangrove forests but that are outside of embankments.

The Triple F model can produce enough fruit, vegetables and fish to supplement a family's diet and can generate regular, additional income from the sale of surplus produce (timber from mature trees that have been cut down can also generate additional income). In addition, the protective



Newly planted forests will provide protection against storms and tidal surges for the 800,000 vulnerable women and men living along the coasts.

mangrove, fruit and timber trees can be pruned regularly for fuel needs. This model offers coastal peoples a great opportunity to improve family food and income security; in 2013, the model resulted in a 230 percent increase in income to beneficiaries.

The programme helped add nearly 2,500 hectares—the equivalent of 2,000 cricket fields—to the over 8,500 hectares of coastal forests along 17 kilometres of highly vulnerable coast line. These newly planted forests will provide protection against storms and tidal surges for the 800,000 vulnerable women and men living along the coasts.

Local communities and administrations in the low-lying delta regions took the lead in planting, which generated over 200,000 days of work for local labourers. The UNDP programme provided livelihood and financial support to 4,380 households for planting the forests and built the knowledge and skills of over 500 local government officials in the Ministry of Environment, Forest, Fisheries and Livestock and Land. As a result, they developed their first local climate change adaptation plans. This is a triple win: it provides green development dividends, creates green economic activities and provides both climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits.

Through another UNDP-supported initiative, three community-managed forests were established in the CHT region, an area at the highest risk of deforestation. These forests, which are managed by village leaders, enable ethnic minorities to sustainably improve their livelihoods in ways that will be adaptive to climate induced-shocks.

Energy-efficient labelling and standards

UNDP, in partnership with the Standards and Testing Institute, helped Bangladesh's efforts to set minimum energy performance standards and to establish star labelling of energy-efficient products (which empower consumers to make informed choices to reduce energy



expenses and protect the environment).

UNDP and its partners supported the design of standards and testing for electrical products. UNDP provided technical support (including technology transfer and tailored advocacy and capacity-building activities) to 62 manufacturers. This support enabled them to update their processes, to meet the new standards and to maintain profitability. UNDP also worked with the media to showcase the economic dividends and environmental benefits for consumers. According to the Barriel Removal Standards and Labelling Survey 2013, the provided support resulted in the sale of \$6.5 million worth of labelled energy products, which reduced overall energy use by an amount equivalent to 100,000 Bangladeshi households' annual use. These changes in consumers' and manufacturers' patterns of behaviour are helping Bangladesh to further its progress along an inclusive and green development pathway.



**OPEN BUDGET MEETING
HELD IN IKARCHALI UNION
PARISHAD, RANGPUR
DISTRICT**



2 INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The overall political and security environment in Bangladesh deteriorated in 2013, due largely to civil and political unrest over the conduct of the 10th National Parliamentary Elections, the War Crimes Tribunal and major industrial protests.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh made significant progress in key areas of governance. For example, 53 percent of respondents in a national survey reported that they had experienced improvements in the quality of public services. Furthermore, Bangladesh moved up eight places in Transparency International's 2013 corruption index to position 136. UNDP and its partners' support was crucial to many of these achievements.



E-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES ARE RADICALLY TRANSFORMING THE WAY THAT GOVERNMENT SERVICES ARE APPLIED FOR AND DELIVERED.

More services are being locally focused and delivered, reaching chronically under-served and marginalized citizens faster. These novel e-governance initiatives enabled around 4 million people per month to access online public services (e.g. land records, birth certificates). A 2013 national census from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics found that online services reduced average wait times from 7 days to 1 hour and reduced average travel distance from 35 to 3 kilometres. Notably, by establishing and providing technical support for 214 women's development forums, UNDP helped local governments ensure that the services meet the needs of women and men equitably. The women's development forums also provide a platform for strengthening women's participation in decision-making.

DESPITE OPERATING IN A TUMULTUOUS ENVIRONMENT, UNDP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE HELPED UPGRADE THE ELECTION COMMISSION'S TECHNICAL CAPACITIES. For example, by helping complete 44 more electoral centres (to 433 centres

in total) UNDP enabled the Election Commission to deliver electoral services to voters nationwide. In 2013, over 300 sub-national elections and five city elections were deemed credible by observers.

UNDP AND ITS PARTNERS' SUPPORT TO FORMAL AND INFORMAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS STRENGTHENED POOR WOMEN AND MEN'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND LEGAL RIGHTS. Village courts, piloted with UNDP technical support, helped 30,500 people receive local, fast and inexpensive access to justice, a 154 percent increase over the number of concluded cases in 2011. UNDP's evidence-based advocacy and testing of innovative approaches contributed to a major policy breakthrough, the Amended Village Court Act, which increased village courts' powers and set the requirement that at least one woman sits on each panel.

UNDP CONTINUED TO SUPPORT BANGLADESH'S NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS WATCHDOG. The National Human Rights Commission is becoming more effective in promoting and protecting human rights.

60
MILLION

electronic requests for services have been processed to underserved communities; over 4 million people per month were able to access public services

Service delivery times and distances were cut by at least

50%

214

Women Development Forums were established and are strengthening women's leadership

BRINGING SERVICES TO THE DOORSTEP

Making local democracy work

Inclusive and effective democracy starts at the local level. Local governance institutions are closest to the people and provide critical avenues to improve service delivery and deepen local democracy. UNDP continued to work with the Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperation and with Denmark, the European Union, Switzerland and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to enhance capacities and expand the accountability of local government institutions for improved service delivery.

Following UNDP technical support, union councils (the lowest tier of regional administration in Bangladesh), are increasingly functioning. The number of elected union councils meeting every month rose to 93 percent in 2013 (from 89 percent in 2012). All 600 union councils supported by UNDP now have 13 functioning standing committees to implement development activities, compared to only 420 in 2012. The union councils' financial standing is improving too. Nearly all supported unions councils have increased their local tax collection revenues from an average of \$1,250 to \$1,600, bringing the



total to nearly \$1 million in tax revenues in 2013. In 2013, UNDP provided small grants to support 14 subdistricts prepare their first detailed long-term plans for local development, which contain five-year visions, annual plans and budgets. Subdistricts also used the funds to identify the needs of vulnerable groups, implement basic services, pass on information to citizens and draw up comprehensive development plans. UNDP also supported planning and management training for over 5,000 officials (including 1,000



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Land Records

In 2013, nearly six million chronically underserved citizens were able to receive electronic land records from district offices. Prior to this UNDP-supported initiative, district offices took between four hours to a full day to process each land record application; it now takes less than one hour. The system also accepts electronic payment for land records, reducing or eliminating corruption related to accessing land records.

women) in nearly 400 subdistricts. The officials now have the tools, knowledge and skills to monitor such plans and to ensure that budgets are utilized to address the needs of women and men.

Similarly, the second lowest tier of regional administration in Bangladesh, the councils at the subdistrict level (Upazila Parishad), are increasingly functioning. Nearly all 500 subdistricts now have the full quota of 17 committees functioning and ready to implement development activities (compared to less than half in 2012). With UNDP support, the government now has a comprehensive system in place to objectively assess subdistricts' performance in planning, managing and delivering public services; 1,400 auditors have the capacity to carry out these assessments.

UNDP supported open budget sessions, through which community members discuss how the local government institutions utilized funds. These open budget sessions are leading to an open and transparent forum where community members can hold their elected representatives accountable for resource expenditures and whether the resources met the community's needs and concerns.

