

## **Executive Summary**

### **Brief description of joint initiative and its chronology**

The joint programme for social mobilization and poverty reduction in Sistan and Baluchistan first appeared within the UN literature in Iran in 1999 after a mission by the then DRR to the region. At that time the region was identified as a disinherited region within the Iranian regional planning apparatus.

Various comparative national studies such as the National Human Development Report 1999 confirmed the plight of this province. All these analysis were on the basis of 1996 national census data and projections there after. UNDP, UNICEF and office of UN RC have continued to update their projections of poverty levels and wealth distribution gap to date in documents such as CCA, towards an UNDAF which intends to integrate MDGs.

The Provincial Governor in Sistan and Baluchistan in 1999 received the UN delegation positively and cooperated with the formulation of a project proposal which at least confirmed the governmental ownership of a joint initiative. Focus was given in two very difficult communities of Sheerabad (urban) in Zahedan periphery and Dahan (rural) village in remote south western Sistan and Baluchistan.

The process of project identification and setting up a project management mechanism then followed within the UN system in Iran from Nov. 1999 till March 2001 when situation analysis of Sheerabad and Dahan was prepared against a better understanding of provincial strengths and weaknesses. A well reputed Tehran based NGO, (Sustainable Family Development Fund SFDF) was also identified with a track record in social mobilization and an interest in micro credit.

Even though the RC resources and UN system as a whole were mobilized towards this joint initiative in the public eye since 1999, it is not till March 2001 that a Zahedan based joint programme coordinator is sought (appointment from May 2001) an office is established and local presence is registered. The UN system in the meanwhile had created a Sistan and Baluchistan working group as a means of coordinating the joint agency initiatives.

The joint initiative is reviewed by Shoaib Sultan Khan in Nov. 2002 and terminated in March 2003. The Sistan and Baluchistan working group is merged into thematic poverty reduction working group in March 2002 and there is no trace of it in the documentation available from the thematic group beyond 2002. The joint programme coordinator moved to other opportunities without a final report and the joint office was transferred to WFP, while the equipment were donated to UNICEF and WFP for their Zahedan based activities.

## **Context and purpose of the evaluation**

As reflected in the RC report for 2002 evaluation of this joint initiative was envisaged for March 2003 and even though draft TOR was prepared by October 2003 engaging the evaluator was not realized till December of 2003.

A change of culture from UN agency to UN system orientation points the way towards a stronger, more focused UN country team better placed to support national partners priorities in diverse theatres of intervention and cooperation.

Joint programming is the process through which the UN country team and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the UN's contribution to effective and efficient achievement of commonly defined development priorities. This evaluation of UN inter agency initiative for community development in Sistan and Baluchistan province is to assess the co ordination activities, outputs and outcomes (intended or unintended) of the joint initiative and evaluate for development results.

## **Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned**

Joint planning and coordination towards a joint programme is a complicated process and requires prior due attention to receptiveness of national counterpart. Capacity of government at central and local level plus the actual commitment of participating UN agencies to coordinate, share resources, manage and support implementation should be carefully considered.

So important the inability or unwillingness of UN counter parties (e.g.: MPO) was at the national level to participate in a joint and coordinate programming exercise, that the UN agencies easily preferred to follow the realization of their separate mandates with their own technical counter parts (sub agencies of line ministries of health, education, or MPO) which in effect led to a lack of coherent and integrated picture of joint initiative both at national and provincial level being formed.

The generally accepted programme cycle of situation analysis, priority setting, project identification, and implementation had been followed. It is not however documented how two locations and size of target communities are chosen. Nor it is transparent which government counter part is engaged to facilitate sustainability.

All local coordinator activities were to be checked with RC office and were often supported by UNDP officers. There is very little evidence that other UN agencies liaised with the local coordinator. None of the UN agencies interviewed indicated any programmatic coordination with the local coordinator. WFP and UNICEF did indicate benefiting from the common service aspects of a local coordinator being in place in Zahedan, when they were looking for office space and equipment.

Resources available to this pilot initiative were too little to gain impact in income generation specially given the expectation of Iranian urban or rural poor. Objectives have to be better chosen so as to be quickly realizable and highly visible.

The way the project has operated by remote control from Tehran only supported locally through a one person coordinator's office in Zahedan will not be able to go to scale. It is essential to distinguish between an advocacy programme and a pilot which has the ambition for up scaling. Resources have to be allocated realistically in order to register impact or else the documentation and reporting on activities must make smaller claims.

