

Aims and Accomplishments

UNDP's development objectives focus on five key areas:

1. Democratic governance and human rights
2. Sustainable environmental and energy management
3. Economic growth and poverty alleviation
4. Reduction of social and economic vulnerability
5. Gender equality and the advancement of women

Each of these objectives reflect UNDAF outcomes and are designed to infuse the development work that UNDP supports with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Each objective is also an expression of best practices developed through the experience not only of the organization in Bangladesh, but also of the global body's knowledge bank.

In the area of democratic governance and human rights, UNDP aims to ensure that the human rights of children, women, and vulnerable groups are progressively fulfilled within the foundations of strengthened democratic governance. UNDP works towards this goal through programmes and projects that support the Parliament, the electoral system, reform of public administration, police administration and institutions of local governance.

Reflecting the commitment to the MDGs and the PRSP goals for environment and agriculture, UNDP's sustainable environmental and energy management objective seeks to ensure that the survival and development rights of vulnerable groups guaranteed within an environmentally sustainable framework. UNDP seeks to promote a holistic approach to sustainable environmental governance with a pro-poor focus in Bangladesh.

Interventions to promote pro-poor growth will contribute to the achievement of poverty-related MDGs and NSAPR (National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction) goals of economic growth, trade promotion, private sector development, support for rural non-farm activities and women's empowerment. The key aim here is to ensure that the most vulnerable groups have improved life conditions, skills, services and decent job opportunities.

To further reduce social and economic vulnerability and promote human security, UNDP supports strengthening of national capacities to respond to disasters, reduction of disaster risk, addressing problems of vulnerable groups, and promoting HIV/AIDS prevention and care. This objective seeks to ensure that human security is strengthened and vulnerabilities to social, economic and natural risks are reduced.

The final stated objective, and one that cuts across the entirety of UNDP's mandate, is that of gender equality and the advancement of women. UNDP advocates women's political, economic and social rights and works to ensure that societal changes are realized to reduce discriminatory practices and to pursue equity and empowerment for women and girls.

UNDP's development objectives are shaped both by the challenges facing Bangladesh and by the experience gained over the many years of working in country. The technical capacity and 'on-the-ground' knowledge that are applied to ongoing development work have been defined in part by the past successes and the lessons that have been learnt from these. These lessons are applied both to the projects and programmes themselves and to the processes by which they are enacted.

UNDP has been involved in an extensive range of projects designed to foster and strengthen good governance country-wide, for instance, by supporting the capacity of locally elected Union Parishads to design and manage local development initiatives in a participatory manner. At the national level, the preparation of an electoral voter roll with photographs is helping to ensure freer, fairer and more credible elections.

UNDP has also played a vital role in partnership with Government, NGOs and the media in promoting environmental policy changes such as the ban on plastic bags and the conversion of buses and motorized rickshaws to compressed natural gas. This partnership with Government has also proved fundamental in the paradigm shift in disaster management thinking in Bangladesh. Not only have the country's disaster management bodies developed their capacity to respond effectively to natural and man-made disasters, but the cultural and attitudinal shift from conventional response practices to comprehensive risk reduction and management is already reaping benefits as were witnessed in the aftermath of cyclone Sidr of 2007.

UNDP is also committed to learn from the success of its interventions and directing these lessons inward in ways that further improve its own operations. Work supported thus far has indicated clearly that development effectiveness can be significantly enhanced through partnerships at all programming stages with Government and civil society. Such interventions also have better prospects for impact and sustainability when they are delivered through existing government structures that use clear and consistent procedures.

Underpinning all of these is the focus UNDP maintains on capacity development, linkages between participation and local involvement, policy reform and public access to information. It is this focus, combined with the knowledge generated through lived experience and a global knowledge network of best practice, that place UNDP in a unique position to support the Government of Bangladesh in its ongoing human development work.