

CASE STUDIES OF SUSTAINED AND SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

SUPPORTING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

United Nations Development Programme October 2011

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FOREWORD



NDP is proud to have supported national development processes around the world for more than fifty years. This work supports the principles of the United Nations Charter and the "Peoples" of the individual programme countries. It catalyses reduction of poverty, improvement of lives, and expansion of choices, in keeping with the human development paradigm and with UNDP's overall mission to empower lives and strengthen the resilience of nations.

Guiding principles of our work have been national ownership of the development process and the conviction that international partnerships can play a valuable role. Our goal is to support

transformational change which brings about real improvements in people's lives. The human development perspective, the values of the Millennium Declaration, and the results orientation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed goals help shape our contribution to development.

Development is neither simple nor straightforward. It is a complex and long-term undertaking which embodies a range of challenges for all concerned. In the course of our work, we and our partners have experienced both successes and disappointments. Along the way we have learned many lessons, and we endeavour to incorporate those in our work in order to better serve our national partners and get results.

The purpose of this publication is to reflect honestly on this experience. It presents seven case studies where sustained development cooperation has enabled programme countries to make a real difference to the lives of their citizens. It also offers lessons learned to help improve our day-to-day work.

I hope that development practitioners will find this publication useful to their work in promoting sustainable human development and enabling the achievement of the MDGs.

Helen Clark

UNDP Administrator

Helen Clace

Our goal has always been to support transformational change which brings about real improvements in people's lives.

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The views and analysis presented in this study are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

he purpose of this report is to reflect on UNDP's experience of development cooperation over the past 50 years, and to extract some common themes and general lessons about development cooperation for the future.

The report makes the case that development is a long-term proposition and is seldom amenable to short-term solutions. Certainly, truly transformational change at the national or subnational level takes time to achieve. If it is to be sustainable and sustained, it must be nationally owned and achieved. Outsiders cannot deliver such transformational change, but they can support it in a variety of ways, especially by helping to develop national capacity. UNDP believes that such international partnerships can play an important role in this regard.

After providing a definition of 'transformational change' and discussing some of the basic characteristics, complexities and uncertainties of the development process, the report documents seven cases where this has been achieved over a period of time. Taking 10–20 years as its frame of reference, the report demonstrates that development can be successful on this basis – even strikingly successful in some cases.

The seven case studies selected – as well as briefer accompanying country boxes – span the continents

a variety of the programme areas in which UNDP specializes: democratic governance; energy and environment; poverty reduction and HIV/AIDS; disaster risk reduction; and post-crisis recovery; as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender, capacity development and south–south cooperation. Taken together, they document successful development programmes and the value of international partnerships.

However, the report also acknowledges that this is not always the case; that for a variety of reasons, development programmes are not always successful; and that, even when they are successful, there is always unfinished business and uncertainties to be addressed. Development is a work in progress, in every part of the world. Development management involves taking risk, seeking to ensure successful outcomes, but acknowledging that there will be disappointments also.

Finally, the report seeks to draw some fundamental lessons from this analysis, lessons which hopefully will be of value to development practitioners around the world, including UNDP's own staff and national partners. The ten common themes and lessons are grouped into three general headings:

 Back to Basics: These are essentially restatements of the most fundamental principles that underpin successful development cooperation:

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