Follow up is essential. An efficient project management has to be fully informed as to the current state of past contribution and as to what has become of delivered outcomes. Iran is not an easy country when exchange of information is concerned and it is up to the programme's management to promote transparency from early stages to encourage future cooperation.

Just in time delivery of promised facilities supports confidence building and lack of it can in fact damage confidence and reduces likelihood of replication. The award of micro loans after a long and protracted process of projects being accepted in the social mobilization and micro credit project had damaged substantially the confidence in the programme.

Generating local or national ownership of joint initiatives is critical for registering impact and showing result. This ownership is also directly linked to potential sustainability. Monitoring impact at all levels contributes directly to sustainability, and local beneficiaries may be trained to report on all developmental programmes and exchange lessons learned between all elements of a joint programme.

UNCT is well placed to take leadership and coordinate international cooperation in Iran and indeed is expected to do so. The RC offices and UNCTs increasingly realize that dedicated, committed and informed staff is required in support of joint initiatives. Communication oriented staff are essential for better focused and coherent joint programming.

Secure funding of staff often stationed in remote areas as well as token rewards for co-opted academics for technical advice are essential so as not to lose key elements of joint or cross sectoral programmes too easily.

The gauntlet of joint programming to alleviate poverty through reducing provincial disparities remains to be taken up. Five years after the announcement by UN agencies in Iran to work in collaboration specifically as a pilot case in Sistan and Baluchistan none of joint programming processes have been institutionalized.

## Introduction

- 1.1- Purpose of the evaluation** of the UN inter agency initiative for community development in Sistan and Baluchistan province on the basis of its TOR (Appendix 1) is to assess the co ordination activities, outputs and outcomes (intended or unintended) of the joint initiative and evaluate for development results.

A change of culture from UN agency to UN system orientation points the way towards a stronger, more focused UN country team better placed to support national partners priorities in diverse theatres of intervention and cooperation. Joint programming is the process through which the UN country team and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the UN's contribution to effective and efficient achievement of commonly defined development priorities.

The first objective of the evaluation is to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the mechanism of management and coordination of the joint initiative, and the second objective of the evaluation is to assess and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the joint initiative in Sistan and Baluchistan.

- 1.2- Key issues addressed** during this evaluation are concerned with programme design, delivery and performance. Design and delivery issues refer to factors affecting results through implementation. Results here are the combined sub total of out puts, outcomes and impacts.

This evaluation has been concerned with results focusing on :

**Relevance :** Did the programme address national priorities and local needs? How the aims of the programme fit UN agency mandates and the UN systems joint programming? Does the target community consider activities within the joint initiative as useful?

**Effectiveness and Efficiency :** In the absence of reliable baseline data on quantitative indicators, addressing poverty and social mobilization the evaluation has verified effectiveness through qualitative means. Have stated outputs been achieved? Was capacity building attempted, and was it registered by stake holders? Did the joint initiative have a gender focus and was it realized?

**Sustainability :** How likely is that the programme will be sustained after the termination of UN system support? Are involved counterparts willing and able to continue activities within the joint initiative on their own? Has programme activity been integrated within the UN agency efforts and local and provincial counterparts? What are the prospects and realistic

time horizon for this pilot initiative to be adopted as national policy (Upscaling or replication)?

Also to a lesser extent this evaluation has been concerned with **unanticipated results** and **alternative strategies** in view of interim monitoring reports provided to the joint initiative prior to this evaluation.

- 1.3- **Methodology of evaluation** draws upon the experience from a number of evaluative exercises within UNDP and in the donor community. These include the lessons learned by UNDP in conducting country reviews, and specifically the results-oriented country reviews led by the Evaluation Office.

The empirical evidence for this evaluation has been gathered through three major sources:

**Documentation Verification** : through a desk review of basic documents (programming documents), monitoring and evaluation reports, progress reports, documentation on perceived success in reports, news, media or any existing documentation from external sources.

**Perceptions** : Interviews with stakeholders (project and government staff, donors, CO, beneficiaries, public, NGOs, etc.)

**Validation** : Field visits, and direct observation.

Whilst the process of joint initiative can be seen as an impact chain:

build awareness > change policy > impact on people's lives

It is important to assess both the process and impact

Process monitoring is needed in order to judge:

are the techniques working?

are people being reached and is the message understood by targets? are the most appropriate targets and channels being used?

are you involving and collaborating with the relevant people, organisations and bodies?

