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Summary

DISCUSSION: Human Development Report System

Prepared by Tim Scott and Stephen Rodriques

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to thank you for your participation in this strategic e-discussion on the Human Development Report system, cross-posted on the Evaluation Network, the HDR Network, and the RR Network.

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Summary of Contributions:

Discussion contributors agreed with the findings of the [HDR System Evaluation](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-main-report.pdf) (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-main-report.pdf>) and UNDP [Management Response](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-mgt-respond-dp07-6.pdf) (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-mgt-respond-dp07-6.pdf>) that recognize the HDRs (regional, national, and sub-national) as a core component of UNDP's mission.

Contributors also agreed that UNDP should make clear its commitment to the HDR system and that this commitment should be reflected in a range of shared accountability and incentive systems at the headquarters, regional center, and country office levels.

Several suggestions were offered on ways:

- 1) to strengthen the financial, technical, and institutional support for HDRs;
- 2) to draw more on the expertise and complementary work of UN Country Teams throughout the HDR process and its follow-up, particularly in the context of UN reform; and
- 3) to ensure better monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the results of HDR processes.

Some of the recommendations shared are already being put into practice by the Human Development Report Office, Regional Bureaus and Centers, and Country Offices.

A summary of the discussion follows.

Let me thank you once again for the truly insightful discussion.

Warm regards,

Guest Discussion Moderators

Stephen Rodriques
Operations Support Group
Executive Office

Tim Scott
Human Development Report Office

Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources

Participants offered several suggestions on ways to ensure a high impact HDR process every 2-3 years that includes post-launch follow-up, advocacy and results monitoring.

These suggestions cover issues of financing, technical, and institutional resources.

Financial resources

Because the HDRs represent a core component of UNDP's mission and new Strategic Plan, core funds must be consistently allocated to their production in the same fashion that UNDP uses to allocate funds to other services widely recognised as indispensable to UNDP.

Sufficient levels of financing should be mobilized to ensure the sustainability of the NHDR process and that minimum standards are met for the six **HDR Corporate Principles** (<http://hdr.undp.org/external/toolkit/index.html>) throughout the **process** (http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/timeline_en.pdf).

These funds should also allow for innovative work with respect to participatory consultations, capacity development exercises, research and statistical work, multi-disciplinary analysis, and comprehensive advocacy plans and related follow-up after launch of the report.

In addition to core funds, HDR teams are encouraged to explore other potential resource mobilization opportunities already available:

- existing UNDP global trust funds where HDR activities are eligible
- other UN system agencies, including UNIFEM, UNICEF, ILO, WB, UNHCR, WHO, etc.
- bilateral donors (from the North and South)
- regional banks and other multi-lateral development agencies
- international foundations
- national government partners
- private sector organizations.

Depending on an HDR's theme, these partners can fund specific research, surveys, part of a chapter, capacity building events, public awareness campaigns, etc. In addition to offering financial support through direct cost-sharing, they can also be called on to offer in-kind contributions through seconded staff, premises for hosting events, and use of existing data.

With all the above resource mobilization partners, special care is required to ensure real and perceived independence, objectivity and national ownership of the HDR contents and process.

Some contributors offered suggestions on the establishment of alternative ways to ensure adequate financing for HDRs:

- establishment of **a new core UNDP funds (e.g. a dedicated TRAC) for HDRs** with global synergies, support and impact.
- creation of **a global HDR Trust Fund**, whereby donors interested in the human development approach can pool their resources.

Technical and institutional resources

The HDRs offer a good way to apply the HD paradigm to the capacity development work of UNDP with respect to HD dimensions of equity, efficiency, empowerment, and sustainability.

They also offer an opportunity to increase capacity development within UNDP and for UNDP partners across practice areas and cross-cutting themes, including use of the South-South modality, and better targeting of issues related to gender equity and marginalized groups.

Nevertheless, several contributors noted that the preparation of quality HDRs can be constrained not only due to financial limitations, but also to capacity issues within UNDP and among partners. The challenges of capacity constraints apply to all aspects of the HDR process, including knowledge, skills, methodologies and tools related to: the HD paradigm itself; thematic areas, data and statistical issues; econometric research; and advocacy and outreach.

The HDR capacity development support currently being offered by BDP, BCPR, Regional Centres, and HDRO across all these areas should be maintained and strengthened.

Some of these resources available in hard and soft copy (at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/support/>) include:

- HDR Toolkit and Minimum Standards
- HDR Timeline
- Measuring Human Development Primer
- HDR Thematic Guidance Notes on Gender, Decentralization, HIV/AIDS, Conflict, Human Security, and Climate Change (under preparation)
- HD Insights
- Support Package for HDR Focal Points
- Journal of Human Development

In addition, HDR teams are benefiting from network discussions, regional workshops, and special training opportunities such as the Oxford HD course, which will take place in September 2008.

Some UNDP regional centres have made available the services of a **full-time HD advisor and/or HD Unit**. This model has supported higher quality work on regional, national, and sub-national reports and could be considered for replication by other regional centres.

Contributors also offered suggestions on other ways to support HDR capacity:

- Provide **targeted support** to address the unique challenges faced by sub-national and regional HDR teams, including issues of data availability, disaggregation, comparability; negotiation, coordination and management skills; timing with global HDRs.
- Stronger collaboration with and support for **HD curriculum** in national schools, universities and other training institutes (NB: a comprehensive listing of **academic** and **training** courses on HD that are currently available can be found by clicking <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/learnmore/#c>).
- Develop a **human development training course for all UNDP staff**, including a discussion of how to operationalize the HD approach into HDRs and all areas of UNDP work and its partners (NB: such a course is now being prepared for UNDP staff and partners. Additional HD resources and training materials can be found by clicking <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/learnmore/#b>).
- Make HD resources available in as many **languages** as possible.
- A more systematic and comprehensive **peer and independent review system** to help ensure minimum standards in the production of HDRs, including the establishment of an expert roster.
- Exchanges of expertise, including **secondment of UNDP staff and national experts** involved in the production of top quality HDRs.
- Strengthen **links between the global HDR and work on other HDRs**.
- Consider different **institutional models** for supporting HDR processes at the country level: an in-house HDR unit (that can also be responsible for other HD/MDG, PRSP initiatives); an out-sourced collaboration with national research partners; or a combination of both models.

Other Incentives

Contributors also offered suggestions on other ways to use new and existing UNDP incentive systems to support higher-quality HDR processes:

- The use of the **Human Development Awards** programme has proven a powerful incentive to recognize and encourage higher quality HDR work – the Awards could be used to further promote the importance of advocacy and dissemination strategies that target district and community level ownership in post-launch workshops on how to follow-up on a report.
- Packaging and setting up a realistic target for specific HDR results in the **Balanced Score Card (BSC)** and the tracking of achievements can also be a good approach.
- Some Bureau Directors already include support for high-quality HDRs a part of **RR/CD/DRR evaluations**. This approach could be replicated for all regional Bureaus,
- Having a Service Area associated with a measurable **core result target in the Strategic Plan** (2008 –2011) could also promote the importance of and commitment to the HDR System.

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

Contributors agreed on the need to leverage the full potential of HDRs through the work of UN Country Teams (UNCTs). They also recognized the value of HDRs in supporting complementary UN Country Team work, e.g. the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) processes, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other UN reports, in support of poverty reduction strategies and other national priorities.

UN agencies should be consulted throughout the HDR process, from the definition of the theme to the peer review, and follow up activities - the multi-disciplinary nature of the human development approach can generate many entry points to include perspectives, knowledge and experience of other UN agencies. UN agency involvement in HDRs can make it easier to ensure that report recommendations are considered by other agencies and, as relevant, utilized in UNDAF formulation. HDRs can also be included as one specific UNDAF output, as appropriate.

Tapping into the networks of other UNCT members throughout the HDR process can help achieve HDR Corporate Principles 1 & 2 (National Ownership; Participatory and Inclusive Preparation). The ability of HDR teams to advocate for policy changes can be enhanced by the potentially larger and stronger set of national partnerships, thereby making a contribution to efforts to achieve HDR Corporate Principle 6 (Sustained Follow-up).

Some themes can be more relevant to the mandate of other agencies (e.g. HIV/AIDS for WHO or youth for UNICEF), and a more intense collaboration might be appropriate. In these cases, UN agencies can provide data, case studies and technical consultants for a relevant theme. Performing data collection and analysis exercises for the HDR in conjunction with UN partners can improve the efficiency of the process by sharing and using best practices. UN agency involvement when planning data collection exercises can increase the potential for new data to be used for HDR follow-up activities and to support such data-related initiatives as DevInfo.

In some circumstances, assuming national ownership of the idea, UNCTs could support HDRs on issues of common concern, such as Climate Change. This would provide an opportunity for the Country Team to advocate more effectively on their collective efforts.

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

Contributors agreed that systematic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the results of HDR processes require strengthening. There is also a need to better capture and learn from these results through UNDP's enhanced Results-Based Management System.

The several aspects of the HDR process which require better monitoring and evaluation include:

- The quality of the report in terms of analysis, data, presentation, etc.
- The inclusiveness of HDR process
- Media coverage and other advocacy efforts to promote the HD paradigm
- Its impact on policy debates and references by political leaders and decision makers
- Its impact on national, sub-national or regional development outcomes.