Faster and easier access to information

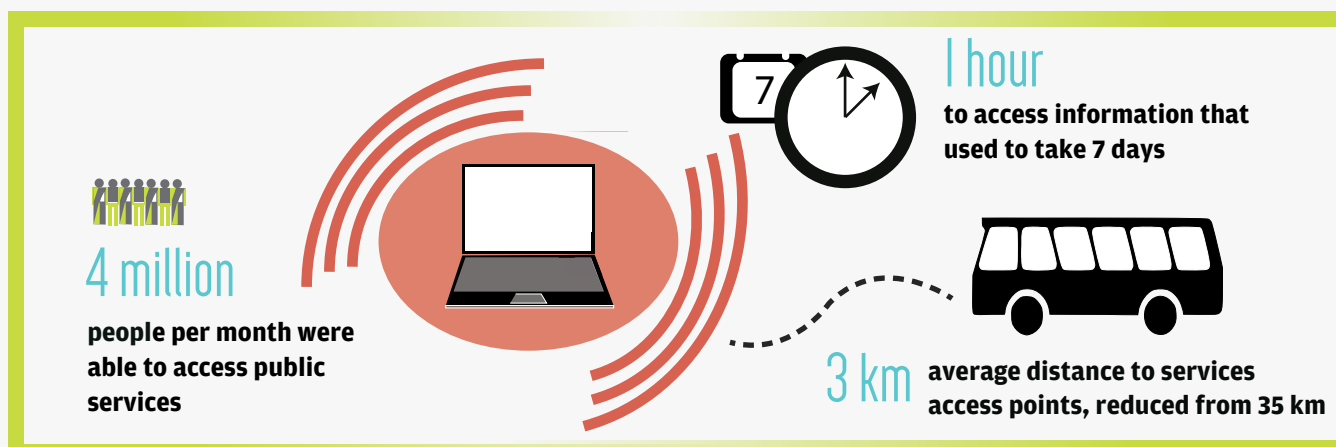
A central pillar of democracy is that the poor and underserved should have easy access to timely and relevant information. Accessing public services in Bangladesh has long been difficult; the rural poor typically had to travel long distances to reach the relevant government offices. This took valuable time away from

their daily work, impacted their wages and often imposed significant travel costs.

UNDP worked closely with the government and other partners to help change this paradigm by supporting the introduction of e-governance in Bangladesh. In 2013, the Government of Bangladesh provided people with 60 million government services over the Internet—quickly and basically for free. A 2013 national census showed that over 4 million people per month were able to access public services. Previously underserved citizens can now use the Internet to access government services such as land records, social services, birth certificates, agricultural services and to look for work abroad. Furthermore, these faster services reduced previously long wait times: on average, information that used to take seven days to obtain now takes one hour.

To use these electronic services to their maximum potential, the rural population needs easy and inexpensive Internet access. The UNDP-supported Access to Information programme, in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and the United States Agency for International Development, led to the establishment of 5,000 information service centres across the country—most of them privately run small enterprises hosted in local government institutions. These enterprises are financially sustainable, having generated over \$30 million of profits in 2013. For the over 4 million people that use these service centres every month, the travel time to access them has been reduced from 35 kilometres on average to only three kilometres, a massive reduction in wasted time and money.

UNDP SUPPORTING ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN 2013



Transparent and accountable public services for the poor and underserved

Mere access to services is not enough—democratic governance also requires **transparent** access to government services. Supported by UNDP, the government used e-governance to simplify a number of public service processes. For example, vulnerable citizens can now check online to determine whether they qualify for certain social services and to track disbursements. In 2013, nearly 2 million workers registered for work abroad. Before that, people had to travel to Dhaka and were frequently cheated or robbed. Furthermore, 1,000 workers moved to Malaysia on a government-sponsored scheme. In addition, farmers can now obtain agricultural information that is tailored to their land to help them make decisions such as what crops to cultivate and what fertilizers to use.

Improving service quality also requires practised accountability and feedback loops from citizens; citizens need to know where and how to apply for, use or complain about public services.

UNDP and its partners, through the Access to Information programme, helped expand citizens' access to information about all national and local government offices in the country. The programme helped the government to build 25,000 official websites and a comprehensive portal to make them easily accessible. Individual sites include descriptions of services provided, contacts for each service, a complaint mechanism and directions for visiting the relevant office. Furthermore, with UNDP technical assistance, 56 public service providers in 16 pilot districts under 13 ministries adopted citizen charters as an accountability tool to measure service delivery efficiency. It is expected the charters will be nationally adopted.



Digital revolution in education and health

Modern technology has already transformed education in Bangladesh. Over 4 million children are taught by 18,000 teachers trained in using a multimedia classroom. UNDP began supporting seven multimedia classrooms in 2010; the Ministry of Education has since equipped 20,500 classrooms across the country with a simple but cost-effective combination of a laptop, an Internet connection and a multimedia projector. This has increased attendance and passing rates. In addition, enhancing teachers' connectivity improved what they teach: in 2013, 20,000 primary and secondary school teachers, most of them women, exchanged thousands of media content items on a teacher's sharing portal. To improve feedback, over 60 million public exam results were transmitted over the Internet.

In 2013, 750,000 people benefited from health camps organized by 300 information service centres. Further, a UNDP-supported telemedicine initiative treated an estimated 70,000 rural citizens (three-quarters of them women) for minor diseases. Because doctors infrequently attend to patients in villages, the national health services are employing doctors in the capitol to provide these services at scheduled times; citizens can use the Internet to contact the doctors via Skype.

Promoting women's leadership and decision-making at the local level

UNDP helped build the leaderships skills of 400 women local government leaders by helping to establish 214 Women Development Forums that served as networking and partnership platforms and enhanced women's capacities and collective institutional positioning. With UNDP's technical support, Local Government Councils submitted 86 development schemes under the Upazila Fiscal Facility. Twenty-five of these schemes were submitted by women; 37 focused on gender dimensions (e.g. developing a childbirth facility, constructing separate toilets for girl students at local high schools and recording pregnant women's blood group in order to match them with potential donors).

UNDP advocacy and capacity-building efforts contributed to enhancing the roles of female elected leaders. Post-training documents and surveys recorded that gender and masculinity training for male local authorities resulted in positive feedback and changes in the perception of gender roles among Union Parishad male members. For example, records show that 243 early marriages were stopped and nearly 900 family conflicts were mitigated. Notably, a gender network in the civil service was formally registered in 2013; it passed gender guidelines to address the challenges women face in the civil service.

▲ Improved access to justice for poor and vulnerable people
51,381

▼ 4% Reduction of case backlog (nearly 4,000 cases)

28 days on average to resolve a case in village courts

15,275 cases concluded by village courts

FASTER, FAIRER, GENDER-RESPONSIVE & ACCESSIBLE JUSTICE

On average, Bangladeshi citizens can expect to wait five years to receive justice from the formal legal system. Many cases take over a decade to reach a verdict; an estimated 2.7 million cases are awaiting resolution. Barriers to more timely resolution include the slow processing rates of cases, the accumulation of unprocessed cases, overly complex procedures, the lack of effective case management, outdated laws and an absence of coordination and cooperation between justice-sector agencies. This backlog places considerable pressure on the sector, hampers access to justice and results in millions of people throughout the country being excluded from access to quick and fair trials. This is particularly acute for the poor that face considerable obstacles if they require legal redress.

However, UNDP support, in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, the European Union and UKaid, is helping to change this situation. In 2013, UNDP supported Bangladesh's efforts to identify effective strategies to reduce the waiting time for legal cases and broaden citizens' access to justice. To achieve these ends, Bangladesh tested different ways to reduce case backlogs, expanded the village court system to provide



local-level dispute resolution, improved criminal court coordination and civil court effectiveness and drafted amendments to outdated laws. As a trusted partner, UNDP was allowed to monitor daily court routines (including the Supreme Court) and was given full access to case files. Having maintained a long-term and sustainable focus throughout, the government is funding the scaling up of these innovative UNDP pilot programmes.



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Court-led mediation session with a judge, lawyers and plaintiffs

Reducing waiting times for formal justice

In 2013, the government tested the effectiveness of better coordination, cooperation and communication in reducing the long waiting times for criminal cases. As a result of UNDP advocacy and support, the Supreme Court Judicial Reforms Committee (chaired by the Chief Justice of Bangladesh) formally established seven case coordination committees in pilot district courts and the Supreme Court. Case coordination committees convene judges, lawyers, police and prison representatives to speed up judicial processes. As these committees demonstrate their effectiveness in reducing waiting times, they will be replicated nationwide. Results are encouraging: in three districts—including Dhaka—the courts disposed of 87 percent of all cases, compared to only 77 percent in 2012. The courts in these districts also managed to reduce overall case backlog by 4 percent, or nearly 4,000 cases.

order to determine causes for delays. This mapping exercise was made possible due to the trust given to UNDP in this sensitive area. As a result, the judiciary launched a backlog reduction programme and established model courts. As a start, 25,000 judgements were made using information technology. Further, for the first time in Bangladesh, legal cases in the Supreme Court and three pilot districts are now managed under clear guidelines.

