



THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN ERITREA

People-Centred Development





INTRODUCTION

BY UN RESIDENT AND HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR, MS. CHRISTINE N. UMUTONI



Eritrea has taken notable steps forward over the past two decades, including significant progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those related to health. This was demonstrated during a recent side even at the UN general assembly supported by the UN. Though challenges still exist, the country is working hard to improve its national capacity in all areas. The achievements made towards advancing the situation of women and enhancing the wellbeing of the most vulnerable Eritreans, especially those in the rural areas, are notable and should be appreciated.

It is clear that the Government is committed to sustaining these gains while pursuing its national development agenda, which aims to reduce poverty levels, expand national capacity, increase food security and support environmental sustainability. UNDP is proud to be a key partner of choice for the Government of the State of Eritrea on this ambitious path.

I am pleased to share that cooperation between the Government of the State of Eritrea and UNDP is growing stronger. We signed the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework in 2013 and the country continues to collaborate with UNDP and its sister agencies. Within this climate of cooperation, UNDP is poised to work closely with the Government to realize its development aspirations. We at UNDP fully support Government ownership, accountability and transparency, and our programming is designed to accommodate and encourage the Government's strong desire to drive its own development agenda. Working together, this approach will enable efficient, effective and sustainable progress towards equitable development. Our close and ongoing collaboration with other development partners is also key to supporting Eritrea on its development journey.

This publication illustrates our work on the ground – through the achievements we've made over the years and the images and voices of Eritreans working with UNDP to foster sustainable development, encourage inclusive green growth and strengthen the nation's institutions.

Looking ahead, we will continue to work with the Government of the State of Eritrea and our partners, especially our donors work towards the eradication of poverty and encourage significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. Our shared vision is to look beyond 2015 and begin to address the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Eritrea.



ERITREA

Country Presentation

Located in the Horn of Africa region, the country borders Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the southeast and the Red Sea to the East. It covers 122,000 square kilometres and is home to an estimated 3.5 million people¹.

The country's geography is diverse, featuring both arid and semiarid climatic conditions and varied rainfall. With lowlands in the west, highlands in the central and northern regions and plains in the east and along the coast, temperature varies from 17 degrees in the highlands, to as high as 28 degrees in the lowlands to more than 30 degrees in the coastal plains.

The Eritrean economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. Although arable land accounts for only 12 per cent of land use, about 65 per cent of the country's population resides in rural areas and relies on crop and rain-fed agriculture, livestock and fisheries for employment and income.

Eritrea became a sovereign state in 1991



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations or UNDP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area.

¹ National Statistics Office (NSO) estimates Eritrea's resident population in 2014 at 3.5 million



Eritrea's key development indicators

3.5 million
182 out of 187 countries (UNDP)
450 (UNICEF)
69% (UNDP)
52 per 1,000 under five children (UNDP)
240 deaths per 100,000 live births (UNICEF)
62.3 (UNICEF)
68.9% (UNICEF)
22% (UNDP)

Sources: UNDP (2014); UNICEF (2014); World Bank (2013); GoSE EPHS (2010); UNDP HDR (2013).

Development context

Following independence, the country enjoyed strong economic growth and marked improvements in health and education thanks to effective social and economic policies and programmes. However, these gains diminished following the border war with Ethiopia (1998-2000) and the subsequent no-war no-peace situation that has continued to challenge the Government's development efforts. GDP dropped sharply to an estimated 1-2 per cent for the period 2007/2008, although more recently, there have been signs of good economic prospects as investments in the mining sector continue to grow.

Eritrea's climate variability, which causes persistent droughts, water stress, land degradation, rising temperatures and deforestation, also poses significant challenges to sustainable development, poverty reduction, food security and steady livelihoods. Persistent drought adversely affects vulnerable communities, groups and households, especially female-headed households. Large areas of land have gone unused, especially following the war, due to unexploded landmines left over from the conflict. The "bread baskets" of Eritrea, the prime fertile agricultural regions of Gash-Barka and Debub, were most heavily affected by the war. Poverty and youth unemployment also remain among the Government's key concerns.

Nevertheless, Eritrea has made strong progress towards the achievement of the health-related Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) and is one of the few African countries on track to meet the health-related MDGs, including reducing child and maternal



mortality. However, much remains to be done, especially to meet those MDGs critical to human development, such as eradicating poverty and hunger and achieving universal access to primary education. While the Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting gender equality, much work is needed to fully integrate gender issues into national development policies and strategies.