One way to ensure better monitoring is to strengthen links between HDRs and regular programme and project cycles. Because the Country Programme Document (CPD) is based on country priorities agreed with the government, the HDR could address some of the demand for research and data emerging from the implementation of CPD-related activities, and subsequent project documents could make use of HDR findings. This would make it easier to measure HDR impact on outcomes defined in the CPD and UNDAF, and boost UNDP policy advice at the country level. At the same time, UNDP can incorporate some HDR recommendations into its day-to-day programming by introducing, where possible, projects that follow-up on HDR recommendations. This ensures the integration of policies and can help to monitor HDR impact.

Regular HDR evaluations could be conducted every two or three years. Depending on what aspects of the HDR process are being monitored, UNDP Regional Centres and/or government and other national partners could be involved. Some HDR activities may be more effectively monitored and evaluated by an external evaluator, especially for politically sensitive issues.

There are at least three ways in which HDR activities can be integrated into regular planning, implementing and learning processes and tools through UNDP's existing results based management (RBM) methodology:

- **Treating HDR as a programme result;**

In many Country Programmes, HDRs are planned as an expected result within the multi-year programmatic framework. The current RBM logic can be applied to HDRs, i.e. setting baselines, yearly outputs and resources (staff and budget) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) with standard tools (while still recognizing and balancing carefully national ownership).

- **Treating HDR as a programme output/s:**

Outputs (and activities) deriving from HDR can both lead to and/or support results achievement in any national programmes (governance, environment, MDGs, etc.).

- **Treating HD indicators as programmatic indicators:**

Merging national HD data and national statistical data into country programming processes can be a good entry point for supporting internal consistency and harmonization. By following the same logic used by the Strategic Plan to incorporate MDG indicators (i.e. No. of countries on track to achieving MDG 1 (i.e. poverty headcount), No. of countries that have met MDG-3 (re gender disparity in primary education), HD data can be embedded into the programming process.

The Strategic Plan, Atlas, the result oriented annual report (ROAR), etc., could be adjusted as required to incorporate various aspects of the HDR process. This will help to maintain focus on the intervention areas that are high priority for each country. For example, if an HDR leads to major legislative changes that are at the same time noted as a desired output in the Strategic Plan, then this information should be used to update the integrated RBM system.

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Contributions received, with many thanks:

We received comments from over twenty countries and every region.

1. Adriana Velasco , Dominican Republic	12. Mihail Peleah , UNDP Bratislava
2. Aminul Islam , UNDP Bangladesh	13. Musa Bullaleh , UNDP Qatar
3. Anuradha K. Rajivan , UNDP Asia & Pacific Regional Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka	14. Nahla Zeitoun , UNDP Egypt
4. Clément Hervé , UNDP Algeria	15. Natalia Aquilino , UNDP Argentina
5. Diana Sekaggya , UNDP Uganda	16. Owais Parray , UNDP Indonesia
6. Getachew Asamnew , UNDP Ethiopia	17. Paola Pagliani , UNDP Serbia
7. Henry Jackelen , UNDP Bulgaria	18. Paulina Franceschi , UNDP Panama
8. Jim Chalmers , Flinders University, Australia	19. Shireen Kamal Sayeed , UNDP Bangladesh
9. Luís Vargas , UNDP Peru	20. Tim O'Brien , UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina
10. Marielza Oliveira , UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean	21. Tshering Pem , UNDP Bhutan
11. Mathieu Ciowela , UNDP Djibouti	22. Valiantsina Stalyho , UNDP Belarus

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Launch Message:

Dear Friends,

An independent [Evaluation of the National Human Development Report \(NHDR\) System](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-main-report.pdf) (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-main-report.pdf>) was completed in late 2006. The evaluation process included in-depth field visits to seven countries (Albania, Armenia, Brazil, Egypt, India, Senegal, and Zambia), detailed NHDR case studies for another eight countries, and an extensive set of interviews.

The *Evaluation* finds that “the NHDR system... has made significant achievements in highlighting human development priorities in countries and has influenced intellectual discourse, policy formation and government resource allocation.”

The *Evaluation* further recommends that “UNDP should regard the NHDR programme as a core component of its mission and provide stronger support... Headquarters should make clear its commitment to a very high priority for the NHDR system and not permit this programme to be pushed aside by new initiatives....”

UNDP management has endorsed the evaluation findings and identified several initial steps to improve the NHDR system through its [Management Response](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-mgt-response-dp07-6.pdf) (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/nhdr-mgt-response-dp07-6.pdf>). This *Response*, which was approved by the Executive Board during its first session of 2007, calls for the NHDR system to “be strengthened with necessary financial, technical and institutional resources, while taking better advantage of the high-impact synergies it offers the entire organization and its partners, particularly in the context of United Nations reform....”

We would like now to draw further on the experience of the NHDR community by asking you to share ideas on how to better leverage NHDR potential across 3 areas identified:

Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources

While corporate support for the NHDR system should be strengthened, this must not compromise the decentralized nature of the NHDR process or weaken its key principle of national ownership. This NHDR commitment should be reflected in accountability and incentive systems at headquarters, regional center and country office levels.

- How to ensure adequate funding and staffing for a high-quality NHDR process every 2-3 years that includes post-launch follow-up, advocacy and results monitoring?
- What incentives and tools are needed by Country Office management, other national partners, Regional HD Advisors, and Bureau Directors to ensure high-quality NHDRs?

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

There is a need to draw more on the expertise and complementary work of UN Country Teams throughout the NHDR process and its follow-up, particularly in the context of UN reform. Reaching out to other UN agencies and partners with such a well-branded UNDP product can be challenging; however, many good examples of collaboration exist.

- How to leverage the full potential of NHDRs through UN Country Teams and UNDOGO?
- How can they complement UN Country Team work, e.g. the UNDAF, MDGRs and other UN reports, so as to better support the PRS process and other national priorities?

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

Systematic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the results of NHDR processes require strengthening. Some examples of national HDR influence have been collected and shared through the recent [Ideas, Innovation, Impact](http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/monitoring/impacts/) (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/monitoring/impacts/>) publication and the Human Development Awards Programme, but more work is needed.

- How to monitor and evaluate the impact of NHDR activities?
- How to capture and learn from these results through an integrated Results-Based Management system (Strategic Plan, Atlas, ROAR, partner surveys, etc.)?

Many colleagues have already expressed a strong interest in supporting efforts to increase NHDR impact through participation in a virtual NHDR task force.

The discussion will be facilitated by Stephen Rodriques from the Operations Support Group and Tim Scott from the Human Development Report Office.

We look forward to your invaluable feedback and suggestions!

Warm Regards,

Ligia Elizondo
Director,
Operations Support Group

Kevin Watkins
Director,
Human Development Report Office

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Contributions in Full:

1. Adriana Velasco, Dominican Republic

Dear colleagues,

Here are my comments on how the NHDR system could be improved.

NHDRs are one of the most powerful strategic tools that UNDP has to support developing countries. UNDP should strengthen the NHDR system providing the needed institutional framework, more sustainability, and support for national teams, without compromising national ownership.

It is necessary to **align the NHDRs and related work of UNDP with the principles of the HD approach**. It is necessary to return to the roots of the analytical framework that UNDP has adopted and promotes. NHDRs must improve its quality of analysis, and go beyond the HD "wording" or the simple intuition of the HD theory. NHDRs should reflect analysis and policy recommendations based on the principles of efficiency, equity and participation. UNDP is not taking full advantage of the opportunity to transmit the HD vision and its analytical framework.

To facilitate this challenge, UNDP could provide assistance by:

- offering more training opportunities to national HDR teams
- providing direct assistance and guidance during the elaboration of the reports, in all stages of the process, especially when the research is being planned (topics and contents selection) and during the research process and final writing of recommendations.

UNDP should support efforts to offer **formal HD training to national actors** from the government, NGOs, political parties, universities, and private sector. Special attention should be taken to the public media, which then will transmit these messages to the entire society. The HD theory allows for the asking of the right questions to any policy or intervention. UNDP should be able to promote this way of thinking to individuals, and create a critical mass of rationality that could lead to a demand for changes.

Currently, in this area there are many on-going initiatives that should be linked, even in different programs or regional bureaus within UNDP. In all cases, the **financial sustainability** of NHDR teams should not be at risk for a determined period of time, or be a direct responsibility of them. NHDR units should be seen as strategic tools that the country offices and Regional Bureaus have in their assistance portfolio to countries, and also as an investment for future projects and resource mobilization. For that, a core researcher team should be assured and funded by UNDP.

Regarding the relationship between **NHDRs and MDGR, both processes should be aligned** in producing, launching and promotion activities, in order to avoid duplications in duties and costs. For this, the same unit should be in charge of both kinds of reports.

This discussion is a great opportunity to share lessons learnt and improve the work of UNDP in the field.