Around 13,000 people resolved their disagreements in 2013 in the three UNDP-supported districts. Judges and lawyers used mediation to resolve 40 percent more family and civil cases—nearly 700 in total. This not only helps restore justice and repair broken relationships in society, but it also reduces the waiting time in the formal justice system. Mediation became possible through UNDP's support in training judges and lawyers who, in turn, become trainers themselves in how to use mediation to resolve cases.

Solving local problems locally

For the vast majority of the population, the prohibitive costs of formal justice, coupled with a poor understanding of legal matters, means that access to justice is beyond their reach.

 *In 2013, 25,000 judgements were made using information technology.*



Village courts, made up of five-person panels and empowered to resolve small-scale disputes, provide another way to free up the formal justice system. Formal court processes are confusing and can take a very long time. The village court system can provide rural citizens with local, fast and inexpensive access to justice. Further, the poor and disadvantaged in Bangladesh can often not afford to travel long distances to the nearest district court. In contrast, village courts are usually within a few kilometres, ostensibly at citizens' doorsteps.

Beginning in 2010, UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives and the European Union, set up the village courts as a pilot initiative to narrow the gaps in access to justice. These pilots have proven very successful: there has been a consistent increase in village court performance, evidenced by dramatic increases in the number of cases reported, resolved, and decisions implemented. In 2013 alone, 15,276 cases were concluded—an increase of 154 percent over 2011.

Most cases concerned disputes resulting from physical assaults, financial, property and land-related disputes, family disputes, killing of domestic animals and theft. Through UNDP support, village

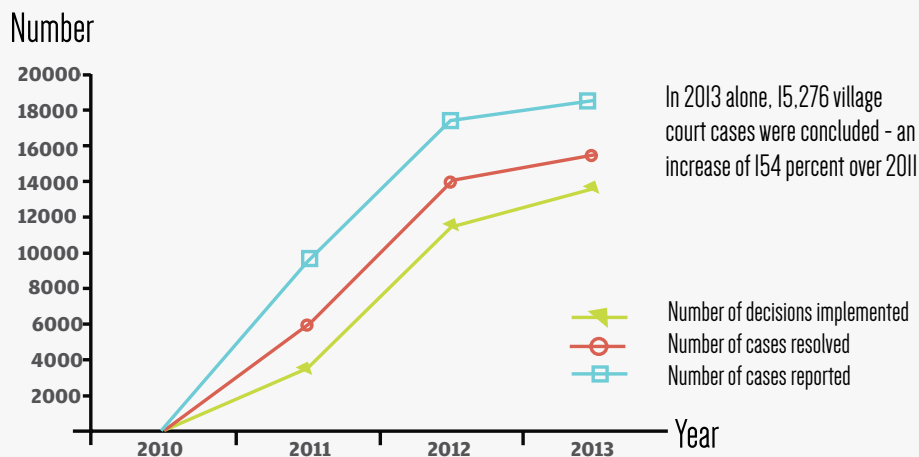
courts are now active in 350 local union councils and have a reach of approximately 7 million people.

Significantly, district courts have transferred nearly 2,800 cases to village courts (around 1,100 in 2013). This not only demonstrates the degree to which the district-level courts recognize the village court system, it also frees up the formal justice system for dealing with bigger cases and reduces waiting time. As a Union Parishad chairman points out, "Sixteen cases were referred to us from the District Courts. Two years have passed and an average of 80,000–100,000 Taka are spent for each case without any result. In contrast, it took us only three weeks to resolve these matters in village courts."

A 2013 mid-term evaluation identified the village courts as an example of international best practice and a model for scaling up. The government has demonstrated clear cost-sharing commitments in the 2014 fiscal year budget by allocating funds to replicate the village court models throughout the country.

Jahanara Begum's demand for compensation was rapidly dealt with through the village courts system

VILLAGE COURTS PERFORMANCE



Updating laws

The Village Court Act, revised based on UNDP policy recommendations, expanded the village courts' jurisdiction and powers. In addition, the Act made it mandatory that at least one woman serves as a panel member in village courts in cases related to women or child issues.

UNDP is helping to realize long-term changes by supporting the drafting of bills to amend the 1898 Code of Criminal Procedure, the 1872 Evidence Act and the 2001 Arbitration Act. These will modernize the systems for summons to be issued, ensure that rape victims are medically examined by registered doctors, fix time-frames for police investigations and make it easier to use scientific evidence in the courts. UNDP supported the revision process, engaging legal experts, police and members of the public to review and revise the draft bills.

The Ministry of Home Affairs developed a draft revision of the Police Act in 2013. The old Police Act, dating from 1861, is still the legal bedrock upon which the Bangladesh Police operate and delineates what police officers can and cannot do. UNDP has long advocated

for the revision of this outdated legislation in order to move from a confessional- to an evidence-based policing culture.

Women's access to justice

A women-friendly environment provides women with equal opportunities to access justice services. In three districts in 2013, the number of women filing cases rose by 20 percent, partly as a result of UNDP support in setting up women-only waiting rooms. In addition, UNDP-supported case management now gives priority to justice for women and victims of violence against women.

Women are increasingly participating in village courts. In 2013, nearly 6,000 women sought remedies in village courts. In district courts, women make up over 10 percent of panel members (up from 8 percent in 2012).

With UNDP programming support, 23,000 poor women now have access to a help hotline. In 2013, over 1,000 victims of violence asked for and received help or legal aid. As a result, nearly 250 early marriages have been stopped and almost 900 family conflicts have been mitigated.



20% of new police recruits are women



700 women and child victims received services from seven Victim Support Centers



Improving Human Security: Towards a More Professional Police

Bangladesh police relied on UNDP technical and financial support to increase their use of forensic evidence in investigations, crime trend analysis and intelligence-led policing. At least one third of all crime scenes in 2013 were visited by an investigator trained in proper evidence collection. UNDP has provided the police with 500 crime scene kits (most of them in 2013). In 2013, nearly 300 repeat offenders were identified using a UNDP-supported fingerprint database, which contains fingerprints of nearly 45,000 convicted prisoners.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police is increasingly using criminal intelligence methodologies in operational planning, with a recent operation resulting in the arrest of 120 suspects. The police in the CHT region are testing a system for crime pattern analysis, which provides police managers with information about where crime is increasing, if it is moving to other areas or if it is changing in character.

Women police officers play an instrumental part in law enforcement, though women's representation in the Bangladeshi Police is still limited at 4.5 percent of the entire force. However, in 2013, an estimated 20 percent of new recruits into the police were women, an increase from about 12 percent over the past three years. In addition, the Bangladesh police now have a draft gender policy to strategically promote women in the police service.

Human security has improved for most vulnerable sections of Bangladesh. In 2013, 700 women and child victims received services from seven victim support centres. In addition, throughout the country, all people now have easy access to victim's support; police stations can refer victims to these centres. These centres are sustainable; two are already directly funded from the Bangladesh Police budget, and the Ministry of Finance will pay the operating costs of the remaining centres.



92
MILLION REGISTERED
VOTERS

over
300
subnational
elections

&

5
municipal
elections
deemed
credible
by observers

BETTER TOOLS FOR ELECTIONS

Managing elections

The Election Commission developed a modern electoral management system in preparation for the 2014 national elections. With support from UNDP and other development partners, the Election Commission now has the skills to use election management software that better manages candidates, polling stations, polling officials, training and election results.

With UNDP technical support (including training manuals, toolkits and audio-visual learning tools), the Electoral Training Institute revamped its approaches and now provides systematic, modern and professional training to equip election offices with the skills to accurately, impartially and consistently apply election procedures. The institute trained over 300,000 election officials in preparation for the January 2014 elections.

The Election Commission relied on UNDP technical support to update the voter list, adding 7 million new voters in 2013. A decentralized voter registration resulted in a more complete registered voter list, bringing the total to 92 million. Furthermore, UNDP technical assistance supported completion of over 44 additional local electoral centres (433 centres in total), expanding local electoral service delivery nationwide.