Impact monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment are needed to know:

are the objectives likely to be achieved, ie, will there be/have there been changes on the ground?

what more needs to be done to sustain changes?

what unintended impacts - positive and negative - have occurred?

have promises of policy changes really been implemented (or are they still only rhetoric)?

what can be learnt for future joint programming activities?

Outcome is measured in terms of success in upscaling and impact on policy instruments, plus sustainability at local level validated through participation and ownership.

Scaling up means

- 1- moving to a higher plane
- 2- assembling resources in order to increase the size of activity
- 3- becoming commensurate with the challenge faced

In short not only climbing up, but also reaching up and digging down, just as a tree grows its branches spread and its roots deepen.

**1.4- Arrangements for evaluation** are an important and integral part of evaluation process. As reflected in the RC report for 2002 evaluation of joint initiative was envisaged for 2003 and even though draft TOR was prepared by October 2003 engaging the evaluator was not realized till December of 2003. This gap of nearly one year had compiled the broken memory of this joint initiative.

Other than administrative support which was fully provided by RC assistant, none of the regular preparation for an evaluation had taken place. The government counter parties centrally or in the province were not informed of the evaluation process.

None of the UN agencies were formally informed of the start of this evaluation even though they were all informed many months earlier that this was to take place, and none of them except UNODC had any recollection of TOR for evaluation being formulated or the possible contributions this report might be able to make to future joint operations such as UNDAF.

Documents made available through the office of RC were only relevant in terms of annual RC reports and general UN joint programming guidance notes. The material specifically relevant to the joint initiative was very inadequate.

Whilst UNDP, UNFPA, and UNODC kept files specifically on joint initiative, WFP and UNICEF openly shared their project specific information on activities in Sistan and Baluchistan alas not focused on the joint initiative's focus community, and a lack of focal continuity which is prescribed in the basic evaluation and monitoring guidelines was evident.

Lack of focal support was also fully registered in interviews with stake holders and during two missions (Annex 4) to the province of Sistan and Baluchistan. Even though representation of WFP in Zahedan very kindly announced their availability in support of Zahedan mission, they could be of little help as they had not been effectively involved in the joint initiative. The counterpart introduced by

the RC office at the Governor's office was irrelevant and uninformed, though very keen to learn. The office of environmental protection in Neekshahre kindly provided a car and driver through out the mission to Dahan village, but no local officer could assist the field visit.

## **2. Management of Joint Pilot Initiative**

**2.1- Joint programming procedures** are currently very much in vogue due to engagement of RC office in UNDAF and earlier as CCA was being prepared. " Draft Guidance Note on Joint Programming" of October 2003 which replaces the earlier version of June 2000 is up to date in the way it incorporates the MDGs into joint programming. Rational, definitions and process of joint programming remain very much the same.

UN agencies and entities would jointly carry out assessments of problems, design interventions consisting of shared objectives, actions, timeframes, resource requirements and clear delineation of responsibilities. The modalities through which the UN agencies may wish to come together, within the context of their respective country programmes and **signed memorandum of understanding** will determine the type of activity and priorities of joint initiative.

As a result of joint programming process which involves two or more of UN agencies, a joint initiative/programme shall be formulated, within the mandates and country programmes of respected UN agencies. A single document to this effect is signed with central and provincial authorities, describing the linkages between responsibilities of all stake holders and participating agencies.

Funding mechanism may vary and can include:

- Setting up a common fund which would be channeled to the implementation entity.
- Participating agencies will channel funds to the implementing agency within the agreed budget of the joint programme.
- Other creative mechanism which respond to the accountability of participating agencies within the agreed budget of the joint initiative

Joint planning and coordination towards a joint programme is a complicated process and requires prior due attention to receptability of national counterpart. Capacity of government at central and local level plus the actual commitment of participating UN agencies to coordinate, share resources, manage and support implementation should be carefully considered. Where applicable, differences in methodology and approach in area prioritization, target community, stake holder and beneficiary mobilization as well as modalities of delivery of technical

assistance need to be looked into and potential discrepancies resolved at planning stage.

In addition to national Iranian census data of 1996, various UN agency country studies and Human Development Report (HDR) of Islamic republic of Iran 1999, place Sistan and Baluchistan as the most deprived Iranian province whose poverty is increased with five years of drought and waves of Afghan migrants. The announcement by UN to focus on this particular region was based on a broad consensus and an all party agreed priority to combat poverty.