Regards,
Adriana Velasco
(Formerly Deputy Coordinator of the Human Development Office of UNDP Dominican Republic)

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2. Aminul Islam, UNDP Bangladesh

I would like to share my thoughts on the following two challenges:

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

HDR/NHDR being a globally acclaimed and well-branded UNDP product as well as a core organizational identity should remain exclusively attached to UNDP. However, in terms of theme selection and content of the report for each year, opinion could be sought from UNCT. Since HDR or NHDR is the UNDP's instrument for alerting each country on the state of people centred development, needs integrated policy leverage which is the comparative advantage of UNDP to deliver the message effectively for policymakers and civil society to take steps to correct the present situation as needed.

Since each UN Agency has their own Annual Report, there could be a common platform at the UNCT level to share complimentary and collaborative issues and concerns in the process of preparing UNDP NHDR. The experience and process of Common Country Assessment or MDGR could be an example for drawing feedback while preparing the UNDP's NHDR with due recognition to be mentioned in the NHDR.

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

Systematic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the results of NHDR processes may be strengthened with the system to follow-up on the analytical progress review at the development forum or at the donors LCG Plenary meeting. Comparative assessment could be done each year end with the National Statistics published by the Government. HDR / NHDR could be consulted to find the strategic avenues while preparing the Country Programme Action Plan.

Aminul Islam
Environment and Sustainable Development Cluster
UNDP, Bangladesh

3. Anuradha K. Rajivan, UNDP Colombo Regional Centre

Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources:

- Establish an NHDR Cell with nationals within government; have a counterpart in the CO. The MDG and HD focal point can be the same person, or in a cooperative relationship. This may, but does not necessarily need, additional staff.
- Establish periodicity rather than ad hoc – each country can decide its own, say, bi-annual.
- Select themes of critical relevance to the country – and through a participatory process.
- UNDP - technical/substantive and some strategic budgetary support, making it part of the country programme, with support from the regional centres and HDRO as may be needed; HDRO can establish 'dotted line' with regional centres.
- Regional Centres could include this in their advisory services (for example the Colombo Centre has an established HDR Unit) for facilitating quality of NHDRs, based on demand from COs.
- Bureau Directors could make this a part of RR/CD/DRR evaluations (HDRO could suggest some indicators).

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

- UNCT and UNDG - This is difficult. It may vary by country and the personalities involved. UNDP has too strong a brand here. Would UNDP like joint logos on HDRs? If that is OK, then it would be easier.
- Theme selection can be jointly done – this will promote buy-in and minimize overlap.
- However, programming implications can certainly be jointly drawn and agreed to by the UNCT, which may include not just NHDRs, RHDRs and the Global HDRs, but major reports from other UN agencies as well.

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

- Government lead or participation in launch and dissemination – and at what level?
- CO should draw one or two concrete programming implications from NHDRs, RHDRs, the Global HDR and the RR/CD should ensure this
- Media exposure / articles / opeds
- Any policy changes, or change in budget – though this will rarely be just due to HDRs.

Anuradha K. Rajivan
Regional Programme Coordinator
Human Development Report Unit
Asia & Pacific Regional Centre, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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4. Clément Hervé, UNDP Algeria

Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources

The first NHDR for Algeria was published in early 2007 and realized in cooperation with the National Economic and Social Council (CNES).

This cooperation with a national institution was paramount in the successful launch of the NHDR process in Algeria for several reasons:

- National ownership of the NHDR is now achieved and was carried through by taking on board a national institution.
- National ownership also means that financial contribution comes from national institutions, which is recognition of the importance of the exercise. The advantage of cooperation also lies in the capacity building element that comes along with putting national institutions and UNDP resources to work together.
- Growing national ownership has also enabled the CO to gain a privileged position in terms of hindsight and play an important role in piloting the process through strategic guidance for subsequent reports and their themes. The NHDR therefore feeds into a more continual process of monitoring, for national institutions.

In-house human resources are somewhat stretched: liaising with national authorities, however rewarding in terms of impact, is time consuming. Attention tends to be focused on the drawing up of the report, ensuring standards of quality, rather than on follow-up and results monitoring.

Even though it is more useful for the MDG and/or HD focal point to follow-up on the NHDR since he or she is in the best position to do so, preparation of the following report is a major concern and extra support from SURF in terms of monitoring and advocacy would be extremely useful. This could come in the form of punctual missions from SURF resources or extra staffing within the CO.

Extra support would also be required in certain countries in the area of core technical expertise. The CO in Algeria has called upon SURF resources as well as experts in the form of consultants to offer advice and strategic guidance in terms of setting a general framework for the NHDR and dealing with precise points of difficulty for members of national institutions and CO staff in the analysis and presentation of data. Nevertheless, the issue of quality is of great importance and its gradual stepping up requires extra work in terms of statistics.

SURF and the HD bureau could offer extra resources during key moments of the drawing up of the report as well as in terms of background work in improving the quality of statistical data and its presentation.

Clément Hervé
MDGs and Poverty reduction
UNDP CO, Algiers

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5. Diana Sekaggya, UNDP Uganda

Dear Colleagues,

For challenge 2 that is being discussed my contribution is as follows:

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

- How to leverage the full potential of NHDRs through UN Country Teams and UNDOGO?
- How can they complement UN Country Team work, e.g. the UNDAF, MDGRs and other UN reports, so as to better support the PRS process and other national priorities?

The NHDRs are policy and advocacy documents on topical issues that are important for a country's development. The themes for each NHDR is chosen in a participatory manner and throughout the process we have different stakeholders involved in writing, reviewing, steering committee, etc. My proposal therefore is that we as UNDP must make a deliberate effort to ensure maximum participation of the UN agencies through the UNCT. If the theme is on water, for example, then the UNDP NHDR team should formally request UNICEF to be part of the steering committee. Other UN agencies can also be part of a UN peer review team at the country level. Some countries may already be doing this but maybe not as a requirement. These agencies would be able to provide data, case studies and technical consultants for a relevant theme.

When we involve the UN agencies in the NHDR process it will definitely be easier to ensure that the report recommendations are taken on by the agencies and are utilised in the UNDAF development as well, since the agencies will also feel a strong sense of ownership.

Diana Sekaggya
Strategic and Policy Unit
UNDP Uganda

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6. Getachew Asamenew, UNDP Ethiopia

Dear Colleagues,

Let me for now focus on the first set of questions for this round of the e-discussion.

On the challenge in respect of **financial, technical and institutional resources for the NHDR System**, I see the following points to merit consideration. Given its potential role in catalyzing development effectiveness through providing the necessary leverage for policy dialogue and change, much more institutional attention and support should be given from all levels (country offices, regional centres, HQs, national development partners, etc) to strengthen and make the NHDR System vibrant.

To ensure high quality NHDRs, there is no doubt about the criticality of adequate funding. An option for meeting the funding demand is setting up and strengthening an NHDR Trust Fund that can be realized through UNDP's corporate resource mobilization effort. This should then be systematically managed, to let country offices come up with valid proposals for accessing and making use of the support from such a Trust Fund. Criteria for qualification can be set up, as appropriate.

Fatigue from short reporting intervals can be a major cause of poor quality and a barrier to promoting the NHDR System. Having an NHDR every 2 to 3 years (not less) is good timing. However, I also see considering a slightly longer interval as doing no harm. When the reporting interval is short, it would be difficult to substantiate significant changes in the individual development variables and the overall Human

Development Index itself, in certain circumstances. In such cases, considering an interval up to 5 years can best match with the given interval for Country Programmes. The benefits from this arrangement are many. As already indicated, it allows lets easy observations of HDI changes, which are otherwise difficult to do in shorter intervals. It also allows synchronization with the given 5 years timeframe for the UNDAF, CPD and CPAP processes, whereby the NHDR can in turn be make part of the review/evaluation of the development programme results in terms of human development, at the end. Moreover, a wider interval helps to spread and make wise use of the available funding.

An alternative to the establishment of an NHDR Trust Fund, committing and making use of UNDP regular resources (Target Resource Assignment from the Core – TRAC) is an option to be maintained. Use of TRAC can help induce national ownership and local political commitment to the NHDR System, as this resource is procedurally programmed and approved in consultation with the programme countries. Funding to NHDRs should not be limited to report production only. It should be extended to support the whole gamut of the NHDR processes, importantly including post-launch activities. Resource mobilization from individual donors is also another option to consider.

The NHDR should be demand driven and nationally owned. Buy-in and local political commitment at the earliest part of the process are essential. In the absence of these, the general acceptance and utility of the Report outcomes can be in question.

Appropriate skills for the production of high quality NHDRs, post-launch follow-up, advocacy and result and change monitoring are also critical. This calls for well-capacitated human/staff resources. In general, national and international consultants are used to produce NHDRs. Establishing a good roster and pooling these experts following a thorough appraisal of their past performance and quality of products delivered should be the norm to remain. Easy access to parts of the rosters already available in HQ and some Regional Centers can be made available for country offices' use.

Also, forming and making use of a well-functioning, capable editorial board can greatly contribute to ensuring a high quality NHDR. This body can be expanded with the inclusion of a virtual editorial board to tap online the expertise of staff in HQ, regional centres and country offices.