Using Mobile Phones to Increase Voter Turnout

Many voters—especially young, new voters—do not have a voter identification number (which differs from their national ID number) required to cast a ballot and do not know where to go to participate in an election. To increase voter turnout, the Election Commission relied on UNDP support to pilot the use of mobile phone technology. Prior to the 2013 local elections in Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet, nearly 30,000 voters sent a text message with their national ID number. In turn, they received a voter ID number that allowed them to cast a ballot and information about how to find their polling station. The Election Commission is planning to scale up this innovative technology prior to future elections and send out—for the first time in the region—an automatic text message.



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PROMOTING & PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Overall, the human rights situation in Bangladesh deteriorated throughout 2013. The most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Bangladesh continue to face a bleak human rights situation. Child marriage remains high, and child labour remains a pervasive element of the economy. A high rate of violence against women continues, despite a strong set of laws and policies to combat it.

National Human Rights Commission

Despite operating with limited funding and staff, the National Human Rights Commission, supported by Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland, took some steps to enable it to carry out its mandate to protect and promote human rights. With UNDP technical support, the Commission widened its coverage in 2013. The Commission is now able to monitor human rights violations in 65 percent of the territory of Bangladesh. This resulted from UNDP linking the Commission with local non-government organisations (NGOs) and setting up a roster of nearly 200 trained investigators. In 2013, these investigators conducted 36 human rights investigations and submitted their reports to the Commission. In 2013, the Commission received 433 complaints about human rights violations; it resolved 325 of them. The government accepted 164 of 196 recommendations from the 2013 Universal Periodic Review.




All children in Bangladesh are now better protected by law. With UNDP technical advice and policy advocacy support, the National Human Rights Commission successfully advocated for changes in the 2013 Children Act. Changes include redefining 'child' from below 16 to below 18 years of age and stipulations that every district must set up a juvenile court, that police stations establish children's desks, that no child below the age of 9 is arrested or detained and that juvenile offenders are provided with alternatives to prison. Notably, with UNDP's policy advice and technical assistance, the Commission developed proposals for two new laws related to prohibiting discrimination and child marriage.



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A woman wearing a vibrant red and orange patterned sari is herding three sheep along a wide, dusty dirt path. She holds a long wooden stick in her right hand. The sheep are of various colors, including white, black, and brown. In the background, there are several traditional wooden houses on stilts, some with red-tiled roofs, situated on a raised embankment. A body of water is visible to the right of the path. The scene is set in a rural area, likely in the Satkhira District of Bangladesh.

**ROKEYA KHATUN IS ONE OF
THE 43 BENEFICIARIES WHO
RESTORED THEIR LIVELIHOODS
AFTER CYCLONE AILA IN THE
SATKHIRA DISTRICT**



3 MANAGING RISKS TO BECOME RESILIENT

Despite the political challenges of 2013, Bangladesh continues to make significant progress and showed resilience in the face of political unrest, natural hazards and other risks.

Resilience is the capacity of men, women, communities, institutions and nations to anticipate, mitigate, respond to and recover from shocks, stresses and change. Bangladesh remains one of the most vulnerable countries to disasters and climate change. It remains off-track in moving towards environmental sustainability, another building block of resilience. Bangladesh's latest MDG report noted several key challenges, such as efficiently using forest resources, developing water-efficient agricultural practices and establishing proper policies and regulation frameworks.

UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and other development partners, significantly contributed to achieving major results in several areas, including:

THE COUNTRY IS NOW BETTER PROTECTED BY A MODERN, EFFECTIVE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS MECHANISM THAT USES A COMPREHENSIVE, WELL-COORDINATED APPROACH TO PREPARING FOR AND RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. This was demonstrated when tropical storm Mahasen hit, which tested Bangladesh's revamped disaster management system. Further, the local disaster risk reduction schemes directly benefited over 3 million people (nearly half of them women).

IN THE POST-CONFLICT REGIONS OF THE CHT, UNDP AND ITS PARTNERS CONTINUED TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROMOTING PEACE AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING. Guided by the Peace Accord, UNDP worked closely with local institutions and communities.

1 MILLION
Bangladesh Scouts stand ready
to respond to disasters

88 million citizens have
two additional days
notice of impending
floods

112 million people
have access
to the early
warning system

18 million school children
know how to prepare
for and react to
disaster

Disaster and climate risks and
vulnerabilities reduced for
3 million people (45% women)

Though 8 million people were at risk
in the affected districts, only
17 deaths happened during
tropical storm Mahasen

PREPARING FOR AND RESPONDING TO DISASTERS—AND BUILDING BACK BETTER

An effective early recovery and disaster management system

The World Risk Report 2012 considered that Bangladesh's disastrous combination of extreme exposure and high vulnerability made it the fifth-most natural disaster-prone country in the world. The Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan estimated that more than 20 million people face the threat of displacement as sea levels rise and result in increased salinity and as the frequency and intensity of cyclones and storm surges increase in the near future.

Bangladesh continued to lead the world in disaster preparedness and response. Through two long-term multi-partner flagship programmes in the country, the Early Recovery Facility and the

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and Australia, European Union, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, helped Bangladesh address disaster with a comprehensive approach, from proactive risk reduction and preparedness through effective humanitarian response and early recovery to promoting resilience and building back better. Bangladesh now has an effective policy framework with clear roles and responsibilities, a set of planning tools and emergency reaction mechanisms (e.g. volunteer networks and digital technologies to provide early warnings). For the first time, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief developed hazard-specific contingency plans to effectively respond to disasters.



Kingdom of the Netherlands



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Bangladesh also made extraordinary improvements in its disaster early warning systems. Through support to the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre has been able to forecast floods five instead of three days before they start to threaten the lives and assets of people living in the four river basins. As a result, 88 million people living in low-lying flood plains have two additional days to prepare for impending floods. This will help to reduce the loss of crops, livestock and other assets of millions of people living in flood-prone areas. Furthermore, a system was put in place in 2013 to give mobile phone users information related to early warnings of disasters. Through a single call to a central number, over 112 million users have access to general warnings or advice for specific groups (e.g. fishermen).

In 2013, UNDP worked with volunteer organizations to mobilize and build the knowledge and skills of dedicated first-disaster responders. The Bangladesh Scouts (the largest volunteer network in Bangladesh) made a formal agreement with UNDP

to provide over 1 million disaster management volunteers to stand ready during an emergency. In addition, 55,000 cyclone volunteers stand ready in coastal areas. In 2013, 7,300 new urban volunteers joined the 16,000 already recruited, and are equipped to prepare for and respond to a disaster as a result of UNDP support. Some of these volunteers were activated in April 2013, when the eight-storey Rana Plaza factory collapsed with over 3,000 garment workers inside. Nearly 1,000 urban volunteers—trained with UNDP support—participated in the search and rescue operations around the clock in eight-hour shifts (with over 200 volunteers active at any given time).

The revamped disaster preparedness system's effectiveness was demonstrated in the response to tropical storm Mahasen. Bangladesh was very well-prepared: around 55,000 volunteers provided warnings to the people of cyclone-prone areas. Over 60,000 people used their cell phones to receive information about the storm. The government sent out ten rounds of text messages—40,000 total—to communities with

Staff at the Flood Forecasting Warning Centre analyze data to forecast climatic hazards



55,000 cyclone volunteers now stand ready in coastal areas.

Baby Mahasen



Rozina Akter, aged 25, lives in Nishanbaria village in Barguna Sadar Upazila. She was in an advanced stage of pregnancy when the warning signal for the approaching cyclonic storm Mahasen was raised. Already facing rough weather, she began to feel birth pains and family members brought her to the cyclone shelter by rickshaw. At the shelter, a room was separated for her delivery and a trained birth attendant took care of her. At 12:30 PM on 16 May—shortly after the storm Mahasen made landfall—she safely delivered her child.

Rozina's husband said this happy ending was made possible by the brick soling approach road that was constructed with UNDP support earlier that year. Previously, the approach road was in poor condition and very difficult to use in the rainy season. During tropical storm Sidr in 2007, one of her family members died on his way to the cyclone shelter.

The baby was named 'Mahasen', after the storm.

information about the approaching cyclone. This contributed to the safe evacuation of over a million people to cyclone shelters within 24 hours of the storm's arrival, and their support with food, water and other emergency items. Nearly 3,800 shelters and other public and private buildings remained open to protect evacuees. Over 1,300 medical teams and 40 water treatment plants were mobilized in the affected districts. As a result of these preparations efforts, only 17 people died due to the tropical storm although 8 million people were at risk.