The provincial governor at the time was very keen to have international assistance in an attempt to snow ball the region out of its bottom of the league standing amongst all Iranian provinces. The coincidence of UN Secretary Generals reform agenda towards a stronger, more coordinated and more focused UN, better placed to support national partners in achieving their own development goals presented a historic opportunity to develop the joint success of producing the first HDR into an applied programme.

The Theme group was chosen as the UN inter agency forum for joint activities in Sistan and Baluchistan. Neither joint assessment, nor joint programme document was formalized. This lack of adherence to joint programming meant that each agency would pursue their own programme of activities and present them to the TG should they coincide with the focal area of the joint programme. These beneficial activities for the local communities had little relevance to main objectives of joint programming as a management concept. In all these efforts UNDP by default took the lead which in the absence of effective coordination from the office of RC reduced other agency commitment.

As important was the inability or unwillingness of UN counter parties at the national level to participate in a joint and coordinate programming exercise, that the UN agencies preferred to follow the realization of their mandates with their own technical counter parts which in effect led to a lack of coherent and integrated picture of joint initiative both at national and provincial level.

The gauntlet of joint programming to alleviate poverty through reducing provincial disparities remains to be taken up. Five years after the announcement by UN agencies in Iran to work in collaboration specifically as a pilot case in Sistan and Baluchistan none of joint programming processes have been institutionalized.



**2.2- Joint programming effectiveness** for this evaluation in Iran is therefore looked at against a background where the baseline definition of joint programming could not be substantiated for Sistan and Baluchistan.

**A joint programme is a set of activities contained in one work plan signed by two or more members of UNCT and national partners. It details how the participants agree to manage and implement activities jointly.**

Effectiveness is none the less looked at in two separate areas of management process and results, supported by minutes of thematic group meetings, correspondence and interim progress reports. These findings are then validated in a top to bottom manner in interviews with key informants of the programme. Site visits complemented this verification in a bottom to top manner.

As already mentioned each agency would carry out their own mandate. Should this happen to be in Sistan and Baluchistan (as it often has been) there was no compulsion for these activities to target the same communities in Zahedan and Dahan. Even when the activities were the same (for example micro credit) there is no evidence of pooling of experience amongst UN agencies. National and/or local counter parts are kept separate by Iranian management structure which complicated more the challenges of networking, essential to joint programming.

By result here is meant the deliverables and outcomes which were documented in different project documents related to joint initiative, as posted in the RC report of 2002.

The generally accepted programme cycle of situation analysis, priority setting, project identification, and implementation had been followed. It is not documented how two locations and size of target communities are chosen, beyond strong suggestion from government. Nor it is transparent which government counter part is engaged to facilitate sustainability, at the end of the joint initiative.

As prescribed a locally based coordinator was selected from within the local academic community. The contract type of this coordinator and its status were not conducive to commitment as reflected in the unresolved ending of this engagement. The support to this local office was also negligible though training was offered in administration and accounting. This lacking status had very pronounced implications in the seriousness with which the local coordinator was treated by local officials.

All local coordinator activities were to be checked with RC office and were often supported by UNDP officers. There is very little evidence that other UN agencies liaised with the local coordinator. None of the UN agencies interviewed indicated any programmatic coordination with the local coordinator. WFP and UNICEF did

indicate benefiting from the common service aspects of a local coordinator being in place in Zahedan, when they were looking for office space and equipment.

In fact the office space was taken over by WFP and the office equipment was donated to UNICEF and WFP when the joint initiative was abandoned. The office space was visited during this evaluation and even though the WFP team present there currently is substantially larger than the coordination previously they are only using half of the space.

A detailed situation analysis was carried out for Shirabad in Zahedan which is later published as UNDP Iran, technical series no3. This is a valuable document which may be referred to for other programmes. This document is circulated in a very limited manner and its Farsi version is even further so. Priorities identified in this situation analysis are not addressed by the joint initiative.

A baseline study of Dahan village is conducted by an NGO engaged later to implement the only programmatic aspect of the joint initiative. This baseline study concluded that Dahan is a lot better prepared to participate in a social mobilization exercise than Shirabad.

Other feasibility's on bio-compost and city wide waste disposal for Zahedan and Date Palm cultivation and packaging for Dahan were also conducted. Recommendations of neither study were incorporated in the joint initiative though unbeknown to the joint initiative the waste disposal study is taken up by the city authorities as confirmed in interviews with deputy Governor.