Strengthened skills are also essential for effective management and guidance of the NHDR process. Inter alia, such skills can also help manage sensitive information and presentation for policy dialogue, with due consideration to independence and impartiality, which are also important in their own right. In general, the upgrading of skills should strictly target delivery of results, not limited to report production but extended to post-launch monitoring and evaluation of the desired changes in policy and human development. One suggestion in this regard is to have a learning resource/package for online staff self-learning. This can be packaged and run in the UNDP Learning Management System (LMS) with the possibility of staff certification at the end of the course.

Coming to incentives and tools for ensuring high quality NHDRs, I see the following.

- 1) The NHDR should be continuously received as one of the core businesses of UNDP, and for this to concretely surface, the political support and commitments from both UNDP/HQ and country offices should be apparent. This by itself is a good starting mechanism to contribute to the stimulation of incentives.
- 2) Another is having a corporate system of identifying and acknowledging high quality and successful NHDRs.
- 3) Packaging and setting up a realistic target in respect of the NHDR results in the e-Balanced Scored Card (BSC) and the tracking of achievements can also be a good approach.
- 4) Having a Service Line associated with a measurable core result target in the Strategic Plan (2008 – 2011) could also promote the importance of and commitment to the NHDR System.

Getachew Asamenew
UNDP – Ethiopia

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7. Henry Jackelen, UNDP Bulgaria

Many thanks Tim and Stephen for allowing the discussion to proceed covering all points of interest.

Institutional Arrangements

I note and agree with colleagues who make the point that the NHDR is a key element of making the HD paradigm real and relevant to our CO substantive capacity. For these reasons I strongly favor creating the NHDR (minimum) core teams within the framework of the CO staff (or NHDOs) not as a silo but as a cross fertilization element that looks at all our work and helps build synergies. Many COs have "outsourced" this work, which while entirely valid, can miss the opportunity to have this investment enriching the core culture of our COs. This means of course a more direct ownership by the COs of this product, however does not negate our famous "denial" clause. It does also allow that these knowledge networks created for NHDRs are more accessible to the broader program areas of our COs.

The key issue of "Government Ownership" needs to be seen in a broader prism of "society ownership" and as such the SOLE control of Government is questionable particularly as we normally create oversight of all sectors of society in our elaboration of this work. The success and stature of the GHDR and the NHDRs give us this ability which we should use. I bow to colleagues who operate in circumstances where such latitude is difficult and even impossible. However, I would wager in a majority of our + 140 countries such is and can be the case, with a lot of diplomacy of course!

Beyond Advocacy

In terms of enriching our options as a global network I believe that the NHDRs can be a MORE powerful tool in leveraging resources, activities and substantive leadership for UNDP/UN. The HDI is unique and, however imperfect, it has proven robust and a reasonable framework from which to examine the human condition that Amartya Sen so eloquently posits.

Without entering into details on CC (and hoping for a dialogue in early 2008) I would argue there is scope for expanding the Global support to NHDRs IF and WHEN countries opt for an area of analysis that is directly meaningful to the Global. Some themes will be more universal than others so I only speak of building a specific option when the specific theme is of major interest to the CO and its constituency and is fully coherent to the Global work. This can happen in a phased or coordinated fashion. CC is a case whereby the report we are currently digesting can lead to COs tackling specific dimensions and the GHDO building a special financing and technical facility to support the local efforts, which can then feed into a distinct GHDR which brings together these threads into a Second GHDR on the same theme (independent of the GHDR sequencing or better stated an entirely new product). In a sense this would be one way to provide meaningful monitoring.

This of course must be an OPTION for COs and is in no way a "straight jacket." At the same time, to be considered part of the Global theme COs would have to make very specific commitments in regards to methodology, etc.

At the other end of the spectrum the richness of the thousands of NHDRs in tackling national, regional and sub-regional themes have had a great impulse from the awards granted and here the GHDO might consider more innovative ways to make this experience more available to others. I recall our colleagues in Peru came out with a landmark study on the issues of competitiveness and productivity, an issue of great interest to any middle income countries. A system where the intellectual capital created in Peru could be made available in some form to others through Global support (of course in region we do collaborate well). This could be part of a new way of working.

Financing

ALL of these ideas are useless without the proper resource package and here my contention is that we have a powerful asset, as a unique global and diverse network, that should be of interest to public and private funders. The case for CC is very strong in this regard. Our current mode of operation is decentralized invention with some minimal coordination. This has been successful and should continue. What I recommend is a NEW TRACK for those themes and issues which can have global synergies, support and impact.

One UN

ALL our reports are always undertaken involving relevant sister agencies. This should be strengthened wherever possible. We have a long way to go still in perfecting this remarkable modality prior to thinking of anything beyond this.

Hope we can return to these issues in early 2008.

Henry Jackelen
RC/RR Bulgaria

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8. Jim Chalmers, Flinders University, Australia

Dear colleagues,

I would like to offer some thoughts on Challenge 1, specifically on the importance of corporate resources and incentives for Country Office staff and Regional HD Advisors.

Clearly, Country Offices are well-placed to deal with the local things that national ownership hinges on. Yet, national ownership itself depends on community level involvement.

Regarding HQ level incentives and support, I suggest corporate recognition for dissemination strategies that target district and community level ownership in post-launch workshops on what to do with the report. This could have the effect at HQ of further keeping staff in touch with local developments within a country.

At the regional level, sufficient resources should be allocated to allow NHDR teams to analyze the various production systems that characterise the economy in a particular country. Local economies are often a conglomerate of ancient and contemporary production systems, which makes them hard to fathom without the time and resources to do the research. National ownership depends heavily on understanding how the different types of economies affect different citizens' social participation. For example, the gift-giving mode of production has residual features that impact heavily on ownership of HDRs, but these features are quite disguised within the dominant market-based economic system found, for example, in Pacific Island states.

At CO level, incentives could do well to reward efforts that succeed in the adoption of HD and MDG indicators in national poverty and development planning systems. Because this goal is so often intertwined with the program priorities of bilaterals, it would make sense to integrate the bilaterals in this incentive. A suggested strategy is to bring in more often these bilaterals as NHDR partners, particularly those with a niche program that supports NHDR engagement, rather than partnering only with larger bilaterals from the global north (who at times may encourage the use of non-HD paradigms of poverty-reduction to support national strategies.)

Jim Chalmers
Flinders University
Adelaide, South Australia

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9. Luís Vargas, UNDP Peru

Regarding **Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources**: The Peru CO Human Development Report Team was established in 2001. To date, the idea of relying on a core team of “professionals” has been kept and the original NHDR Team is still the main team responsible for drafting, promoting and disseminating the NHDR.

Following the corporate guidelines, the NHDR Team has ensured an adequate selection of the subjects to be covered by the Reports, taking into account their importance and impact in the national context. This selection process is carried out in close coordination with the CO Representation. Moreover, the NHDR Team encourages the active participation of national experts in the preparation of the reports, ensuring the parameters of academic rigor and intellectual independence of the analysis. Aiming at guaranteeing that the entire process is participatory, the Team promotes workshops and roundtables with representatives of civil society.

This working approach allowed the NHDR Team to produce 3 HDR in 6 years. It is important to highlight how these Reports have been used, not only as a reference for national political actions (for example, the assignment of computers to children living in areas with the lowest HDI) but also as a baseline in debates within civil society and private business sectors.

The demand for the Peruvian HDR, coming from various stakeholders, has progressively grown, and this increasing interest is confirmed by the international cooperation funding of the reports, which reached 40% of the total costs.

What can be done in order to strengthen this process?

- Avoid turn-over and ensure the continuity of the core NHDR Team through budgeting of CORE resources.
- Consolidation of strategic partnerships with actors able to contribute on both the financial and technical/scientific aspects.
- The selection of the subject to be covered in the Reports should involve all the Units of the Country Office.
- Discussion should be promoted and regional HDR Coordinators meetings should be institutionalized.
- Aiming at improving the technical/scientific participation and financial support necessary for the preparation of the Reports, it is important to strengthen the image of UNDP as international cooperation actor committed to various aspects of substantial development focused on people.

Luís Vargas
Chief, HDR Unit
UNDP Peru

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10. Marielza Oliveira, UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean

Dear colleagues,

In discussing challenges in NHDR systems, it is important to also consider the supra-national (sub-regional and regional) and sub-national reports, as the issues differ a little bit when approaching the discussion from these levels:

Supra-national reports: With an increased emphasis on results and development effectiveness, it is crucial for UNDP to be able to monitor the progress achieved by program countries in terms of poverty and sustainable human development. In this scenario, an essential ability is the capacity to examine their socioeconomic performance, for which availability of reliable and comparable statistics is crucial. As the Human Development Primer has pointed out, empirical-based evidence is what makes it possible to

formulate and implement better and better-targeted development policies. However, for such examinations to take place, a human development team needs access to: 1) time series data, useful for tracking the evolution of a unit (territory such as a country, province, etc; or group based on gender, ethnicity, etc) performance over time; and/or 2) cross-section data, useful to compare (rank!) performance of different units in a disaggregated fashion. Supra-national HDRs, which have an emphasis on cross-section comparisons, bring an added level of complexity to the table as new challenges must be dealt with:

1. The involvement of more than one national government creates political issues from the start for example, from the selection of topic to address (as different governments have different priorities, interests, etc) - to the end, for example, in the definition of a launch place and date (as internal political moments in different country may result in different and sometimes conflicting preferences). Thus, negotiation, coordination and management skills become more crucial for the success of the report than the technical skills normally required of a HD team. HD teams that perform very well when producing NHDRs do not necessarily possess all the skills needed for production of supra-national reports, and may need additional support.
2. There is a need to identify all national or sub-national reliable data series on the chosen topic that are comparable for the group of countries involved (in terms of concept, base year, methodological procedures, etc). Metadata differences may impede the realization of cross-section comparisons that at first glance seemed possible, or that would be possible if instead one was looking at a unit's performance over time. Thus, funding must consider the need to homogenize differing knowledge levels and technical capacities in different countries both in the government counterparts and in UNDP's teams and to conduct solid metadata comparisons from the start.
3. Interaction of the supra-national HDR with the existing and planned NHDRs must be considered. Thus, there must be incentives to synchronize efforts and to generate policy messages that reinforce each other as much as possible.