Reducing risks and vulnerabilities

Recognizing that a key disaster preparedness resource is the people themselves and that local initiatives provide tailored improvements to disaster resilience, UNDP supported local communities seeking to reduce their vulnerabilities and worked with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Ministry of Education to strengthen awareness among school children.

Awareness and knowledge about managing risks

and resilience is becoming widespread. With UNDP support to the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation skills have been incorporated into the school curricula for all schoolchildren from age 8 to 17. In 2013, 18 million students learned about disaster management and climate change.

Working closely with the local government disaster management committees and communities, UNDP managed 1,200 local-level funding schemes, which helped reduce natural disaster and climate change risks for 3 million vulnerable people (45 percent women). These schemes provided jobs for 160,000 people (37 percent women) and livelihood opportunities for 260,000 vulnerable households. In independent surveys of UNDP's Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme, 99 percent of community respondents confirmed the impact of the schemes in reducing risk and vulnerability; 98 percent confirmed that local communities were involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of interventions and that interventions directly responded to their needs and concerns.


UNDP managed 1,200 local-level funding schemes, which helped reduce natural disaster and climate change risks for 3 million vulnerable people (45 percent women).



Converging climate change and disaster risk reduction

UNDP's systematic, on-the-ground efforts and its successful track record at the community and policy levels helped lay the path for policy results by bringing together the climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas. By showcasing effective models of interventions and through prolonged advocacy, UNDP efforts helped bring together, for the first time, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the Ministry of Environment for a coordinated response. Similarly, UNDP led the Local Consultative Group (which represents donors, the United Nations, NGOs and the government), which formulated a cohesive policy response. The government reaffirmed its commitment to resilience and strengthening this convergence in its post-2015 report.

Bangladesh's national planning processes now include the linkages between poverty, climate change and disaster. UNDP supported the Bangladesh Planning Commission's revision of

its tools to include the different dimensions of poverty, disaster and climate change and their linkages in all public-sector investments. This includes measures for preparing, screening and monitoring investments using a set of indicators that track the degree to which plans are pro-poor, environmentally friendly, low emission and climate resilient. Notably, with UNDP technical assistance, Bangladesh developed its first national and local-level Climate Fiscal Framework, which enables national planning processes to strengthen and monitor budget allocations, disbursements and results achieved for poverty, climate change and disaster initiatives. A 2013 evaluation commended UNDP's long-standing support to the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission, in particular UNDP's support in piloting new tools, policy dialogues and developing indicators for monitoring progress in the areas of poverty, environment and climate change.

**Agricultural
adaptation to climate
change and disaster
risk reduction**

65% percent of people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts that can now move outside of their village confidently (compared to 35 percent before the Peace Accord)

34 women peacemakers are playing pivotal roles in promoting peace dialogues, conflict mediation and violence prevention

BUILDING PEACE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The CHT region has remained outside the mainstream of development assistance to Bangladesh for more than 25 years due to persistent low-level conflict in the area. UNDP and its partners have continued to provide capacity-building support to institutions, including traditional local groups, to improve and expand decentralized services.

Promoting confidence-building and human security in the CHT region

The security situation in the CHT region remained fragile throughout 2013. Violent communal attacks that took place in August in the Khagrachari Hill District forcibly displaced over 2,000 villagers. Despite these attacks, a recent household survey found that communities are increasingly confident in their ability to secure and enjoy their basic human rights. UNDP, in partnership with the government, Denmark, the European Union and the United States continued to advocate for sustainable peace and development, engaging with key national- and local-level stakeholders.

In 2013, the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts increasingly took decisions into their own hands.

For the first time, traditional leaders in the region were members of local development committees. UNDP and its partners helped ensure that traditional leaders were incorporated into the fabric of local government committees. As a result of UNDP and its partners' advocacy and technical assistance, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare decided to finance major components of the locally managed health services in the CHT region. Similarly, significant progress was made in ensuring that 42 schools were nationally financed for the first time. Ministries have committed themselves to sustaining these local services.

In the CHT region, poor and marginalized tribal communities faced forced displacement, pressures from resettlement plans and threats to their land rights. Following UNDP, the European Union and Denmark's advocacy and technical support, the draft Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Disputes Resolution Commission Act was developed, subsequently approved by the Cabinet, and then put before the parliament in 2013 (the Act is expected to be passed in 2014).

The people of the Hill Tracts are increasingly likely to encounter police officers from ethnic minorities.



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In 2013, the government agreed to transfer 1,500 ethnic minorities' police officers (including senior officers) from other areas of Bangladesh to police stations in the CHT region.

By early 2014, over 200 police officers from ethnic minorities were working in all 27 police stations of the region. Ultimately, the government aims to have half of the region's 10,000 police officers coming from the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These changes had a significant impact in increasing ethnic minorities' confidence in the region's law and justice system.

Overall, the sense of peace consolidation felt by people in the region is remarkably improving. The 2013 household survey showed that 65 percent of the respondents could confidently move outside of their own village, whereas prior to the Peace Accord, less than 35 percent had such confidence.

Promoting women's participation in peacebuilding

The UNDP-managed programme in the CHT, in partnership with the European Union and Denmark, trained 34 women CHT peacemakers who are crucial to promoting peace, mediating conflicts and preventing outbreaks of violence. Moreover, the programme helped build knowledge and skills of 82 traditional leaders and locally elected women members of Union Parishad on mediation and human rights. The programme resulted in establishing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Women Organizations Network, which has become a gender advocate and champion for promoting gender issues in the CHT. Notably, as part of the support for youth programme, UNDP engaged 50 girls in 'Sports for Peace', building confidence and bridging ethnic divides through participation in football matches.

Women peacemakers prepare for an anti-violence against women campaign



200 police officers from ethnic communities are now working in all 27 regions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Women Peacemakers: Building Confidence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Thirty-four inspiring women were trained in mediation and peacebuilding as part of the 47 CHT Peacemakers initiative, supported by UNDP and the European Union through the CHT Development Facility. Their experiences and training helped them channel their energies towards advocating for a peaceful response to the violence and for taking preventive measures in the future.

In 2013, communal violence erupted in Taindong in the Khagrachari district of the CHT. The devastation was deeply felt across 13 villages. Over 36 houses were burned to the ground, 261 homes completely looted and over 900 households were affected. Seeking refuge from the attack, 2,000 villagers tried to flee towards the Bangladesh-India border. Another 380 families fled into the neighbouring Panchari Upazila.

Namita Chakma and Nigar Sultana, both residents in Khagrachari district, mobilized their civil society network and headed to Taindong. They witnessed the heart breaking destruction with their own eyes. After several days, Namita forged positive linkages with the local administration. “I have better access to the local officials, and even the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari. I help to flag early warning signs of conflict, and local officials have been responsive. It has been 16 years since the signing of the CHT Peace Accord in 1997. We try to be guardians of peace. We have lived in CHT long enough to really appreciate the meaning of peace.”


Meanwhile, Nigar, together with government officials went as far as the Bangladesh-India border to support and encourage the 2,000 displaced Taindong villagers to return home.

One morning in 2012, an unexpected and painful communal conflict erupted in Rangamati town.

Vested interest groups spread rumours of ethnic divides, resulting in panic and fear among residents. Shahnaz Begum actively promoted social cohesion and conflict transformation in her community. A Bengali woman, she had been living in Rangamati town since her ancestors settled in there. An eye witness to the many ups and downs of the region, she is well-known in her neighbourhood and maintains very warm and friendly relationships with community members across ethnicities.

When violence broke out in pockets across the town, and tensions between both ethnic and Bengali communities were high, Shahnaz tried to lessen the extent of the violence by protecting citizens and property; she took strong control of the adjacent areas of her neighbourhood. Using her training as a peacemaker, she communicated quickly with influential neighbourhood Bengali and tribal community law enforcers.

She then motivated and mobilized male youths in her locality as peace supporters and boldly requested them to not engage in destructive or harmful activities. She led a strong and organized team to protect citizens, particularly ethnic minorities, from violence. She also used her residence to provide shelter and food to ethnic women and elderly neighbours.