Combating severe drought and inadequate drinking water networks plus non existent sewage system was only addressed by the charitable gesture of donating water tanks to shirabad and Dahan and providing a vehicular water tanker for village of Dahan. Water tankers were visited in Shirabad and they are very much appreciated by residents. The water tankers visited in Dahan were all empty. And they are very rarely filled. The van donated for transport of water is being used by the nearby city environmental protection office to transport equipment and does not service the villages for drinking water.

No Healthy City programme has been adopted for Shirabad and in fact as reflected in a recent report of Medicine San Frontier the situation in Shirabad has worsened in terms of health and environment. Shirabad was subject of a street widening programme which if successful would lead to gentrification and displacement of its very poor residents. Shirabad is also the start point of a city wide sewage programme which has started. Zahedan drinking water problem is expected to ease as a major pipe line bringing water from Zabol to Zahedan has been inaugurated in 2003.

None of these gains are in any way linked to the joint initiative and the programme had failed even to ride the wave of these infrastructural benefit gains

due to lack of resource base, lack of local presence, and lack of relationship with local managers. The informal arrangement for each agency to bring its achievements within the joint initiative did not respond adequately due to lack of resource and focus in the steering of the theme group.

UNDCP did support sport activity and facilities from its own resources and within its own country programme NOROUZ. However lacking in joint programming the joint initiative did not capture the potential of this effort and in fact as annex 5 shows a very rudimentary version of similar activities recently taken place at Dahan village from local community resources with no impact or mutual exchange between elements of the joint programme. Drug abuse remains a major social issue within both target communities.

Joint initiative also conducted a social mobilization and micro credit pilot scheme in Shirabad and Dahan. UNDP was the agency responsible for this project and had benefits of joint initiative funds. This project has progressed to be a pilot with the Bureau of Social Affairs within the MPO. The same community in Dahan village had also articulated a desire to be the beneficiary of a GEF Small Grant to combat desertification and generate income.

Through interviews with MPO and Programme officers in UNDP it became clear that the scope of this evaluation may not include a detailed evaluation of these projects, however their contribution to joint programming and beneficiary communities are relevant.

This evaluation positively supports and substantiates the recommendations made by Shoaib Sultan Khan reflected in his mission report of November 2002.

The way the project has operated by remote control from Tehran only supported locally through a one person coordinator's office in Zahedan will not be able to go to scale. If UNDP is serious then the social mobilization and micro credit project has to be revamped to achieve its main objective of replicability and upscaling.

Resources available to this pilot initiative are too little to gain impact in income generation specially given the expectation of Iranian urban or rural poor. Objectives have to be better chosen to be quickly realizable and highly visible. Mixing in with large municipal project for local visibility within target community is a missed opportunity.

In Dahan because of the rural culture there is a strong danger that in fact the confidence gained would be lost due to bureaucratic delays in awarding of loans approved.

As a credit to local communities specially in Dahan it needs to be registered that social mobilization has had unexpected results specially in local governance

issues. The joint initiative is also failing to coach these gains into social capital and may be seen going against traditional hierarchies.

- 2.3- Lessons learned** from the management of joint pilot initiative in Sistan and Baluchistan are general when guidance notes and programming hand books are concerned. It is essential to have written agreements. It is essential to have joint programme documents. It is essential to have clear delineation of responsibilities for agencies and counter parts.

It is essential to distinguish between an advocacy programme and a pilot which has the ambition for upscaling. Resources have to be allocated realistically in order to register impact or else the documentation and reporting on activities must make smaller claims.

National and local counter parts are to be carefully coached so that they realize the extent of expectation. The MPO in Iran is very reluctant to view international collaborations beyond research and as such does not fore see their upscaling. Even if convinced of the value of a pilot but not planned for in the five year development plans, national adoption of successful projects may be delayed.

Iran is a vast country and locations for intervention have to be chosen paying due attention to distance. It is as unreasonable to wish to manage a programme in Zahedan from Tehran as it is to wish to do the same for Dahan from Zahedan. Distance and remoteness can only be overcome through resources for networking, and greater participatory approach.

Follow up is essential. An efficient project management has to be fully informed as to the current state of past contribution and as to what has become of delivered outcomes. Iran is not an easy country when exchange of information is concerned and it is up to the programme's management to promote transparency from early stages to encourage future cooperation.