Moving forward, the Government of the State of Eritrea has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the lives of all Eritreans through an ambitious development programme. Under the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework 2013-2016, the Government and UNDP are working together to address persistent challenges and strengthen national capacities for development.

2013-2016

UNDP's work under the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) 2013-2016

The Government of the State of Eritrea and the UN system signed the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF) 2013-2016 in 2013 to enhance the wellbeing of the people of Eritrea. The primary aim of the SPCF is to support the most vulnerable, through rapid, balanced, home-grown and sustainable economic growth.

The Framework is organized around Eritrea's stated national priorities, which are to ensure basic social services, develop national capacity, promote food security and sustainable livelihoods, support environmental sustainability and foster gender equity and the advancement of women. Each priority area is closely tied to the related Millennium Development Goals and further elaborated into eight desired outcomes.

UNDP's activities in Eritrea are organized by the agency's Global Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, which prioritizes two areas of work: **sustainable development pathways and inclusive and effective democratic governance**. Therefore, UNDP's Country Programme in Eritrea focuses on five (5) of the (8) SPCF outcomes, in line with this global strategy, as illustrated in the adjacent graphic.



Already, UNDP has recorded substantial achievements under the SPCF, including in the areas of national capacity development for stronger data collection and analysis; sustainable livelihoods and crisis recovery; environmental sustainability and gender equality and the empowerment of women.

UNDP Country Programme in Eritrea

Bringing together the UNDP Global Strategy and the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Agreement

Global UNDP Strategic Plan Outcomes

Outcome 1

Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded

Outcome 3

Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services

Outcome 4

Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women empowerment

Country Programme Document Outcomes

Outcome 24

Selected government institutions have the capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver services to all

Outcome 25

Poor and vulnerable households have improved access to and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities

Outcome 26

Eritrea is on track towards the achievement of MDG targets for environmental sustainability

Corresponding MDGs

Enable strategic governance (MDGs 3 and 8)

Developing national capacity and fostering gender equity and women's empowerment, towards two SPCF outcomes

Foster inclusive and sustainable development (MDGs 1 and 7)

Enable sustainable livelihoods and food security, supporting crisis prevention and recovery, and addressing environmental degradation, towards three SPCF outcomes







Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

Eritrea is on track to meet three of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals ahead of the 2015 target date: reduction of child mortality (MDG 4), reduction of maternal mortality (MDG 5) and combatting HIV and AIDS (MDG 6). Although data is limited, the country also appears to be making strong progress towards environmental sustainability (MDG 7).

Eritrea has made less progress, however, towards the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) and the attainment

of universal primary education (MDG 2). Though adult literacy has improved, enrolment and retention indicators continue to lag behind. Despite significant advancements made towards gender parity (MDG 3), substantial improvements, particularly with regards to female representation in the work force and in national assembly, are still needed to meet this target. Lack of data has made it difficult to assess progress made towards MDG 8, a global partnership for development.



















OVERVIEW

UNDP in Eritrea

The vision of the new UNDP Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017 is to help countries achieve simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. UNDP's newly designed main areas of development work will focus on adopting sustainable development pathways; building and/or strengthening inclusive and effective democratic governance; and building resilience.

In Eritrea, UNDP has been an important development partner for more than two decades. Country office activities began in Eritrea in 1992 and were formalized in 1994. Over these last 22 years, UNDP has worked to meet the needs of all Eritreans by working closely with the Government to meet its development objectives.

2013 marked a milestone for UN cooperation in Eritrea. The Government and the UN system signed the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework 2013-2016 and later the same year the partners came together to commemorate the UN Day for the first time in several years. These developments have paved the way for broader, deeper programming around a range of priority areas.



In Eritrea, UNDP has been an important development partner for more than two decades

As a leading development agency in Eritrea, UNDP is well positioned within the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework to support the Government in five key areas:

- · National capacity development;
- Gender equity and the advancement of women;
- Food security and sustainable livelihoods;
- Crisis prevention and recovery; and
- Environmental sustainability



PROGRAMMES

Inclusive and sustainable development

UNDP promotes sustainable development pathways and provides the required technical back-stopping for development initiatives globally. This includes tackling the connected issues of poverty, inequality and exclusion; transforming productive capacities; preventing the irreversible depletion of social and natural capital; and lowering risks arising from crises. UNDP's work improves the resource endowments of the poor and boosts their prospects for employment and livelihood.

In Eritrea, UNDP works in collaboration with the Government to empower local communities and strengthen the ability of national institutions to ensure sustainable use of natural resources and improve environmental governance.