Sub-national reports:

1. Political issues may also crop up in sub-national (state, provincial, municipal, etc) HD reports, particularly when sub-national reports start revealing the realities behind national averages. Motives are as varied as the choice of a particular sub-national unit for a particular report generating "jealousy" from other units that may want to develop a similar topic, to sub-national and national counterparts belonging to opposite political parties and using the report to compare their performances (when such comparisons are not technically correct). In any case, again, the HD team needs solid negotiation skills.
2. Technical issues also crop up, given that the standard HDI cannot be calculated at the sub-national level without some modifications; that some disaggregations that can take place at national level are not possible at certain sub-national levels due to lack of sufficient statistical data points; etc. Also, sub-national counterparts, who usually have had little experience with HD concepts in the past, may need much capacity building on the paradigm.
3. Interaction of the national HDR with the existing and planned sub-national ones must be considered, and thus the same synchronization and reinforcement issues apply.
4. Fatigue may become an issue as many sub-national reports are released, such that when the national or global ones are published they don't get sufficient coverage.

I would love to hear the experiences of other colleagues, who participated in production of such reports, as I'm sure other issues would be identified and with them the need for additional resources and support.

Marielza Oliveira
Programme Advisor
Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC)
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
Millennium Development Goals: Yes we can!

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11. Mathieu Ciowela, UNDP Djibouti

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to contribute to this interesting discussion, which is also one of Country Offices' concerns. Indeed, the Human Development Report is a valuable contribution by UNDP to the development paradigm and theory, and NHDRs provide a sizeable opportunity to put back into the public discourse a debate which could result in concrete policies and actions, so as to catalyze the efforts of stakeholders in changing their living conditions.

The case has been made for this idea to become sustainable and for countries to take ownership of the NHDR production process. However, it must be noted that despite all these efforts the NHDR process does not yet, in most cases, take shape in a structured way, and that it belongs to a spontaneous process. For each publication, funds are provided only for the period to produce the report and launch it, it is also important to note that in some cases the management team for the preparation process of the NHDR changes for each publication. This weakens the NHDR's significance and affects its "promotion", resulting in the fact that the ideas developed are often insufficiently exploited.

The difficulties which Country Offices encounter in ensuring a sustainable mechanism to manage the NHDR stem from insufficient financial resources. Indeed, producing the report and ensuring its promotion through the establishment of a media strategy requires more technical, human and logistic resources.

The problems of **Financial, technical and institutional resources** at the centre of this discussion raise questions related to, on the one hand, the institutionalisation of the NHDR at country level while preserving the guiding principles of the NHDR process, and on the other hand, the nature of UNDP's support. With the institutionalisation of the NHDR, there will have to be a focus on, *inter alia*, **how to guarantee national ownership of the process while ensuring improved quality and independence of analysis of the report**, therefore the availability of tested, high level, technical resources should be the foundation stone of this process. In addition, this institutionalisation will make it possible to stabilize the NHDR management system and ensure its sustainability. At the same time, UNDP's support should remain constant in order to avoid the situation of the report on development cooperation. Indeed, the publication of this report, supported for years by UNDP, has become irregular – even uncertain – since its transfer to governments. With this in mind, it is right to put financial resources at the disposal of Country Offices to allow them to mobilise the best technical support, and also additional resources.

It will then be a question of identifying technical partners able to guarantee the creativity, independence and quality of the analysis of the NHDR and would be useful to institute collaboration with academia. Indeed, research and study centres exist within universities and abound in general purpose and multidisciplinary technical resources, which could better lead the process. This approach has the advantage that in the long term the university course could be modified with the establishment, for example, of a Human Development Chair. This centre could develop a methodological approach adapted to the country context, ensure the mobilisation and the broadest participation of stakeholders in the NHDR process, and develop and implement the media strategy following each publication. A high quality report itself represents a tool to mobilize partners around the topics and can catalyze resource mobilisation; for the latter, it would be useful to consider the sale of the report.

To carry out all this, UNDP will have to continue to strengthen the capacities of national partners while bringing, *inter alia*:

- Directives necessary for their dissemination through the system set up;
- Documentary references;
- Extension of the HDR network to national partners so they can share best practices with their counterparts;
- Training;
- Advice and direction;
- Expertise for the development and implementation of the report's media strategy.

It would be useful to institute a system to inspire and encourage emulation, through rewarding the best NHDRs each year. This reward could allow the writing team to look further into their research on the theme with a specialist centre and/or take a particular training course.

Best wishes,

Mathieu Ciowela
UNDP Djibouti

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12. Mihail Peleah, UNDP, Bratislava Regional Centre

Dear colleagues,

First let me to thank the team of facilitators for initiation of very interesting and timely discussion.

To answer the question of challenges in terms of financial, technical and institutional resources, I would suggest to first step back and ask very basic but important question: "Why are we (countries) writing National Human Development Reports?" My answer is "To analyze important medium-term human development issues, raise them higher on development agenda, and build consensus on potential solutions for the issue". In this sense, **National Development Reports should be nationally owned (not necessarily Government owned!) exercises, sponsored by UNDP**. The role of UNDP, in my view, consists in the following: (i) to select the topic (in consultation with national stakeholders); (ii) to finance core NHDR activities; and (iii) to ensure quality of the analysis.

Selection of topic. UNDP should not rush and produce National HDRs each year at any cost. Contrary, NHDRs should be country demand driven and address development topics which will remain valid in next 5-7 years. The typical timeframe for the production of a NHDR is 12-18 months, which means that reports would be produced and published once in two years in average. Such a timeframe allows adequate time for careful selection and discussion of NHDR topic, for quality research work, and for participatory discussions, consensus building and inclusion of report recommendations into the policy making cycle. In Moldova we used a NHDR Advisory Board to validate the proposed topic. The Advisory Board is headed by the Vice-minister of Economy (National Project Coordinator) and includes representatives of UN Agencies, relevant Ministries, National Statistical Bureau, think tanks and academia, private sector and civil society organizations. We tried to keep the composition of Advisory Board limited enough to be manageable but at the same time extended enough to be relevant to the topic of the NHDR (for instance, for the Education-related report we invited in AB representatives of Ministry of Education and of the Council of Rectors). The Advisory Board proved to be very instrumental for the whole NHDR process, but especially valuable for discussion and agreement on the topic.

Financing of NHDR. To keep NHDR going one need finances. Typically, the cost of one NHDR is not very high. In UNDP Moldova we covered the core activities of NHDR (core team of authors, discussions, and printing of the report) through TRAC funds, while looking for other resources to finance additional activities. For instance, this year we received funds from SDC for the production of a simplified version of the NHDR in the form of brochure for the general population. For next NHDR we created a partnership with UNIFEM, who is ready to cover costs of local and international expertise to investigate deeply gender issues in Education and Labor Market, which are the topic of the forthcoming report. Such an approach helps us to go forward with the report, producing it regularly. At the same time, this approach allows us to raise funds for specific elements of NHDR, not just "for writing yet another report nobody reads".

Ensure quality of analysis. While the report is prepared by a national team of authors, UNDP has a huge role to play in ensuring quality of the analysis. This work starts with preparation of the Concept Note/Terms of Reference for the Report. A clear and comprehensive Concept Note is a key of success for the NHDR. This work is done by a UNDP Programme Officer, and we go through a number of rounds of consultations, first internally, in UNDP, on Programme section meetings, next with the Advisory Board.

Next stage is the selection of the team of authors. This is a very challenging task, as country research capacities are limited. This means that national team should be complemented by international expertise, which requires additional funds. First reports in Moldova were produced by a team from the Academy of Sciences, while for the latest reports think tanks were selected on competitive basis. Shift toward selection of the team of authors through a tender radically increased the quality of the reports (as I could judge after reading all Moldova reports for the past 10 years). Also, contracting out research work the think tanks reduces pressure on UNDP Programme officer in terms of daily monitoring the team of authors and keeping up with deadlines.

To ensure that report is prepared on time, we put certain milestones for the team of authors. We ask for "Draft 1" and "Draft 2" of the report. We give them 3 months to prepare Draft 1, which should include main messages, outline, and list of research questions. We give another 3 to 5 months to prepare Draft 2 of the report, which is a more comprehensive document, providing most of statistics and policy debates. The draft 2 of the report is used for participatory consultations with interested stakeholders, which takes another 3 months. After that team of authors finalizes the report, which should be accepted by the Advisory Board and then go to print. Drafts of the report are reviewed by the UNDP Programme Section to ensure the quality of the analysis and the relevance and accuracy of data. This also helps to involve a large group of UNDP staff in NHDR work and thus facilitate sharing of knowledge within UNDP.