### **3. Implementation of Joint Pilot Initiative**

- 3.1- Main stake holders** of the joint initiative in Sistan and Baluchistan are of three categories. Target community which is chosen to be 200 households amongst the poor in Shirabad and Dahan. Government authorities which are of two types, UN counter parts and technical ministry counter parts, both at central and provincial levels. The next group are UN agency officers including the RC office involved in programme design, management and evaluation, focused through the thematic group. All the consultants and other contractors who actually carry out training, feasibility studies and facilitate the implementation and are most closely in touch with target communities.

The evaluation process interviewed all the stake holders and key informants in the target community. The weakest link is the government counter parts which are not familiar with this high profile joint initiative. The most effective carrier of the programme memory should have been the programme coordinator in Zahedan which had abandoned the programme when the first alternative had presented itself. The RC office which ought to have been ultimately in charge seemed not to have much information nor focus.

Contracted consultants had produced their deliverables, the NGO charged with facilitation of social mobilization and micro credit is faced with a mammoth task of turning a micro exercise into a national impact under very hard and remote circumstances.

The communities are rather different in their composition and environment. Shirabad is a growing informal settlement on the fringes of Zahedan city. Whilst the agrarian families in remote Dahan have reached a precarious socio-economic equilibrium not much above the national poverty line.

**3.2- Main components** could be summarized into a two by two matrix of hardware / software against charity / developmental. Water tankers, sports facilities, sewing machines are the hardware provided, often in a charitable gesture with little connectivity to capacity building in development. At best such efforts can bring the plight of this regions poor people to the attention of remote decision makers.

On software side there is capacity building, for the local authorities, community activists, and facilitators. The main focus in this area which is the strongest point of UN agencies in a middle income country such as Iran, is to promote and provide international success stories, through documentation, workshops, and visits.

Concept of micro credit is a major component of joint initiative. This development tool has been adopted by many countries often with the help of multi lateral aid agencies as an inclusive way of poverty alleviation, and is also being investigated in Iran. Culture of micro credit certainly is present in the poorest communities in Iran as a livelihood mechanism.

Another aspect of micro credit which is of interest to Iranian authorities is the possibility of introducing small loan schemes as an employment promoting mechanism. This dichotomy of interest in micro credit which may also converge into a unified national programme, has to addressed delicately not to raise expectations too quickly at the local level. Also a rush by development agencies to be the next Grameen bank has to be realistically framed.

- 3.3- Results expected** and reported in the RC reports and project document are certainly more ambitious than this evaluation or other independent assessments could support.

The goals of the initiative are recorded as achieving community based development - increased quality of life for 400 households in target areas and building the basis for sustainable livelihoods and stable access to basic needs.

#### **4. Overall achievements of Joint Pilot Initiative**

- 4.1- Contribution made to capacity development of target groups** to access basic needs is the most effective tool available to development agencies. Access to accommodation, drinking water, electricity, health care services and facilities, refuse collection services, education, welfare and adequate nutrition, are the various elements of an improved quality of life.

No base line data is available for quantitative indicators of above basic needs in either target community, though capacity building in these areas are mentioned as goals of social mobilization. An across agency pool of expertise could be drawn from to address the needs of joint initiative.

At the early stages of the joint initiative, capacity building workshops were held for both the targeted community and their local official. Particularly through UNDP experience of South Asian Poverty Alleviation Programme was drawn on. A study tour was also arranged to Nepal for local and central government agencies involved.

These efforts are not ignored but in the light of the scale of the problem and preoccupations of officials involved are negligible. If capacity building is to be sustainable it should be designed in reaction to specific needs and priorities of local community. Experience of social mobilization in Pakistan illustrates appropriate capacity building can empower local community. Skills training, paramedical training, disaster damage mitigation capabilities support the collectivity while individual capacity building can support entrepreneurial opportunities.

- 4.2- Unexpected achievements** rising from presence of international aid agencies are a mixed blessing. In this joint initiative even though ambitious goals may be in reach in very long term, social mobilization has had unexpected consequences, specially in village of Dahan.

On the occasion of the second nation wide election for town and village councils one woman member of target community in Dahan had stood and was elected to the village council. This is a clear indication of increased emancipation. Such unexpected achievements may be misinterpreted as undesirable interference in

traditional norms, by traditionalist which may turn against the programme. In order to avoid this, positive efforts need to be made to share the benefits which may be derived from good governance.

