

Outcome Evaluation of the UNDP Project

“Building the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Open and Inclusive Consultations”



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Contents

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	9
1.2 Delineation of the Evaluation	10
1.3 Structure Evaluation Report	10
2. Project Description	11
3. Methodological Approach	17
3.1 Methodological Choices and Nature of the Evaluation	17
3.2 Evaluation Standards and Principles	18
3.3 Evaluation process	18
3.4 Observations Concerning the Evaluation Process	19
4. Findings and Analysis	20
4.1 Introduction	20
4.2 Effectiveness	20
4.2.1 Effectiveness of the global consultation processes	21
4.2.2 Effectiveness of national consultation processes	26
4.3 Relevance and Inclusiveness	30
4.3.1 Relevance in light of other global processes	30
4.3.2 Inclusiveness at the global level	31
4.3.3 Inclusiveness at the national level	33
4.4 Positioning of the Project	35
4.4.1 Positioning of project in the global process	35
4.4.2 Positioning of project in national processes	38
4.5 Innovation	39

4.6 Analytical Findings of What Went Well and What Could Be Improved	42
4.6.1 Concerning project design	42
4.6.2 Concerning process management	43
4.6.3 Concerning content / Results of the consultations	45
5. Conclusions	47
5.1 Effectiveness	47
5.2 Relevance and Inclusiveness	49
5.3 Positioning of UNDP in the Process	50
5.4 Innovation	51
5.5 Overall Conclusion	52
6. Recommendations and Dilemmas	53
6.1 Concerning the design of future consultative processes	53
6.2 Concerning the management and implementation of future consultative processes	59
Annexes	63
Annex 1. References	63
Annex 2. Informants	71
Annex 3. Visual Overview Evolution of the Project	82
Annex 4. Description of project Outputs	84
Annex 5. Terms of Reference	87
Annex 6. Overview of Consultations	92
Annex 7. Evaluation matrix	95
Annex 8. sense-making event	98

Abbreviations

ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DESA	Department for Economic and Social Affairs
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
HLP	High Level Panel
HQ	Headquarters
IGN	Inter Governmental Negotiations
INGO	International non-governmental organization
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
Mol	Means of Implementation
NY	New York
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OWG	Open Working Group
PAC	Project Appraisal Committee
P15A	Post-2015 Agenda
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SG	Secretary-General
TOR	Terms of Reference
TST	Technical Support Team
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office
UNTT	United Nations Task Team
WWW	World We Want

Executive Summary

With the world entering a new millennium, 189 Member States adopted the Millennium Declaration in September 2000, containing the values, principles and objectives for international development in the 21st century. Building on various global summits and international conferences of the 1990s, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) comprised eight global goals. The MDGs provided important development objectives that were seen by many as a powerful tool for global action. However, apart from significant achievements made on various targets, the MDGs were also critiqued. Because the goals were not subject to intergovernmental agreement, they lacked ownership by Member States and many development actors. It also took a while for the MDGs to gain momentum. In terms of content the critique focused on reducing the Declaration's overarching principles into relatively simplistic targets focusing too narrowly on the social and human dimensions of poverty at the expense of development in its broader sense and not addressing the root causes of the overarching challenges to development faced worldwide.

Despite the critique, it was felt that an overarching global framework would continue to be of essence for the post-2015 period. During the 2010 MDG Summit, Member States requested the UN Secretary-General to initiate a process towards shaping a post-2015 development agenda, which would have to take into account the lessons learned and limitations of the MDGs. It would have to be broader, more ambitious and covering the global challenges of the 21st century and be actionable at country level, while taking into account the complexity of integrated development challenges, and most important, be owned by Member States from the very beginning.

In his 2011 MDG progress report, the Secretary-General stated that “the post-2015 development framework was likely to have the strongest impact if it emerges from an inclusive, open and transparent consultation process”. In response to this, several work streams were initiated, including the establishment of the UN System Task Team to coordinate system-wide preparations for a Post-2015 Development Agenda (P15A), and a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons to advise on the global development framework. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), working with agencies in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), initiated preparations to realize the Secretary-General's vision to make the discussions of the post-2015 agenda open, inclusive and in line with the UN's principles and values. On a parallel track, UN Member States convened in 2012 for the Rio+20 Conference, where the request to develop an open and broad consultation process with technical support from the UN system formed part of the outcome document. This outcome document also tasked the General Assembly to set up an Open Working Group (OWG) to define and to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is in this context that in 2011 the project “Building the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Open and Inclusive Consultations” was conceptualized and launched. The overall objective was to “build and lead a strategic coalition of partners that can shape the post-2015 development agenda through

global broad mobilization and engagement of government, grassroots, academics, CSOs and other organizations” and “to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is (1) guided by UN norms, values and commitments, (2) informed and shaped by the arising challenges of the 21st century, including sustainability and equity and (3) built on the momentum and lessons learned from the MDGs”!

At the end of the project, almost 100 national consultations, 11 global thematic consultations, 6 global consultations on implementation and pilot exercises with illustrative goals in 10 countries had taken place. In addition, the project initiated the “MY World” survey with almost 10 million respondents and organized numerous (side-)events and advocacy efforts to communicate the results of the consultations and feed into the OWG. A large part of the project focused on building a bridge between the people who normally do not participate in this type of agenda setting and the institutional mechanisms in place responsible for a global process like the formulation of the SDGs.

Although it was administered and hosted by UNDP, the project was led by UNDG, to allow for a coherent and coordinated approach in which several UN agencies could work together on the development of the P15A.

In recognition of its complex context, the project was designed to be flexible, without pinning down an explicit Theory of Change or detailed results framework, so it could evolve organically and adapt to changes in the policy context by adjusting the project’s outputs and activities. In this way it was expected that the shaping of the post-2015 agenda could benefit optimally from a global inclusive consultation process, making the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to national contexts and allowing for an unprecedented diversity of stakeholders to contribute to the post-2015 agenda.

By opening up the global policy making space to virtually “everyone”, this consultation and advocacy process consumed a significant amount of time and resources within and beyond the UN system. Given the unprecedented scale and unique nature of this project - that has now come to an end - a learning-oriented evaluation exercise was commissioned with two main objectives:

1. *Assess the significance of this global consultation process for the shaping of the Sustainable Development Goals and the wider P15A in all its qualitative dimensions both at global and country level;*
2. *Draw lessons from this global consultation process for ongoing / future policy and programme development within UNDP and the UN system at large.*

In pursuit of these objectives, the evaluation started by mapping out how the global consultative processes had played out in reality. This led to the distinction of three complementary “tracks of

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