To sum up, I would suggest the following to effectively address challenges in terms of financial, technical and institutional resources in the preparation of NHDRs:

- UNDP should avoid producing NHDRs each year at any cost. Reports should be country demand driven, address medium-term human development issues and should be practical enough to be used for policy making purposes.
- UNDP should secure funds to cover the core activities of the report preparation and build partnership with other actors to mobilize funds for additional activities.
- UNDP should tightly control the quality of the report, by means of Country office Programme staff but also attracting expertise from regional centers, HDRO NY, and networks.

With best regards,

Mihail Peleah, Research Assistant
UNDP, Europe and the CIS
Bratislava Regional Centre
europeandcis.undp.org

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13. Musa Bullaleh, UNDP Qatar

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to share with you our experience with Qatar's 2nd HDR as it relates to the sub-question under challenge 1: **how to ensure adequate funding and staffing for a high quality NHDR and report launch follow-up, and monitoring.**

The Qatar Report is entirely funded by the government; however, there is a tendency on the part of national authorities to economize on specific activities, e.g. recruiting experts familiar with the issue and/or minimum requirements as stipulated in the HDR Toolkit. We believe our role at the CO with the support of others (e.g. HDRO, SURF-AS, etc) is to balance the national ownership imperative on the one hand and intellectual independence on the other.

Adequate familiarity with the report's requirements remains a challenge, coupled with its process and benefits. In my view, we need to engage our counterparts in explaining the aim and mission of the Report, and when available provide them with learning opportunities that relate to its benefits, such as capacity development of national statistical offices and as a policy instrument. Recently, I saw this in practice

during our regional MDG workshop, where we invited national MDG focal points. The workshop was a success because, inter alia; it provided a forum to share and exchange regional experiences and discuss innovative approaches to utilizing disaggregated data to measure progress towards the MDGs in our region, for instance.

With respect to impact and follow-up; some of the report's impacts are easier to quantify and assess the extent to which policy change has occurred consistent with its recommendations, while in others change might be incremental and hard to measure in the short-term. To overcome these inherent challenges with socioeconomic data, some of our colleagues, for instance, have either revisited earlier reports and/or coupled it with new measuring techniques, such as utilizing disaggregated data or localized the issue at the municipal/state level.

Finally, with regard to post-launch follow-up and advocacy, we need to integrate more systematically pre and post report launch. In particular, we need to mainstream the Report's theme into identified national challenges and priorities. Furthermore, this facilitates the support/cooperation of the UNCT as it relates to the country programme.

Wish you all the best,

Musa Bullaleh
UNDP Qatar

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14. Nahla Zeitoun, UNDP Egypt

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you very much for sharing with us the Management Response to the NHDR System Evaluation and initiating this discussion.

With regards to Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources, I would like to share some views which are particular to Egypt. Egypt has been one of the systematic countries producing NHDRs. This year we are working on our 10th NHDR. The tradition has been to use TRAC funds to support the process of production and in some few cases we got some donor funding for some particular activities i.e. survey, qualitative studies, etc... I am quite positive that UNDP in Egypt can mobilize resources from the private sector to support process of producing NHDRs. The NHDR project is a UNDP flagship project that has very high visibility. Also the authors of the Report have continued to be prominent Egyptian figures that are highly credible and respected. The launch event and post-launch activities will provide the space for private sector visibility and the Report's independence will remain untouched.

However, I do believe that the national counterpart, in our case the Institute of National Planning (INP), needs training and needs institutional resources to provide high quality data as well as acquire the resources to do advocacy work on the Report. UNDP is usually the leading entity behind the formulation and implementation of the **communication strategy and dissemination of NHDRs** (organize policy consultations, produce short policy briefs on the report, organize workshops including launch event etc...). This, as a result, requires staff time and effort. The Institute of National Planning if provided with the right training can carry out such tasks. UNDP therefore needs to invest in training on communication and advocacy, conference/event organization, etc.... In the past, most of the training provided to INP was on methodology of calculating HDIs and other technical types of training.

We also try at the country office to introduce the recommendations of the NHDR in our day to day programming, by introducing, when possible, projects that follow-up on the report's recommendations. This ensures the integration of policies and the monitoring of the NHDR's impact.

What incentives and tools are needed by Country Office management, other national partners, Regional HD Advisors, and Bureau Directors to ensure high-quality NHDRs?

Country office management should not feel pressured to produce NHDRs on an annual basis to ensure high-quality NHDRs as well as ensure diligent follow-up on the Report's recommendations. Similarly governments (INP in particular) should take more ownership of following up on the NHDRs properly and not just be keen on producing reports on an annual basis.

The NHDR Toolkit and the Oxford HD course have been an instrumental source of knowledge on guidance on producing NHDRs. Any similar material would be a great incentive for country offices and for government counterparts to continue their good work.

Thank you.

Nahla Zeitoun
NHDR Focal Point
UNDP - Egypt

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15. Natalia Aquilino, UNDP Argentina

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks for a challenging discussion. Here are some thoughts on 2 and 3:

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

Leveraging NHDR potential through UNCT can be explored in many ways:

1. **Through common programming processes:** One way of addressing complementarities is to incorporate NHDR as an analytical source of information when thinking and developing CCA or UNDAFs. Having done so in Argentina for the development of the UN Common Strategic Vision, we found out that agencies appreciate HD data. Another idea is that, NHDR can be perfectly treated as UNDAF outputs - belonging to UNDP as an agency and hence fully incorporated into UNDAF results and resources frameworks. In this sense, also merging NHDR indicators into DevInfo as a standard pattern can help in monitoring results at UN level.
2. **As a UNDP service to agencies:** The data produced can serve as a resource for joint programmes and individual project planning. This can be available through the DGO site.

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

For systematic monitoring and evaluating, NHDR activities will need to be integrated into regular planning, implementing and learning processes and tools. We may identify a minimum of 3 scenarios for capturing and learning, building on our existing RBM methodology:

1. **Treating NHDR as a programme result;** In many Country Programmes, NHDR are planned as an expected result when developing the multiyear programmatic framework. Although government involvement can vary from country to country, this constitutes a scenario of UNDP's contribution - with clear attribution - to national development. Assuming this is a correct way of programming against NHDR, the current RBM logic can also be applied to it as a result - meaning setting baselines, yearly outputs and resources (staff and budget) and M&E with standard tools.
2. **Treating NHDR as a programme output/s:** With this idea, outputs (and activities) deriving from NHDR can both lead and support results achievement in any targeted programmatic area at the national level (governance, environment, MDGs, etc.) giving more specificity to HD interventions.
3. **Treating NHDR indicator's as programmatic indicators;** Merging NHD data and national statistical data into country programming processes should be a good entry point also for supporting

internal alignment. The idea here will be to follow the same logic that the Strategic Plan uses to incorporate MDG indicators (i.e. No. of countries on track to achieving MDG 1 (i.e. poverty headcount), No. of countries that have met MDG-3 (re gender disparity in primary education). By doing this HD data will be embedded into the programming process itself.

In any case, statistical data produced at NHDR level should be regularly fed into existing systems as strategic information and a tool for high level decision making.

Regards,

Natalia Aquilino
UNDP, Argentina

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16. Owais Parray, UNDP Indonesia

Dear all,

A few thoughts on **Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources:**

To maintain intellectual integrity, although it may seem to make more sense that UNDP assumes responsibility for managing (DEX) the NHDR, it may never be fully "owned" by the Government. On the flip side though, too much "involvement" of the Government may prevent some of the sensitive issues to be discussed in these reports. I like the idea of an NHDR Cell - a sort of a think tank that works within a Government institution but is mandated to work independently and to the extent possible retains intellectual sovereignty. Moreover, our experience in Indonesia shows that it is better that this NHDR cell also houses MDGR because many of the issues affect both processes including data compilation, analysis etc. It also minimizes confusion and makes the advocacy more systematic. Funds for this NHDR+MDG could be then be channeled through TRAC, other cost sharing arrangement including government funds. It is important that the NHDR is institutionalized; otherwise it is challenging to have any meaningful follow up. Working in an ad-hoc manner makes the production of an NHDR an end itself rather than a means to an end, and of course there is no institutional memory.

Owais Parray
Technical Advisor
TARGET MDGs
Jakarta, Indonesia

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17. Paola Pagliani, UNDP Serbia

Dear colleagues,

I would like to contribute to the three raised challenges in a single message.

How to ensure adequate funding and staffing for a high quality NHDR process every 2-3 years that includes post-launch follow-up, advocacy and results monitoring?

If the NHDR is a "core component of UNDP mission", **core funds must be consistently allocated to its production through transparent mechanisms vis-à-vis donors and national counterparts**, in the same fashion that UNDP uses to allocate funds to administrative services that are widely recognised as indispensable to UNDP operations.