PEACEMAKER SHAHNAZ HOPES
FOR LASTING PEACE AND
HARMONY AMONG DIVERSE
ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN THE
CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS





4 FIT FOR PURPOSE

A GENDER-RESPONSIVE ORGANIZATION: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF WOMEN AND MEN

This report provides evidence of gender equality results across each of the UNDP areas of work. Gender marker data indicated that all 2013 UNDP programme expenditures contributed to gender equality.

These were a result of UNDP's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across all interventions. The gender marker indicated that 81 percent of expenditures treated gender equality as a principal or significant objective (GEN 2 and GEN 3); 19 percent made some contribution to gender equality (GEN 1).

When compared with 2012, the gender marker data reflects a decrease in expenditures promoting gender equality as a significant objective (from 46 percent in 2012 to 37 percent in 2013). However, expenditures making a "significant" contribution to gender equality increased from 40 percent to 44 percent. This reflects an increased focus on gender-mainstreaming across all UNDP projects and programmes. Further, there is an increase in expenditures making "some" contribution (from 13 percent to 19 percent), and a decrease in expenditures that made no contribution to gender equality (from 1 percent to 0 percent). UNDP has prioritized gender equality and women's empowerment as a core priority for 2014, and is partnering with UN Women to develop a new and innovative joint programme on promoting women's economic leadership.

UNDP Expenditure Contribution to Gender Equality 2012-2013 (%)

GEN 3: Gender equality is a principal objective

37

46

GEN 2: Significant contributions to gender equality

44

40

GEN 1: Some contributions to gender equality

19

13

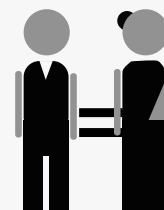
GEN 0: No noticeable contributions to gender equality

0

1

2013

2012



Indicative Gender Equality Results

Supporting formal and informal justice mechanisms

33,000 women received direct access to speedy and quality justice, a 20 percent increase in the number of women filing cases over 2012. UNDP and its partners introduced facilities for women and children in pilot district courts (e.g. women-only waiting rooms). Further, case management committees now give priority to women and victims of gender-based violence, and in 2013, over 1,000 women received legal advice to file a case after calling up a legal aid hotline in two districts (a 20 percent increase over 2012 levels).

Advancing gender-responsive policies

The Village Court Act included a gender quota to increase representation in village court panels. Furthermore, the Government of Bangladesh's post-2015 report included a dedicated goal on gender equality and women's empowerment; all other goals mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment and include targeted indicators.

The National Human Rights Commission, with UNDP and partners' policy support, played a leading role in developing two draft laws related to prohibiting child marriage and to anti-discrimination.

Promoting women's economic empowerment

UNDP managed the Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction programme in partnership with the government, UKaid and UN Habitat. The programme enabled 135,000 urban poor women to take steps to overcome poverty and to become economically active.

UNDP programmes helped to turn climate change challenges into economic opportunities by helping create 68,190 green jobs and livelihoods for women. The number of women working in the green brick kiln industry is more than three times the number in traditional brick businesses. The green brick kilns also provide women with gender parity in wages and employment quality.

Increasing women's disaster resilience

By establishing community assets in coastal risk areas, UNDP and partners helped enhance community risk and resilience for 14,000 households (70 percent of which were led by women).



Partnership and South-South cooperation

All the results highlighted in this report were implemented in partnership with government ministries and departments, bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society, and community-based organizations, media, academia and the private sector.

All projects are anchored across government ministries and departments. A 2013 mid-term evaluation of a UNDP project (Activating Village Courts) commended the UNDP-assisted programming approach, which “combined the strengths of local government and NGOs.”

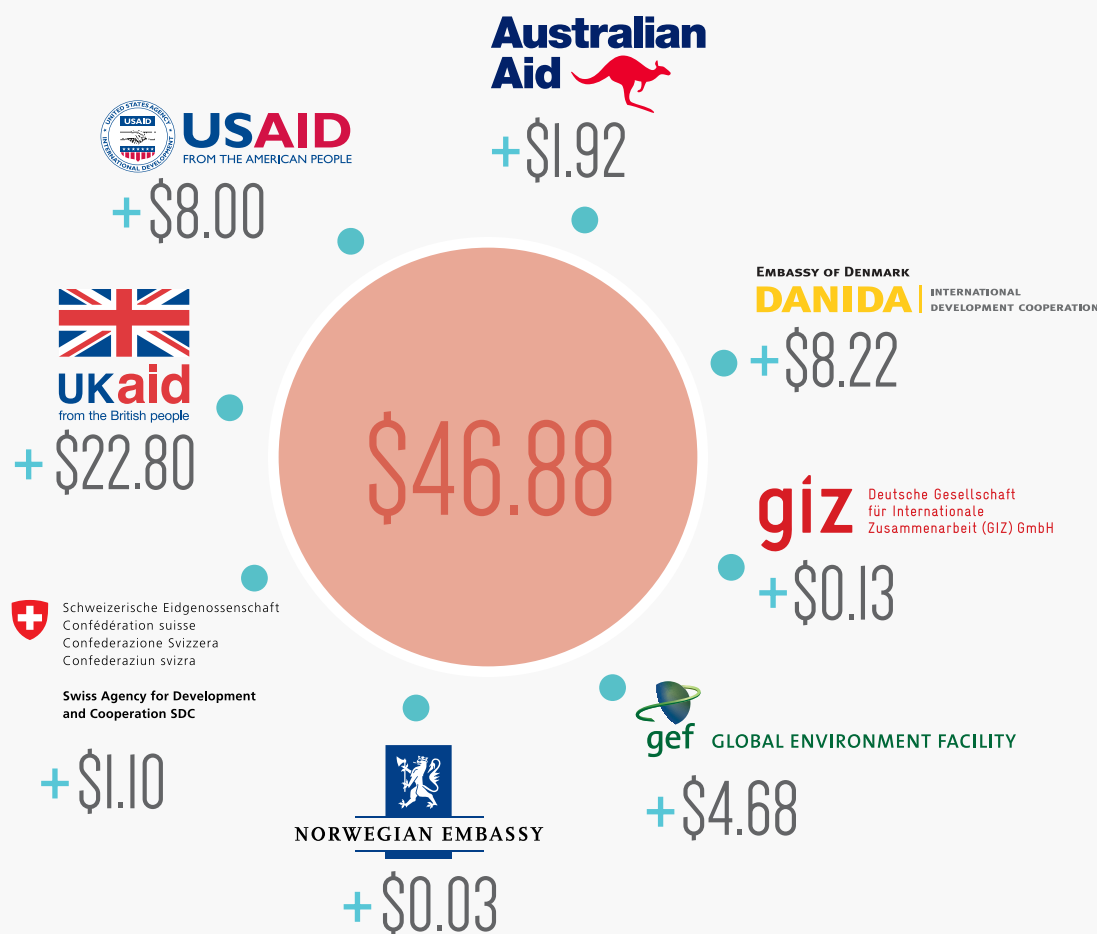
UNDP-brokered partnerships helped the government and development partners use their combined knowledge and experience to draft the country’s first National Social Protection Strategy. UNDP convened development partners and fostered a common vision to translate the on-the-ground experiences and approaches into policy-level changes. This was particularly evident within the United Nations country team, where UNDP was instrumental in establishing the first Social Protection Theme Group.

Furthermore, UNDP was actively involved through the Local Consultative Working Groups (LCG) on Climate Change and Environment and Disaster Emergency. The LCG is comprised of the government, development partners and UN agencies. Notably, UNDP continued to provide a leading role in the CHT LCG to jointly advocate for the inclusion of CHT issues in the government’s nationalization programme.

Despite the challenging political environment in 2013, UNDP was able to establish new partnerships with seven partners and mobilize over \$46 million.

Strengthening South-South partnerships remains critical for UNDP Bangladesh. Bangladesh played a critical role as both a ‘provider’ and a ‘recipient’ of South-South flows of knowledge and partnerships across a range of issues.

FUNDS MOBILIZED FROM DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN 2013 (IN MILLION US\$)





Examples of Bangladesh South-South Cooperation

Learning from Nepal on addressing the needs of ethnic minorities

Officials from the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and local government institutions learned about managing ethnic minorities' affairs through decentralized governance structures and planning from Nepal. Based on the learning, CHT-based local governments upgraded their annual development plans to incorporate ethnic minorities issues.

