UNDP strategic plan, 2018-2021 (zero draft)

The road to 2030

Creating opportunity for sustainable development

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. The strategic setting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. UNDP in the United Nations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Coordination and integration</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Common approach with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The UNDP approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Vision and thematic areas of work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Inclusive and sustainable development pathways</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Effective governance for prevention and participation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Building back better after crisis</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Development outcomes and targeting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Partnerships</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Institutional transformation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Higher-quality programmes and managing for results</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Making UNDP a more efficient and adaptable organization</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Improving sustainability and enhancing financing capacities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. The strategic setting

1. UNDP is a development agency working in a volatile context that has changed fundamentally. Important advances have been made over the past decade in reducing poverty, improving health and education and increasing access to basic services. Yet, there are still high levels of deprivation and deepening inequalities within countries. Even where there has been sustained growth, not everyone has benefited and even those who have are vulnerable to a rapid reversal of their gains. Gender inequality continues to persist, both structurally and in discriminatory social norms, attitudes and practices. This mixed picture has given rise to popular disenchantment with current development models and rising social tensions.

2. After a period when it looked as if violent conflicts might diminish in their intensity and scope, there has been a recent spike in the number of people affected by armed conflict, with the world now facing its worst humanitarian crisis since 1945. The outlook is darkened by the slow onset emergency of climate change. Recent experience also shows how fragility and vulnerability rooted in longer-term development shortfalls can escalate rapidly into full blown crises that reverse decades of economic and social progress.

3. Major structural changes are underway as well. Developing countries are increasing their share of global economic output. Technology is redefining economic prospects and social behaviour. The demography of development is changing: there is still rapid population growth in some developing regions but also rapid ageing in others. More people now live in cities and towns than in rural areas, for the first time in human history. And even as the effects of climate change become more apparent, the world is crossing other planetary boundaries that are evident, for example, in loss of biodiversity and forest cover.

4. New problems – or older problems in a new guise – are emerging. Violent extremism with disruptive potential on a global scale is one. Another is susceptibility to contagion in a highly integrated world. Lack of structural economic change in a significant number of developing economies has now become a pressing concern.

5. It is difficult to know exactly how these factors will interact and influence events in the future. But this much is clear: volatility has become the new normal, in a world dealing with major and rapidly escalating risks but, paradoxically, unexpected opportunities for progress as well.

6. It is against this backdrop, amidst growing scepticism towards globalization and multilateralism and the political, economic and funding ramifications of a complex international environment, that the United Nations is undergoing a major transition, the contours of which are still being defined. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development points the way forward underpinned by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Istanbul Programme of Action, New Urban Agenda, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Samoa Pathway and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, among others. At the same time, resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies in 2016 signalled an important breakthrough in connecting conflict prevention, the humanitarian-development nexus and sustainable development, calling for much better integration across the three pillars of the United Nations. This was echoed by commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit.

7. General Assembly resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system focused on the ability of the United Nations development system (UNDS) to assist Members States as they implement the 2030 Agenda. The resolution covers a wide range of issues with an important bearing on the future work of the UNDS: alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and of planning processes, funding and functions.

8. This setting requires UNDP to do things differently, through smart evolution that:

   (a) unlocks the value of a comprehensive and integrated 2030 Agenda;

   (b) focuses attention on those left behind, reaching the furthest behind first;
(c) broadens partnerships, within the UNDS, across the United Nations system and beyond;
(d) builds on existing strengths but adjusts to new realities: urbanization, ageing and the youth bulge, displacement, violent extremism or innovation and new forms of financing;
(e) concentrates efforts on crisis and conflict prevention, response and recovery.