In order to ensure adequate funding, it is fundamental to predispose a planning system at the HQ, regional and CO level, which takes into account all potential cost implications of producing a NHDR, which might be very different according to the country and the selected theme

If UNDP is to be a broker of policy advisory services, each Country Office must be endowed with core functions dedicated to policy analysis and research. This function should operationalise the human development approach through the publication of NHDRs, coordinating as well MDG monitoring and the support to other strategic policy support (e.g. the preparation of MDG-based PRSPs, national sustainable development strategies, etc.) and other advocacy efforts.

In the Serbia Country Office, most of these functions have been incorporated into a Policy Unit, which is also in charge of knowledge and learning management, but funding remains a challenge taking also into consideration that:

- **TRAC funds** (the main source of funds for the Policy Unit in Serbia) are meant to mobilise additional resources, which might not always be the case with the NHDR
- **Donor and government funds** risk undermining the independency of the process. Although in some cases (e.g. because of shared interest in developing policy analysis in a specific field) both donors and governments can co-fund the production of specific NHDRs, UNDP should maintain the control of the process and ensure the regular production of NHDRs, which is easier if it consistently participate in its financing.
- **Cost-sharing with other UN agencies**, although desirable in light of the UN reform, it is unrealistic in the short term because of non-harmonised planning and budgeting. Nevertheless, to start developing better cooperation for the future, the involvement of other UN agencies can be sought through consultations, co-financing of specific researches, and tapping into knowledge and expertise within other agencies.
- **A human development trust fund** risks rewarding COs where the NHDR process is already functioning well, while more should be invested in COs with scarce capacities to produce high quality NHDRs. While acknowledging the excellence of certain reports through the NHDR award can motivate COs to invest more and dedicate more attention to these products, HQ and Regional Bureaus should also create assurance mechanisms to enable each CO to produce NHDRs of the highest possible quality, also taking into consideration the expectations of many development partners who look at the NHDR as one of the main sources of information about the status of development in a country.

What incentives and tools are needed by Country Office management, other national partners, Regional HD Advisors, and Bureau Directors to ensure high-quality NHDRs?

As other colleagues have already mentioned, reflecting the human development approach (and therefore the necessary production of human development analysis) in corporate documents such as the Strategic Plan, the UNDAF and the CPD, and linking individual staff performance reviews to results in this area could be a sufficient incentive to dedicate more attention and resources to NHDRs. Besides senior management, human development literacy should become mandatory for all UNDP staff, which is linked to the need for tools to make it operational, such as:

- **More training opportunities** should be provided, not only for NHDR focal points, but also on how to apply the human development paradigm to programme and project cycles, with the aim to strengthen the link between the analysis produced in HDR, RHDR and NHDRs and UNDP programmatic activities at the country level.
- **A systematic review system** (probably better performed at the regional level) can help ensuring adequate standards in the production of NHDRs.
- **Exchanges of expertise** (including secondment of UNDP staff and national experts involved in the production of top quality NHDRs) can help in raising the profile of NHDRs in Country Offices where capacities are momentarily weaker.

How to leverage the full potential of NHDRs through UN Country Teams and UNDGO? And, how can they complement UN Country Team work, e.g. the UNDAF, MDGRs and other UN reports, so as to better support the PRS process and other national priorities?

As mentioned above, UN agencies (and especially members of UNDG) should be consulted throughout the NHDR process, from the definition of the theme to the peer review and follow up activities. Some themes can be very important for the mandate of other agencies (e.g. HIV/AIDS for WHO or youth for UNICEF), and in these cases a more intense collaboration can be envisaged. In general, the multi-disciplinary nature of the human development approach can generate many entry points to include perspectives, knowledge and field experience of other agencies.

For instance, the Serbian NHDR currently under preparation is addressing the theme of regional cooperation and the importance of Serbia to establish good relations with neighbouring countries, in light of the need to address the legacy of recent conflicts, and as an essential feature to promote economic development, environmental sustainability, security, and to address other common development challenges. One WHO staff member was requested and accepted to contribute to the NHDR with a paper on regional cooperation in the health sector.

While the know how to prepare NHDRs rests with UNDP, their analysis and statistics are already interfacing many UNCT processes. In Serbia, a customised MDG Monitoring Framework has been developed under the leadership of the Government and in close collaboration with the UNCT, although UNDP offered most of the financial support. Highlighting national priorities elaborated also in the PRSP and in other national strategic documents such as the European Union integration strategy, the MDGs can provide the scope of work for an in-depth multi-sectoral analysis to be developed through NHDRs, which can be instrumental to fill in MDG data gaps and to deepen the understanding of the root causes of shortcomings in the achievement of the MDGs. If properly managed and coordinated, these processes can produce a wealth of analysis and information that can feed into the preparation of the Common Country Assessment and the UNDAF, and support through policy advice the implementation of poverty reduction and other national strategies. Especially at the country level, the coordination of MDG and NHDR processes, and the full appreciation of their value in terms of policy analysis and policy advice is fundamental to identify development priorities and it could contribute to the UN speaking with one voice.

How to monitor and evaluate the impact of NHDR activities?

How to capture and learn from these results through an integrated Results-Based Management system (Strategic Plan, Atlas, ROAR, partner surveys, etc.)?

When discussing the monitoring and evaluation of NHDRs, we should distinguish two levels of impact:

1. Impact of NHDR-related advocacy, which would include:

- a. The quality of the report (in terms of analysis, use of data, presentation, etc.)
- b. The inclusiveness of the preparation of the report and the extent to which it presents a variety of perspectives
- c. Media coverage and other advocacy efforts to promote the human development paradigm
- d. Its impact on the current policy debate at the country level (e.g. being referred to by prominent political leaders and decision makers)

This has been already covered by the previous NHDR evaluation (in selected countries) and best practices have been presented in the “Ideas, Innovation, Impact” publication. Based on this, there is a need for systematising a monitoring system that could be based on Atlas. Standard indicators can be derived from the NHDR toolkit, but they should be adapted to reflect a multi-year process. Since in most countries NHDRs are not produced on a yearly basis, the indicators should reflect the progress made during each year in the NHDR preparation. This monitoring system can be also an electronic platform to collect relevant documents, such as terms of reference, concept notes, lessons learned, etc. Periodical evaluations (every 2 or 3 years) can start from the information collected through the monitoring process. I assume that Regional Centres are best placed to coordinate the monitoring and evaluation system, having an overview of regions or sub-regions that often share similar challenges and characteristics. Regional centres should also establish a management response mechanism to support country offices that perform below the expectations or that are facing specific difficulties in preparing NHDRs.

2. The impact of NHDR analysis and recommendations on the development situation in a country. To measure this it would be necessary to enhance the link between NHDRs and the programme and project cycle. If the CPD is based on country priorities agreed with the government, the NHDR should address the demand for research and data emerging from the implementation of CPD-related activities, and project documents should make use of data and information contained in NHDRs. This requires UNDP staff (especially those involved in project and programme development) to be familiar with the human development paradigm, and to be involved in its preparation and dissemination. If this approach is implemented consistently, it will be easier to measure the impact of NHDRs on outcomes defined in the CDP and UNDAF.

Paola Pagliani
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18. Paulina Franceschi, UNDP Panama

Dear Colleagues,

It is good timing for this discussion, which allows us to look at the future of the NHDRs with more confidence. I feel that the HD paradigm is really interesting and personally believe that the approach has a great logic to it and represents a substantive and valuable contribution from UNDP to countries.

In Panama the NHDRs have also been prepared since 2001. To date, we have launched 2 reports and have a third ready to be launched. To add to the discussion, I think that an aspect which contributes to the strengthening of the teams is its model of financing. In some way this determines to a great extent the team's technical and institutional environment. The NHDR project in Panama is a national execution 'NEX' project, which is financed with UNDP funds and by the government. Nevertheless, this model, in our experience has generated conflicts, particularly in cases where the reports take on politically sensitive themes.

Ensuring this delicate balance between national ownership and UNDP product can be less conflictual if they are financed with TRAC funds, via direct execution and the door is opened so that different bodies (organisations, private sector or others) finance specific products and processes. Of course, to strengthen the NHDR system also demands guaranteeing appropriate human support, of a standard to allow the creation of a product of quality and great credibility.

I believe that a great incentive to producing a quality NHDR is recognition from UNDP that the NHDR product must be and is the most valuable substantive contribution, as much for the quality of its analysis within the prism of human development, as for the participatory processes which are introduced as something intrinsic and integral to the preparation of the reports. It is a tool to engage in continuous dialogue with actors and for the analysis of themes key to the reality of each one of our countries. In this way, a key incentive is the endorsement and stability of the teams involved in the preparation. At Country Office level, the centrality of the HD paradigm must be a mandatory frame of reference for the preparation of cooperation and assistance programmes. In addition, the ongoing support of regional exchange and the Bureau become a virtuous cycle of incentives for the creation of quality NHDRs.

Once again, I welcome this discussion, and I hope to have contributed to such an interesting debate.