Exchanging approaches with India on case management systems

Supreme Court judges and high-level officials from the Bangladesh Law Ministry exchanged knowledge, experiences and best practices on effective case management and justice-sector coordination systems with their Indian counterparts. Based on the learning, the Supreme Court and the Law Ministry finalized pilot case management committees.

Working with Thailand to establish community housing development funds

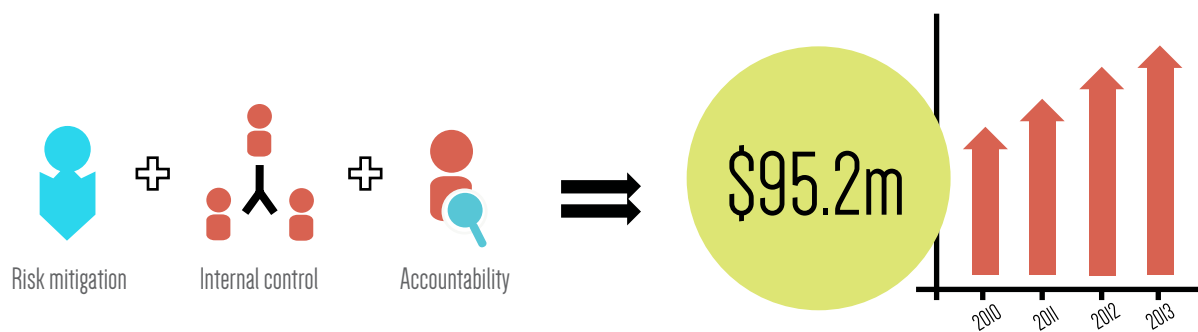
Three towns (Chittagong, Gopalgang and Rajshahi) received technical support and a model on establishing community housing development funds from Thailand's Asian Coalition for Housing Rights. Bangladesh has successfully piloted a cost-effective community housing model for 500 urban poor households.

Partnering with China on strengthening community-based disaster risk reduction and preparedness

Officials from the Ministry of Disaster Management learned valuable lessons from China on planning and implementing community-based disaster management programmes. Based on the learning, the ministry drafted a plan to seek technical and financial support from China on a community-based earthquake safety and preparedness programme. The Ministry also shared innovative approaches with its Chinese counterparts on flood forecasting information dissemination systems, urban disaster risk volunteer mobilization and national disaster risk reduction coordination systems. The initiative opened new avenues for bilateral cooperation in the area of disaster risk reduction. Both countries have established a multi-year partnership to exchange knowledge and practices.

Partnering with China on improving energy-efficient technology

Partnership with Clean Energy Alternatives and the Xian Institute in China helped Bangladesh improve its energy-efficient and environmentally friendly brick-kiln technology. The new technology has led to up to a 50 percent savings in energy use, resulting in economic dividends and environmental benefits.



UNDP Bangladesh managed to deliver \$95.2 million, exceeding the delivery levels of the last four years

Robust, effective and accountable delivery

Despite severe operational challenges in Bangladesh—a third of all working days were affected by violent strikes in 2013—delivery in UNDP was directly proportional to transformational results and changes made on the ground. UNDP Bangladesh managed to deliver \$95.2 million, exceeding the delivery levels of the last four years. Delivery of results and resources took place in the context of an enhanced risk mitigation, internal control and accountability framework in UNDP.

Overall, all UNDP Bangladesh audits, donor verification missions and due diligence (conducted by UKaid) have been satisfactory. For example, the UKaid Annual Review of the Urban Poverty Reduction Programme rated the programme with an “A+”, and an Office of Audit and Investigations audit of the programme was successful without any observations. These results were due, to a large extent, to increased accountability efforts that included the establishment of a mutual

accountability unit by the programme. Seven mid-term project evaluations/reviews were successfully completed, all commending UNDP’s work. UNDP strengthened accountability through a series of spot checks, mid-term and end-of-the year reviews. Procurement efficiency was further enhanced, including through increased use of long-term agreements and decentralized delegation of authority to projects.

UNDP Bangladesh is the pilot of one of UNDP’s global efforts to streamline procedures for contracting NGOs for emergency response and recovery, which is expected to lead to operational effectiveness and efficiency. For example, UNDP Bangladesh has established an NGO roster that enables UNDP to contract pre-qualified NGOs within 48 hours of a disaster event.

Monitoring and evaluation

UNDP Bangladesh intensified its efforts to deepen the culture of results-based planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting in the country office and



Over 80 monitoring and evaluation activities took place in 2013, including:



7 EVALUATIONS



40 SURVEYS



A NATIONAL CENSUS

related projects. It rolled out and costed a multi-year monitoring and evaluation plan for all projects. The plan set benchmarks in order to capture results for the entire life of each project. Around 2 percent of projects' budgets are dedicated to monitoring and evaluation activities.

Over 80 monitoring and evaluation activities took place in 2013, including 7 evaluations, 40 surveys and a national census. These included innovative data collection methods, such as primary research on multi-dimensional poverty and a women's empowerment scorecard. UNDP supported Bangladesh's Bureau of Statistics to conduct its first national census, which provided data and analysis on the efficiency and quality of public services. Various platforms were used to ensure data quality and equitable and broad-based participation in data collection. For example, a UNDP-commissioned household survey in the CHT region engaged women, traditional leaders, local government members and tribal communities.

Overall, UNDP investments in empirical studies and enhanced monitoring yielded high returns in 2013. For example, a UNDP-led business mapping process

of the district court system's workflows provided a solid evidence base for programming and increased understanding of case backlog causes. Courts improved access to justice by using the analysis to collect better quantitative and qualitative data. A 2013 UKaid Safety and Justice Programme Review concluded that the mapping was essential to ensuring that findings were integrated into the national level.

However, monitoring and evaluation remains a challenge for national partners. For example, a 2013 midterm evaluation of UNDP support to the National Human Rights Commission highlighted the need for UNDP to strengthen the Commission's monitoring and evaluation systems and capacities. In response, UNDP strengthened its programming focus on enhancing monitoring tools and institutions, including using performance-measuring tools such as citizen charters and customer assessments in areas such as human rights, justice and civil service. These tools will strengthen evidence of institutional effectiveness and lead to enhanced accountability and better services.

THE WAY FORWARD

Despite many challenges in 2013, Bangladesh continued to demonstrate itself as a resilient nation. It achieved major development results across promoting sustainable development pathways, inclusive and effective democratic governance and managing risk for resilience. UNDP and its partners played key roles in many of its successes. 2014 remains a critical year for Bangladesh. It is also the penultimate year to the MDG deadline, and the midway point of the 2012–2016 United Nations Development Assistance Framework country programme document. The country is focused on achieving middle-income status by 2021, and is approaching least developed country graduation thresholds. Bangladesh's 2013 Report on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda reaffirmed its commitment to pro-poor and inclusive growth, good governance, gender equality, climate change adaptation and resilience building, and even adopted a climate change mitigation orientation through its focus on increasing sustainable energy use, developing a green economy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Building on the successes and lessons learned from 2013, UNDP Bangladesh will continue to support its national partners to deliver on commitments that are well-aligned with UNDP's key areas of the new Strategic Plan: shaping inclusive and environmentally sustainable development pathways, inclusive and effective governance and managing risks for resilience.



Towards inclusive and environmentally sustainable development pathways

In 2014, UNDP will support the government's finalization and implementation of its National Social Protection Strategy (now termed as the National Social Security Strategy). UNDP Bangladesh will undertake analysis and foster dialogue on most vulnerable groups (e.g. Dalits and other ethnic minorities) to identify innovative solutions. UNDP will focus on facilitating broad ownership of the Strategy, as well as on improving coordination and governance of national social protection systems.

Building on the gains made, UNDP will continue to support Bangladesh to turn its significant environmental degradation and climate change challenges into economic opportunities for poor women and men. UNDP will work closely with the private sector and policymakers to

pilot interventions that transform high-value industries and sectors as engines for driving low-emission, green human development that address environmental degradation while creating jobs, protecting food sources and facilitating skills and technology transfer.