9. Smart evolution needs to draw upon the comparative advantage of UNDP. This resides in:
   (a) mandate, expertise, operational capacities and a large programme portfolio that cut across all three dimensions of sustainable development, making UNDP one among a select group of development agencies that can play a substantive integrating and convening role in the 2030 Agenda;
   (b) a coordination role combined with an unmatched global footprint across all income typologies as well as development and crisis conditions that provide the ‘backbone’ of the UNDS in the field;
   (c) the ability to work on some of the most sensitive and consequential issues at the intersection of growth, governance, crisis and conflict, based on an understanding of realities on the ground, relationships of trust and successful partnership with programme countries nurtured over decades;
   (d) the highest levels of transparency and accountability in international development cooperation, rated as the most transparent development partner worldwide by the International Aid Transparency Initiative for two years in a row and with unqualified audit opinions from the United Nations Board of Auditors for 11 straight years.

10. The UNDP response to a changing world, therefore, draws upon its strengths and is informed by its knowledge and experience of how development happens in different conditions. The task – as a major United Nations development agency, with its Administrator as the chair of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), and as custodian of the resident coordinator system – is to ensure that:
    (a) UNDP contributes to having a UNDS that is coherent, effectively coordinated and well-integrated;
    (b) UNDP responds to the priorities and needs of programme countries with assistance that is of high quality and designed to be transformational in support of the 2030 Agenda.

11. Reflecting this argument, and as detailed in subsequent sections, UNDP proposes to concentrate on two thematic areas of work and two cross-cutting elements (the ‘2+2’), as well as four outcomes, moving in the direction of greater focus, less fragmentation and higher impact on fewer issues. UNDP is determined to phase out activities that are less relevant to its mandate, do less of what it is not best suited for in the United Nations system and hand over to others activities for which it does not have the highest comparative advantage. UNDP will opt for fewer and larger, rather than smaller and too many interventions, avoiding the fragmentation of its portfolio at country, regional or global levels.

12. This plan is also designed with the necessary flexibility to integrate UNDS reforms and adapt to recommendations made in forthcoming reports of the Secretary-General. By focusing on what it does best, UNDP retains the flexibility to absorb any changes quickly and successfully.

II. UNDP in the United Nations

13. UNDP occupies a strategic place in the United Nations system. With its extensive network of country offices, it is at the centre of the development pillar and works closely with
the other two, peace and security and human rights, including humanitarian action. UNDP collaborates with the political arm of the United Nations, whether on elections, development solutions to violent extremism, mediation or peace and development, and with missions in conflict and post-conflict settings on a broad range of civilian affairs, with the purpose of contributing to mission objectives, within the UNDP mandate, in mediation, stability and return to peace. UNDP supports on the ground the efforts of the Secretary-General, and United Nations departments, special representatives and agencies, funds and programmes. This includes contributing to the ‘Sustaining Peace’ agenda from a development perspective, as UNDP supports activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development.

14. UNDP is also at the core of the UNDS. It works with the development arm of the United Nations Secretariat on the 2030 Agenda. In recognition of this and taking its cue from the QCPR, UNDP plans to reinforce its contributions towards a coherent system, viewing its integrating, convening and coordinating roles as being of critical importance to the overall UNDS response to implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Coordination and integration

Coordination for sustainable development

15. UNDP will work with sister agencies and entities to improve the quality of coordination of United Nations country teams (UNCTs) in programming and implementation to simplify and lighten processes and products to lower transaction costs and clearly identify United Nations support for accelerating sustainable development. This will be framed by the common UNDS approach to Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) and enhanced joint analysis and planning. Identifying those left behind and furthest behind, as well as factors contributing to fragility and vulnerability, will advance context-sensitive programming and promote joint and collaborative work by resident and non-resident agencies to deliver transformational results. Another vital objective will be stronger partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs), other development partners, the private sector, academia and civil society to build effective coalitions that can support national development priorities.

16. Effective management of the joint policy fund to advance the 2030 Agenda through inter-agency policy integration will help to raise the quality of country-level coordination. UNDP continues to invest matching funds from its own resources in this regard and will call on the agencies, funds and programmes to support capitalization of the joint fund.

17. Underpinning these proposals, UNDP will better distinguish the role of the resident coordinator from that of the UNDP resident representative, implementing a revised delegation of authority from resident coordinator/resident representative to country director/deputy resident representative by the end of 2017. It will make the case for an updated profile for resident coordinators, emphasizing greater substantive competence, versatility and context-specificity, solid team management skills and a stronger background in building and growing partnerships. The resident coordinator must also be more empowered in the future, along the lines set out in the QCPR, and have the right profile of skills and capacities to meet changing needs.