Another unexpected though minimal achievement indicated by WFP was in common services and premises, a benefit derived due to the prior establishment of joint programme office in Zahedan when the WFP wished to establish a local office.

The likely gentrification of Shirabad which may result from local authority activities there along tribal allegiances may get an unwanted boost due to the presence of international agencies. There always needs to be a fine balance between advertising UN presence and promoting sustainable livelihood.

- 4.3- **Impact on development process in Sistan and Baluchistan** has to be approached from center, that is to see what part of the joint initiative has been adopted in the central government and directed to the provincial level as guild line. It could also be assessed from the local level and see if any local mobilization is being registered at the provincial level for resource allocation in response to a lacking facility.

Following on from the 3<sup>rd</sup> five year development plan (FYDP), the 4<sup>th</sup> FYDP envisages greater decision making at provincial level. In fact articles 134 and 135 in the draft law for the 4<sup>th</sup> FYDP (referred to by the MPO during interview in connection with this evaluation) promote the planning subcommittee under provincial governor as the focus of regional development plans and activities.

Whether from above (center) or below (local) the joint initiative should have found a committed partnership with this planning subcommittee. It would have been through such partnership where development process in Sistan and Baluchistan or any other province may be engaged. This evaluation failed to register any such engagement.

The MPO in Tehran how ever did indicate that they carefully follow this pilot in Zahedan and Dahan, amongst many other pilots being conducted through out Iran for formulation of possible regional job creation funds through small loans. This has not been registered at provincial level yet.

- 4.4- **Lessons learned on replicability and upscaling** from the joint initiative are very relevant at this time both to national and provincial authorities and to the UNCT. Given that the UNCT embarked on UNDAF process with this joint initiative behind them, and in the absence of any direct or indirect references to joint initiative during the UNDAF process so far, this evaluation attempted to draw some of the lessons learned.

Joint programming must involve the national counter part from an early stage. The national counter part must take ownership of a pilot so as to ease it into its planning processes.

In Iran substantial efforts need to be made to convince MPO as the main counterpart to take ownership of pilots and commit itself to inclusion into plan making mechanisms. In fact capacity building at the systemic level is needed to facilitate such eventuality.

For replicability, available mechanisms need to be identified and at the provincial level existing institutional arrangements how ever inadequate need to be engaged. From working with these institutions their capacity needs may be assessed. Capacity development would be on top of what exists.

Networking is a best practice learned from international experience which had been very much lacking in the Sistan and Baluchistan joint initiative. Using ordinary means of communication, such as news letter specially in local language can be of great help. This is a low cost confidence building mechanism which promotes transparency.

Another aspect of networking is engaging locally learned individuals through round tables and festivals. In Iran where government representation is ever present locally based academics could be coopted into local development process. The joint initiative in Sistan and Baluchistan could further its reliance on local experts, who are not the same as permanent staff assigned to such projects. Rewarding such participation is not costly and should not be forgotten.

Just in time delivery of promised facilities supports confidence building and lack of it can in fact damage confidence and reduces likelihood of replication. The award of micro loans after a long and protracted process of projects being accepted in the social mobilization and micro credit project had damaged substantially the confidence in the programme.

## **5. Sustainability of the results achieved**

- 5.1- **Organizational arrangements** are successfully maintained at the target community level through the enthusiasm of local activists and the NGO engaged to facilitate social mobilization. The theme group initially formed for joint Sistan and Baluchistan initiative was merged with the poverty theme group and has now been abandoned.

There was no steering committee to bring UNCT, local and national authorities and facilitators together. Once the enthusiasm had disappeared there was little communication between the project and local authorities.



The local office established was abandoned and there was no documentation available locally as project memory. Linkages between the programme and the governor's office were too informal and disappeared when the provincial governor was transferred.

- 5.2- Impact on local, provincial and/or national policy making** could not be measured at this evaluation as the MPO as the main concerned counter party is engaged in numerous such pilots.

Locally the targeted community feels out of touch. It is using its own creativity in support of its livelihood and feels the project is losing momentum. Provincial policy makers are keen to have greater access to international technical assistance but are limited in imaginative use of their existing institutions.

A local impact registered during the field visit was the feeling that some funds are available for small loans, that the amount is too small, and that its mechanisms are mysterious.

This joint initiative had not had any contact with provincial plan making sub committee and has been unable to register any impact. In order to have impact, available institutions need to be engaged.