Supporting food security and sustainable livelihoods

The majority of Eritreans live in rural areas and generate their livelihoods through crop agriculture, livestock and fisheries. Yet without extensive arable land or almost any access to irrigation



trabling sustainable development pathways is at the heart of UNDP's work

systems, food security and livelihoods are challenged by the negative effects of climate variability, recurrent drought and overdependence on and overexploitation of natural resources.

A number of vulnerable groups require food and livelihood support, including poor, female-headed households, children under five, pregnant women and breastfeeding women, who are particularly vulnerable to poor nutrition. Refugee populations that lack farming and livelihood opportunities are continuously dependent on external assistance and are badly in need of more sustainable solutions.



The Government of the State of Eritrea considers addressing food security a top national priority

The Government of the State of Eritrea considers addressing food security a top national priority and has worked to ensure that all Eritreans have sufficient quantities of quality food at an affordable price no matter where they live.

UNDP is supporting the Government's efforts by strengthening the traditional production capacity of agricultural, pastoral and fishing communities.

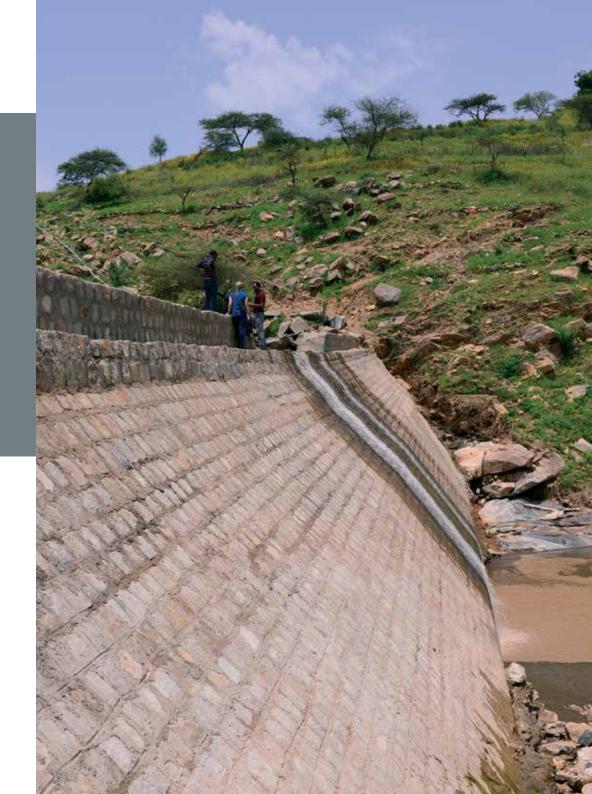
Focus areas include:

- Creating employment and income generating livelihood opportunities
- Drought preparedness, mitigation and contingency planning
- Support to building local leadership capacity

"Let me emphasize that the sustainability of this important project, is almost guaranteed, since projects in this area and in the rest of the country benefit from community, participation especially the beneficiaries, participation especially the beneficiaries, said Christine N. Umutoni, UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator during the UN Country Team visit to the micro-dam in Lamza Village

Enabling local livelihoods

UNDP has so far generated strong results with the Food Security Project throughout the country. For example in the Central Region, three micro-dams have been built in the Gala-Hefhi sub-region. 1,200 villagers have already benefitted from the dam constructed in Lamza Village, with improved food security and stronger productivity.







Eritrea is extremely vulnerable to climate variability and natural disaster



Building resilience

The frequent droughts, floods and varied rainfall patterns in Eritrea are severe enough to reverse the country's development gains. Disaster risk management is therefore critical to minimizing impacts and building the resilience of systems and individuals to withstand shocks.

The Government has worked hard to mainstream disaster risk reduction into key sector strategies, including those for health, agriculture, labour and human welfare. Greater synergy across sectors is needed, however. UNDP is therefore supporting the Government to strengthen national disaster risk management mechanisms by enabling stronger coordination and carrying

out needed assessments. Support will also be provided to prepare a disaster risk management plan and establish a multisectoral National Platform for Coordination.

UNDP's support has enabled the Government to increase its capacity to respond to and recover from crises. UNDP worked with the partners to implement the Recovery Programme to supports efforts towards crisis prevention and management. UNDP support also led to stronger action against landmines and the demining program immediately following in the early times after the war, and the successful return and resettlement of displaced persons.