18. Better country-level efforts by UNCTs demand improved quality of coordination at headquarters. UNDP will pursue this in several ways. One strand will be stronger coordination with the United Nations Secretariat and other partners on prevention, sustaining peace and the humanitarian-development nexus. Another will be stepped-up and systematic collaboration with regional economic commissions through regional UNDG teams on issues of supranational nature that demand 'neighbourhood' and regional solutions.
19. Progress on operational issues will be equally important. Building on progress with standard operating procedures and business operations, UNDP will move towards full mutual recognition of good practices, expansion of shared services and further utilization of shared back-office operations.
Integration across the three pillars

20. UNDP is already a strong actor on prevention and response to crises. As a development agency, it is ready to contribute to the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda. As custodian of the resident coordinator system, and given the concurrent responsibilities of resident coordinator and humanitarian coordinator in many countries, UNDP will continue to support humanitarian coordinators and fully participate in humanitarian country teams (HCTs) in the same way that it supports resident coordinators and UNCTs, in the former case under the leadership of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

21. As the development agency of the United Nations with both cross-sectoral and coordination mandates, UNDP accepts its responsibility to address the humanitarian-development nexus as part of a broader partnership within and outside the UNDS. It is already collaborating to flesh out the New Way of Working, addressing prevention and a more sustainable response to crisis and displacement that takes its starting point in the short- and long-term needs of those displaced and the communities that host them. UNDP will work to ensure that the New Way of Working is implemented in the field, focused on collective outcomes, multi-year timeframes, defining agency contributions based on comparative advantage and working together on the programme cycle.

Linked capacities for strategic planning

22. There are two aspects in which UNDP proposes to advance collaboratively with United Nations agencies and entities on more forward-thinking and agility. The first is a much better understanding of ‘frontier issues’ in development, human rights, peace and security, those that are currently beyond the horizon, with possible large-scale effects within a generation such as the impact of technology, the future of work and the effects of a predominantly urbanized world.

23. A second aspect is application of ‘strategic foresight’, so that the UNDS can think ahead of the curve and be proactive. Scenarios and strategy simulations at country level will need to be linked to collaboration on strategic planning such as the work done by UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to link up their strategic plans for 2018-2021, which is an initial step in this direction.

Stronger partnerships based on country programmes

24. UNDP will leverage its country programmes to build partnerships within the UNDS on the 2030 Agenda while substantially improving coherence and integration. Expanded or new programmatic partnerships can bring together the specialized skills of agencies, in particular non-resident agencies, with the UNDP presence, relationships and country and regional programmes. As part of this effort, UNDP is ready to host joint programmes and agency staff outposted to its country offices.

25. As a contribution to this effort, UNDP will commit to substantially increasing its share of programme resources dedicated to collaboration with sister United Nations agencies and entities. Initiatives are also being tested with UNDP providing seed resources for programming with other agencies to attract matching funds. Scaled-up approaches based on this experience could be the next step in collaboration.

Nurturing people and culture for ‘One United Nations’

26. UNDP will continue to support the Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO) and the One United Nations toolbox through new ideas for better coordination, system-wide coherence, policy convergence and joint operational effectiveness. UNDP will encourage temporary staff movement among agencies that would allow its staff to gain experience in other United Nations agencies and bring staff from those agencies into UNDP on the same basis.
B. Common approach with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women

*Shared responsibility for a better future*

27. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the QCPR present a unique opportunity to align the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, to improve the delivery of results at country level towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. The response reflects the principles of the 2030 Agenda, including the pledge to leave no one behind and to reach the farthest behind first. The four entities will also be guided by the common principles developed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the UNDG. They will retain the flexibility necessary to address decisions arising from follow-up to QCPR-mandated processes.