- 5.3- Linkages between the Joint pilot initiative and other interventions** by UN or multi lateral agencies in Sistan and Baluchistan were not formed. Shirabad is part of a World Bank loan being prepared for upgrading of Zahedan informal settlements. Even though the local coordinator and the WB feasibility consultant had often worked on common issues, neither project has documented its awareness of the others activity.

Monitoring impact at all levels contributes directly to sustainability. Local beneficiaries may be trained to report on all developmental programmes and exchange lessons learned between all programmes.

- 5.4- Recommendations in view of future provincial and/or joint initiatives**, such as UNDAF or area based development programmes could be outlined from advocacy and sustainable livelihood models.

The linkages between joint programming, country programmes and national priorities need to be strengthened. There is a need to further promote this understanding among UNCT and national counter part.

Generating local or national ownership of joint initiatives is critical for registering impact and showing result. This ownership is also directly linked to potential sustainability.

Synchronization of joint initiatives with national programmes and national planning is essential for an efficient implementation of programmes. Also early coordination between UNCT and WB will insure consistency and effectiveness.

Joint programming is an instrument which allows identification of capacity gaps in a cross sectoral manner. This opportunity needs to be taken up so as to make capacity development sustainable.

UNCT is well placed to take leadership and coordinate international cooperation in Iran and indeed is expected to do so. The RC offices and UNCTs increasingly realize that dedicated, committed and informed staff is required in support of joint initiatives. Communication oriented staff are essential for better focused and coherent joint programming.

Secure funding of staff often stationed in remote areas as well as token rewards for coopted academics for technical advice are essential so as not to lose key elements of joint or cross sectoral programmes too easily.

## **Annex 2**

### **List of persons interviewed**

#### **In Zahedan**

Mr. Ajdari, Deputy governor in charge of Development  
 Mr. Javedan Managing Director for Public security and political affairs  
 Mr. Akbari Managing Director of Sistan and Baluchistan MPO

#### **In Dahan**

Mr. A. Izadpanah      Molavi and head of Village council  
 Mr. A Sahebzadeh      Community facilitator and village head master

#### **In Tehran**

Dr. Marufi      Managing director of FSDF  
 Dr. Hamidid      Consultant with      FSDF

Mr. Bamdad      Deputy head bureau of Social affairs, MPO  
 Mr. Jabari      Programme officer MPO  
 Mr. Dehestani Programme officer MPO

#### **With United Nations**

##### **Office of RC**

Mr. Antonino De Leo      RC analyst  
 Ms. Rozita Roghani      RC Assistant

##### **UNDP**

Mr. Yuxue Xue      DRR  
 Mr. Ali Farzin      Programme Officer  
 Ms. L. Daraie      SGP

##### **UNICEF**

Ms. Askari Nasab

##### **UNODCP**

Mr. Moradi

##### **UNFPA**

Mr. Shirazi

##### **WFP**

Mr. Fortmann Head of representation in Tehran  
 Mr. Marcus      Zahedan Office

## **Annex 3**

### **List of documents reviewed**

Three folders provided by the RC Analyst  
Six folders provided by UNDP

RC guidelines and reports from internet.

Consultants initial situation analysis report for Sheerabad (UNDP Iran technical series no: 3) and Dahan

Consultants mission report for joint programme by Sultan Khan

Medecins Sans Frontieres on Sheerabad, 2003 kindly provided by WFP

UNDP CCF review 2003

UNICEF mid term review 2002

CCA 2003

## **Annex 4**

## Field visits

As foreseen in the preliminary work plan two visits were organized one to Zahedan and one to Dahan.

On both occasions RC assistant arranged for return air tickets and informing local stake holders. As the field trips were very close to parliamentary elections, local governmental support was very flustered but included local transportation.

### Visit to Zahedan

Dept. : 3 Feb. 2004.

Visit to Governor's office

4 Feb. 2004. Visit to WFP Zahedan office

Visit to Sheerabad

Interview local MPO

Return to Tehran 5 Feb 2004.

### Visit to Dahan

Dept. : 17 Feb. 2004 with 4 hours of delay

Arrival Chahbahar Transfer by car to Dahan

Interview with local community facilitator

18 Feb. 2004.

Interview with village council head and "Molavi"

Inspection of site and village

Transfer by car to Chahbahar

19 Feb. 2004.

Return to Tehran 19 Feb. 2004.

## Annex 1 TOR

**&  
Annex 5 Local Football league, Dahan**

**Under a separate attachment**