Promoting environmental sustainability

In recent years, the Government has introduced a number of policies and strategies to address Eritrea's vulnerability to a range of environmental challenges, including droughts, floods, variable rainfall, soil erosion, desertification and land degradation. It also created several legal safeguards concerning the protection, conservation and proper management of biodiversity. However, Eritrea still struggles to meet its global environmental commitments. An estimated 1.3 million people need access to safe water, and only a quarter of rural areas have adequate sanitation. Current patterns of resource consumption are also unsustainable.

UNDP is supporting the Government's overall environmental strategy by building institutional capacities in three key areas:

- Sustainable water sources development and management for domestic and agricultural use
- Natural resource and environmental management
- Increased access to energy services
- Promotion of food security through ecosystem-based climate change adaptation.

Progress under this focus area includes the installation of new renewable energy projects, support drafting environmental policy and organized community-based efforts for sustainable resource management. Examples of projects in this focus area are:

Generating renewable energy sources

The UNDP Pilot Wind Energy Application Project is among the few in sub-Saharan Africa and is expected to promote strong economic development. Already the new 750kw wind farm at the port of Assab is generating clean, renewable energy for the local population. Overall, it is estimated that the new wind energy system will reduce carbon emissions by 37,500 tonnes over the equipment's 20-year lifetime.



Promoting Sustainable Land Management

Under the traditional land tenure system, practiced for generations in Eritrea, farmland was redistributed every seven years, resulting in farmland fragmentation, deforestation and soil degradation, and serving as a disincentive for investment. The Sustainable Land Management Project is piloting a new approach to land distribution that will benefit 30,000 villagers in 28 pilot villages covering 240,000 hectares of land. The approach represents a paradigm shift in the way farmland is managed in the pilot villages and holds enormous potential for generating valuable lessons for Eritrea.



Strategic Governance

UNDP enables inclusive and effective democratic governance that delivers clear benefits to citizens. This includes improving access to justice and public administration and developing capacities to deliver essential services to those most in need. UNDP believes that sustainable development and the elimination of poverty depend on strong governance structures.

UNDP engages with the Government of the State of Eritrea to generate knowledge, build alliances and promote sound approaches to national capacity building and knowledge sharing.

Developing national capacity

In order to carry out its national development agenda and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Eritrea needs to strengthen its institutions and human resources. Solutions must be developed that address major gaps in national capacity, from public sector service delivery to legal administration, and sustain the progress made over the long-term.

Over the past few years, the Government and UNDP have worked together to enhance the capacities of key public institutions and improve service delivery across the board. These include the Ministry of Justice, the Civil Service Administration, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance.



UNDP is continuing to support capacity building in the following areas:

- Development planning and data for development
- Implementation of international obligations and commitments
- Youth training and development
- Higher education
- Capacity building in the Ministry of Justice



The ALDP is an excellent example of the push to further decentralize policy, planning and implementation processes in tritrea

UNDP and sister agency support have improved national capacities across the board. The National Statistics Office is now generating and analysing data critical to national planning and policy development and increased capacity in data development and dissemination will continue to be a priority. Support has also been provided to build the capacities of key ministries, including the Department of Immigration and Nationality. Youth training and development and the improvement of higher learning institutions have also been key areas of support.

Building capacity in the justice sector

As part of its effort to develop the capacity of the Ministry of Justice, UNDP strengthened the community court system. Previously, the rural population had spent considerable time getting their cases heard in formal courts. Today, community courts have brought judicial services closer to the rural population, saving time, money and energy.

Creating opportunities for young people

UNDP financed the Youth Employment and Development Skills Project to create practical programmes and tangible employment opportunities for poor and vulnerable youth. Most of the 500 vulnerable and poor male and female youth trained in metal, wood work and entrepreneurship are now using those skills to improve their livelihoods. Given the project's success, the Government will expand and replicate it throughout the country.

Improving the capacity of local governments

The Anseba Local Development Project (ALDP) supported the local government to deliver basic public services, develop crucial infrastructure and address key issues such as planning, budgeting, financing, implementation and management. The goal was to support grassroots poverty reduction and enable the local government to deliver pro-poor, multisector services. Various levels of local government were engaged in the project and local communities enthusiastically contributed to and led the process of planning and implementing key services.







Gender equality goals and interventions face powerful challenges due to deeply-rooted traditional values and practices



Promoting gender equality and the advancement of women

Although remarkable progress has been made to foster gender equality in Eritrea's institutions, gender disparities continue across sectors, including in education, agriculture, health and food security. Gender equality goals and interventions face powerful challenges due to deeply-rooted traditional values and practices. Women lack decision-making power and face economic disempowerment and stigma within the workforce. Gender mainstreaming efforts suffer from limited capacity and lack of gender-specific data continues to pose a challenge.