Promoting inclusive and effective democratic governance

UNDP will continue to advocate and broker knowledge and ideas to create conditions for a national consensus that will nurture an accountable, inclusive, responsive and human rights-based democratic culture. To promote social cohesion, UNDP will create platforms to engage communities in democratic dialogue and will increase civil society capacities to form alliances and coalitions around key national issues, articulate their views and hold the government to account. UNDP will conduct a series of in-depth assessments, perception surveys and analysis of institutional, legislative and policy frameworks that inhibit democratization and political decentralization. The knowledge gained from these exercises will support and promote issue-based dialogue and stakeholder engagement in the critical areas of human rights and improving public service accountability and integrity. A focus on youth will be integral to widening democratic space, creating channels for a plurality of voices and harnessing capacity for innovation.

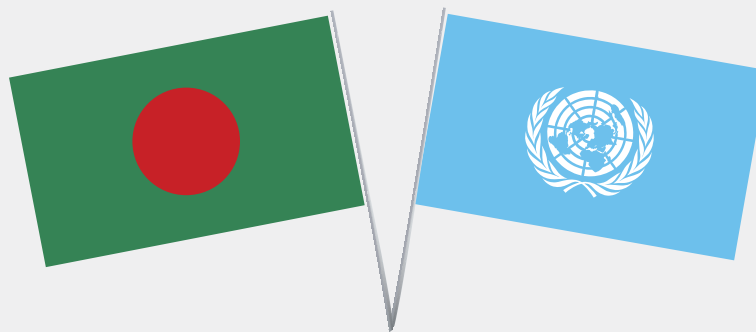
Managing risks to become resilient

Bangladesh has become a champion in disaster management, from preparedness and risk reduction

to early recovery and building back better. Building on the successes of its major disaster risk reduction and early recovery and climate change programme, UNDP will continue to support Bangladesh combine disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into comprehensive efforts that promote livelihoods and resilience. These efforts will include drawing strong linkages to the post-MDG and post-Hyogo Framework for Action contexts. In addition, UNDP will continue to promote peacebuilding efforts in the post-conflict CHT region, including by leveraging community participation and strengthening local government's institutional capacities. UNDP will continue to convene forward-looking analyses and policy dialogues with the Government of Bangladesh, development partners, other UN agencies and practitioners to support the country's efforts to combine social, economic and governance perspectives to increase its resilience to crisis and disasters.

Empowering women and promoting gender equality

UNDP Bangladesh's well-recognized gender equality and women's empowerment efforts will be significantly reinvigorated in 2014. UNDP, often with partners such as UN Women, will continue to use strong analysis and concrete evidence to invest in and to design women's empowerment programmes. Both mainstreaming and dedicated efforts will be needed to address those social norms and institutional practices that prevent women from fully realizing their potential and making economic, political and social development contributions.



FIT FOR PURPOSE

In each of these areas, UNDP Bangladesh will continue driving innovation and taking risks in order to maximize new opportunities and will build on its innovations of access to information, green brick-making, coastal afforestation and South-South partnerships. UNDP will continue to demonstrate leadership in thematic priority areas, yield concrete results and manage resources in an effective and accountable manner. These efforts will enable UNDP to remain relevant and credible to its development partners and to national stakeholders.

UNDP will continue coordinating with UN agencies and ensuring that we work as 'One UN', aiming to effectively draw on agencies' comparative strengths. In 2014, UNDP will contribute to this end through its co-chair role of the UN task team on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, concluding a joint UN programming exercise and by co-leading the UN Theme Group on Social Protection. Joint programming efforts will also continue in the areas of urban development,

common country assessment, the environment and women's empowerment. UNDP will also play a leading role in the area of disaster risk management and humanitarian response by co-chairing the Government/Development partner working group.

UNDP will continue to nurture "One Team." Efforts will be taken to further develop UNDP Bangladesh and its many country office and project staff into an empowered, collaborative and service-oriented cohesive team. Hand-in-hand with staff empowerment, UNDP Bangladesh will continue to implement the financial sustainability and effectiveness strategies that seek to ensure that UNDP is more effective, efficient, accountable and leaner in delivery results and resources.

2013 Project Expenditure and Partners

Project / Programme	Expenditure (US\$)*	Funders	National Government Implementing Partner / Counterpart
Access to Information (Phase-2)	1,677,611	US Agency for International Development, UNDP	The Office of the Prime Minister
Activating Village Courts	2,793,001	European Union, UNDP	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, Local Government Division
Aid Effectiveness	686,655	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Denmark, UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Ministry of Finance, Economic Relations Division
Aquatic Ecosystems	138	Global Environment Facility	Ministry of Environment and Forest Forest Department
Barrier Removal to the Cost-effective Development and Implementation of Energy Efficiency	102,829	Global Environment Facility	Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute, Ministry of Industries
Civil Service Change Management	918,476	UNDP	Ministry of Public Administration
Coastal Afforestation and Reforestation	29,158	Global Environment Facility	Ministry of Environment and Forest Forest Department
Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change through Coastal Afforestation in Bangladesh	1,954,598	Global Environment Facility, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; UNDP	Ministry of Environment and Forest, Forest Department
Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (Phase II)	19,555,783	Australia Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, European Union, Government of Norway, Government of Sweden, UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Construction of Server Stations for Electoral Database	2,125,906	Kingdom of the Netherlands; UK Department for International Development	Bangladesh Election Commission
Conversion from hydrochlorofluorocarbon 141b to cyclopentane technology in the manufacture of insulation foam in domestic refrigerators at Walton Hi-Tech industries Ltd. Bangladesh	246,232	Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest
Development of Sustainable Renewable Energy Generation	22,817	Global Environment Facility	Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts	14,287,524	Government of Denmark, European Union, US Agency for International Development, UNDP	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, Hill District Councils

Project / Programme	Expenditure (US\$)*	Funders	National Government Implementing Partner / Counterpart
Early Recovery Facility	3,949,164	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNDP	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
Implementation for Digital Executive Committee of National Economic Council	102,432	UNDP	Planning Division, Ministry of Planning
Improving Democracy through Parliamentary Development	1,146,785	Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNDP	Bangladesh Parliament
Improving Kiln Efficiency in the Brick-making Industry	474,051	Global Environment Facility, Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNDP	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest,
Inclusive and Sustainable Development	32,514	UNDP	Ministry of Planning, General Economics Division
Institutional Strengthening for the Phase-out of ozone depleting substances (Phase-VI)	43,586	Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forests
National Capacity Development for Implementing Rio Conventions through Environmental Governance	4,395	Global Environment Facility	Ministry of Environment and Forest, Forest Department
National Social Protection Strategy	853,261	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, UNDP	General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning
Judicial Strengthening	1,124,095	UNDP	Supreme Court
Justice Sector Facility	1,127,528	UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Law and Justice Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Knowledge for Development Management	264,414	UNDP	Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance
National Database on Violence Against Women	142	UNDP	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
National Human Rights Commission Capacity Development Project	1,313,164	Government of Denmark, Government of Sweden, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNDP	National Human Rights Commission
Phase out of chlorofluorocarbon consumption in the manufacture of Metered Dose Inhalers in Bangladesh	180,241	Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forest

Project / Programme	Expenditure (US\$)*	Funders	National Government Implementing Partner / Counterpart
Police Reform Programme (Phase II)	4,973,950	UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Bangladesh Police, Ministry of Home Affairs
Poverty, Environment Climate Mainstreaming	271,453	United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP	General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning
Promoting Access to Justice and Human Rights	410,132	UNDP	Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Division, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh	1,701,444	European Union, UK Department for International Development, US Agency for International Development, UNDP	Bangladesh Election Commission
Support to 10th Parliamentary Election	2,915,833	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Denmark, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Bangladesh Election Commission
Support to implement reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+)	51,377	UN-REDD, UNDP	Ministry of Environment and Forest, Forest Department
Support to MDG Monitoring	33,345	UNDP	General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning,
Sustainable Environmental Governance	1,471,972	Kingdom of the Netherlands, UNDP	Department of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Forests
UNDP Joint Programme on Violence Against Women	85,946	Spain/UNDP MDG Achievement Fund	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Union Parishad Governance Programme	1,581,501	Government of Denmark, European Union, UNCDF, UNDP	Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Co-operatives
Upazila Governance Project	2,644,071	European Union, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNCDF, UNDP	Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Co-operatives
Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction	23,732,372	UK Department for International Development, UNDP	Local Government Engineering Department, Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Co-operatives
Resident Coordinator Management Office	178,997	UK Department for International Development	

* Expenditure data as of 31 December 2013