Paulina Franceschi, Ph.D.
CO NHDR Panama
Dear Colleagues,

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19. Shireen Kamal Sayeed, UNDP Bangladesh

Dear Colleagues,

This is an interesting discussion. For having a meaningful HDR we need to first recognize that we cannot really compete with the World Bank's development report which is far more comprehensive and analytical. The reason they do it that better is because they have the resources to hire top class consultants and field missions as required to get a quality product. We probably do that well when we have a global HDR. But when it comes to national level HDRs, resource constraint is a key thing to consider. In spite of that, we nevertheless have managed to produce some good quality reports by pitching in our own in-house expertise. But then the person or persons involved have to be released only for that work and cannot take care of their regular work. If we are thinking of producing a UN System joint NHDR, then probably the resource constraint could be overcome to some extent with all agencies pitching in or by placing special funds under the RC.

For example, the focus for this year being on climate change, the countries could think of having a common NHDR on Climate Change. This would provide an opportunity to all the agencies to bring forth what they are doing in the national context and how it is impacting the sectors they are working in. This will also provide a holistic picture of UN System assistance for climate change or any other thematic area considered as a priority in a particular year or period in a country.

Undoubtedly, it will go a long way in raising awareness on the issues at the national level since NHDRs are discussed in various fora and in the media. It also has the potential to draw commitments from the governments to work in the area. This will be more so if they find that all the UN agencies are united on a common platform to assist them in this critical area. It may also bring in other development partners to join hands. In other words, the NHDR could be a powerful advocacy and awareness tool focused on a specific area of development – in this case addressing climate change, which has become a critical issue for the survival of the Earth and all its inhabitants.

Best regards,

Shireen

Shireen Kamal Sayeed
Assistant Country Director
UNDP Bangladesh

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20. Tim O'Brien, UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dear all,

With respect to the request for input to the NHDR System debate, please see the response from UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH):

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact. Systematic monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the results of NHDR processes require strengthening.

1. How to monitor and evaluate the impact of NHDR activities?

The impact of NHDR activities may be more effectively monitored and evaluated by, for example, employing an external evaluator to examine the impact on government policies through analysis of government documents and/or on social awareness through analysis of media reporting. This could be carried out between six and twelve months after the release of the NHDR so that the results could be

effectively implemented into the next round of NHDR preparation. This evaluation could be carried out in cooperation with relevant government agencies in order to incorporate into the evaluation a capacity building component.

A further method would be to undertake a spin-off research project involving the measurement of the same or very similar indicators of one or more of the themes from the original NHDR. In this way, the latter project may be used to not only produce new research material, but also at the same time, would involve a direct monitoring function with respect to the NHDR.

2. How to capture and learn from these results through an integrated Results-Based Management System (Strategic Plan, Atlas, ROAR, partner surveys, etc.)?

In order to capture and learn from these results through an integrated Results-based Management System, the Management Response to the M&E exercise must call for the M&E results to become inputs to the integrated system. The Strategic Plan, Atlas, ROAR, etc., should then be adjusted as required given the new information. This will help to maintain focus on the intervention areas that are the highest priorities, consistent with the actual reality in each country, and based on the most recent information available. For example, if the NHDR leads to major legislative changes that are advocated within it, and that are at the same time noted as a desired output in the Strategic Plan, then this information should be used to update the integrated RBM system.

Tim O'Brien
Economic Policy Analyst
UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina

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21. Tshering Pem, UNDP Bhutan

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to share some experiences and challenges relating to the production of NHDRs in a small country like Bhutan.

Bhutan produced its first NHDR in 2000 titled "*Gross National Happiness and Human Development - Searching for Common Ground*" which assessed the country's human development progress within the unique development paradigm of Gross National Happiness. The country's 2nd NHDR 2005 is on the contemporary theme of "*Youth and Employment*" which is an issue of rising concern confronting Bhutan today as it faces the challenge of providing its rising number of educated youth gainful employment. <http://www.undp.org.bt/publications.htm>

Challenge 1: Financial, technical, and institutional resources

For small countries the preparation of quality NHDRs are constrained not only due to financial limitations but capacity.

The availability of a confirmed source of funds for NHDR related work not tied to regular resources could help CO to leverage the production of quality NHDRs with national governments and other stakeholders. This is particularly important for small COs.

Inadequate HD know-how and low capacity are also key constraints in small countries which limit the quality of national ownership and availability of research materials and information on contemporary issues of particular significance to the country. In this regard, availability of HD advocacy materials, support to HD related country level research activities and training sessions for both CO staff and national counterparts should be activities supported by HQ. Key to easing this constraint could be the provision resources, both financial and technical, to undertake research work and studies in HD related areas which could greatly enhance availability of well analyzed and researched materials and information to

ensure production of quality NHDRs. This can also contribute towards building research capacity in countries where this is a major constraint and at the same time enhance sustainability of future NHDR preparation.

To further enhance use and policy impact the frequency and timing of NHDR preparation could be timed so as to ensure that it informs important country level development events such as preparation of national development plans, background national documents for round table meetings for donor coordination and resource mobilization, etc.

Mandating the preparation of at least one NHDR once every 3 to 4 years could be considered. This could work towards sustaining HD focus in the socio-economic development processes of countries while at the same time ensuring that national and CO capacities are not overly stressed, which could dilute national ownerships of NHDRs, their quality and hence the impact.

Challenge 2: UN Country Teams and complementary initiatives

As HD is as multi-dimensional as the MDGs, the preparation of NHDRs could be targeted as a joint UN collaboration as in the case of MDGRs.

At the CO level, ToRs of thematic groups could be made to consider relevant HD together with the MDGs so that HD priorities are reflected accordingly in the CCAs, UNDAFs and subsequent CPAPs. This will also work towards further ensuring HD focus from the government side particularly where the CCA, UNDAF and CPAP processes involve extensive consultation and buy-in from national governments.

Challenge 3: Monitoring results and impact

Effective monitoring of results and impact of socio-economic development investments are challenges faced by many developing countries. Hence, the integration of any monitoring requirements into national processes is crucial to ensure effective systematic monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the results. As mentioned above, this further emphasizes the importance of NHDR preparation timing, its quality and the relevance of the NHDR theme in the development context of the country as these key factors would go towards ensuring the use of the NHDR's analytical findings and recommendations to inform national policies and programs, which are then monitored and evaluated using national M&E processes.

I hope that the few points that I have raised above are of some use in further improving the HDR system.

Tshering Pem (Ms)

Asst. Resident Representative (Program)
Poverty and MDG Unit,
UNDP, Bhutan

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22. Valiantsina Stalyho, UNDP Belarus

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to join such an important discussion by sharing some experiences from Belarus and views on **Challenge 1: Financial, technical and institutional resources.**

Capacity building of national partners in increasing national ownership, while also ensuring political independence and analytical quality is quite an important element of UNDP's work in assisting the NHDR preparation in the country.

A major challenge to improving the quality of the NHDR in Belarus is that local academics and policy makers still have insufficient knowledge and experience in applying the human development concept, analyzing policy problems and making concrete policy recommendations relevant to country context. Making the Human Development concept more "locally relevant" may also be an issue facing NHDR

teams in other countries. In Belarus, this knowledge gap has been identified in the UNDP review of the 2002 Belarus NHDR. Specifically, the fact that past reports have addressed a very wide range of policy problems at the expense of a more in-depth analysis of specific issues, partly reflects insufficient methodological focus of the reports.

In this regard I would suggest the following:

1. A good starting point would be to make a bibliography of literature on human development, with special emphasis on examples from individual countries, particularly those whose contexts are similar to Belarus. Although a vast amount of literature is available on applying the human development methodology in different country contexts, very little of it is in Russian. Works that are not available in the Russian language could be translated and published as a book, or, preferably, on the Internet. This would be an invaluable tool for educating the writing teams and national partners. The quality of the NHDRs would be improved by strengthening their human development focus. Providing copyright issues can be settled, the costs of such support would be moderate, and could be borne by the regional NHDR project, or shared among UNDP offices in countries where Russian is widely spoken. Such an initiative would strongly rely on the expertise, advice and other support available from RBEC, the UNDP regional office in Bratislava and the regional HD advisor.
2. We involve experts on human development in the NHDR process as peer reviewers within the framework of an international peer review board. The Board works to maximize the academic quality of the NHDR and strengthen the appeal of the NHDR to academic and professional audiences. The board consists mostly of researchers and academics, and UNDP Belarus is keen to involve participants from other countries in the board. At the level of Regional Bureaus (or even corporately) assistance could be provided to compile a list or a roster of qualified individuals capable and willing to act as international peer reviewers and making this information available to country offices.
3. *In a more long-term perspective*, UNDP could invest in the capacity building process through the introduction of human development materials into university and schools curricular. That will indeed “spread the human development ideas over the long term”, as suggested by the Evaluation of the NHDR system. As far as I know, in the RBEC region there are materials, including those in Russian, which could be shared with other COs. That will not require extra resources to reprint. What is needed is good communication with national partners and their buy-in to this idea, which also exists in some of the universities in Belarus, including the Academy of Management under the auspices of the President (the main institution where civil servants – future policy makers – are trained).
4. I think it would be also useful for UNDP to do some kind of an inventory to understand what is available in terms of money, human and institutional resources at global, regional and CO level and what is really required to strengthen UNDP’s support to the NHDR system. Then it will be easier to identify how to do that and use the available resources efficiently.

Best regards,

Valiantsina Stalyho
ARR (Programme)
UNDP Belarus

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