UNDP is working to integrate gender issues across its interventions in Eritrea and is supporting the Government to do the same within its policies and programmes. UNDP is also supporting partners to monitor, evaluate and report on the process of integrating gender into national development approaches and meeting international obligations on gender. Support has also been provided to increase awareness of gender issues among authorities and the general public.



Under the Joint Programme on Gender Equality in Eritrea,
UNDP and partners have strengthened the capacities of key
institutions and organizations to carry out gender-sensitive
research, analysis, advocacy and communication. Currently,
six Government ministries have gender focal points, five have
gender integration strategies and four have gender action plans.

Through the effective implementation of the National Gender Action Plan, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and other gender-related policies and programmes, gender equality and equity have been institutionalized in Eritrea. Support to the national congress of the National Union of Eritrean women brought together women from all regions ('Zobas') to discuss their ten year progress and elect new leaders. It was an opportunity to interact with women representatives from the COMESA region in attendance.



Building capacity for gender equity

UNDP and partners supported the establishment of the Gender Resource and Research Centre at the main office of the National Union of Eritrean Women to build capacity on gender equity. Among its features is a gender database, which will serve as a 'one stop shop' for gender resources.

Ending female circumcision

Nearly 3,000 people took part in a nationwide anti-FGM training and advocacy programme carried out under the Joint **Programme on Gender Equality in support** of Eritrea Proclamation No. 158/2007 against female circumcision. Surveillance indicates that rates of female genital mutilation are dropping in Eritrea.

FUNDING

Funding and resource mobilization

UNDP has committed US\$19.675 million of regular resources (RR) to the implementation of the country programme action plan over its life span, from 2013-2016. UNDP will also mobilize an additional US\$42.091 million from bilateral and multilateral funding institutions and global trust funds, including the Global Environmental

Fund. A robust resource mobilization plan has been implemented towards this end and will give equal consideration to all strategic priority areas. In addition to enabling UNDP Eritrea to meet its co-financing commitments, the strategy will enable the Country Office to effectively carry out its programming mandate under the SPCF.

	Coordinating partners	Regular resources	Other resources to be mobilized	Total budget
Outcome 4: National capacity development	Ministry of National Development	4,875,000	2,000,000	6,875,000
Outcome 5: Disaster risk reduction	Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare	150,000	-	150,000
Outcome 6: Food security and sustainable livelihoods	Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization	4,000,000	2,000,000	6,000,000
Outcome 7: Environmental sustainability	Ministry of Land, Water and Environment	9,850,000	38,091,000	47,941,000
Outcome 8: Gender and equity and empowerment of women	National Union of Eritrean Women	800,000	-	800,000
Total		19,675,000	42,091,000	61,766,000



PARTNERS

Working with partners

National ownership and leadership of development interventions will drive the sustainability of development results in Eritrea. UNDP will work closely with the Ministry of National Development according to the framework agreed to by the Government and the UN System. UNDP will also explore opportunities for joint programming with other UN agencies to increase value for money and lessen transaction costs.

Over the past 21 years, UNDP programming in Eritrea has also benefitted tremendously from the generosity of its global development partners. Since 2007, 15 separate partners have supported UNDP's work in Eritrea, with the majority of funds mobilized from the European Commission/European Union, Norway and the Global Environment Facility.

However, the donor space has shrunk significantly since 2007, heavily impacting UNDP's resource mobilization efforts. Total resources mobilized have decreased from more than US\$14 million in 2009 to US\$1.3 million in 2013. Today, nearly all outcomes under the SPCF are underfunded by 50 per cent. These gaps can only be closed through the mobilization of additional resources from UNDP's generous partners in development.

The success of programming in Eritrea depends on this support to help existing projects and new ones to come. One of the projects supported by UNDP is the youth program, a Government initiative that addresses youth unemployment and migration, which offers



An example of emerging program priorities is the UNDP supported youth program, a youth empowerment initiative by the Government

forward-looking opportunities for engagement with a broad range of partners. Though this project has received some support and is a model for replication throughout Eritrea, the funding needs are immense and support from partners and donors is crucial.

Various projects led by UNDP under the SPCF draw on UNDP's comparative advantage as a UN agency to build human and institutional capacity. The agency's vast experience working with governments, non-state actors organizations and stakeholders both in country and globally make it a key partner in the effort to improve the lives of all Eritreans.

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. We are on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges. As they develop local capacity, they draw on the people of UNDP and our wide range of partners.

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