29. Alignment can be best accomplished through a two-pronged approach. First, ‘collaborative advantage’ to reduce overlap and duplication, pool expertise, build stronger partnerships and achieve greater harmonization, innovation and programme and operational efficiencies. Second, clarification of comparative advantage, using the strengths of each entity to provide flexible, context-specific support.

*Areas of collaborative advantage*

30. The entities will seek collaborative advantage acknowledging that poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is one of the greatest global challenges (QCPR, para. 8). Complementing work that directly addresses poverty and inequality, the entities will also contribute to prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in accordance with national plans, needs and priorities, and respecting national ownership (QCPR, para. 24 (b)); address climate change; advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and strengthen data for sustainable development. These areas have been selected based on their relevance to a changing environment, positive multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals, early experience with implementation of the 2030 Agenda and shared prioritization across the entities. Collaboration will be open to other issues and broader partnerships as well, in response to country context and priorities.

*Commitment to action*

31. The respective strategic plans will include common outcome indicators, drawing upon indicators for the Sustainable Development Goal targets, to track coordinated action while maintaining individual accountabilities through agency-specific outputs and output indicators. The four entities are committed to stronger linkages between results and resources in integrated results and resources frameworks and strengthened and further harmonized result-based management, including reporting. They will also work to achieve more effective collaboration with other entities in the United Nations system; stronger partnerships with Governments, the private sector and civil society; and greater coordination, accountability and transparency in business operations.

32. At the field level, shared results will also be pursued through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) or related instruments. The new generation of UNDAFs not only aligns United Nations country programming to the 2030 Agenda, but also provides a catalyst for collaboration through several common elements: core programming principles; country assessment across the humanitarian-development nexus; theory of change with a corresponding results matrix; outcomes that are captured in country programme documents and workplans; resource mobilization strategies for joint initiatives; monitoring and evaluation frameworks; and standard operating procedures. The entities will also employ financing arrangements, including pooled funding where efficient and effective, that can advance collaboration in the field and increase country-level access to resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
III. The UNDP approach to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

33. The principal frame of reference for UNDP as it implements this strategic plan is the 2030 Agenda. UNDP is committed to all key aspects of the 2030 Agenda: the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; universality; the integrated and indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals; and meeting the pledge of leaving no one behind, reaching the furthest behind first. UNDP also recognizes, as set out in the 2030 Agenda, that there ‘…can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development,’ (Preamble). As emphasized by the Secretary-General, this calls for a renewed focus on prevention of conflict and other shocks to reduce humanitarian need over the long-term by addressing root causes of fragility and vulnerability.

34. The integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda is particularly important from a development perspective because:

(a) there are very strong and specific interdependencies between the Sustainable Development Goals in each country, making it unlikely that significant progress can be made on any individual Goals if others are falling behind;
(b) the Secretary-General’s prevention agenda requires looking at the root causes of poverty, fragility and vulnerability embedded in common structural factors and their interactions;
(c) development progress, crisis and conflict do not follow a linear, sequential trajectory – and can coexist at the same time in the same country – demanding a joined-up response that can cope with diverse needs;
(d) those who are being left behind and are furthest behind do not experience their exclusion in a single dimension but in multiple ways,\(^1\) implying that policy solutions to their problems need to cut across sectors.

35. The proposed UNDP approach to the 2030 Agenda, therefore, rests on its integrated nature which calls for inter-agency coordination both in process and substance. UNDP sees its role and responsibility to promote integration, collaboration and coordination in the overall support of UNDS to the 2030 Agenda. By tackling some of the fundamentals of sustainable development – the transition of society and the economy towards inclusiveness and sustainability of development pathways and better governance – it aims to strengthen the foundations for implementing the entire 2030 Agenda. With a design that takes inclusive and sustainable development pathways, effective governance, crisis and conflict prevention and recovery out of their silos and integrates them across the portfolio, it reinforces the ability of UNDP to support collaboration across the three pillars of the United Nations.

36. The UNDP approach consists of two main thematic areas of work with two cross-cutting issues deeply embedded in each (the ‘2+2’). The thematic areas – or the ‘what’ of UNDP work – build on the strongest parts of its portfolio: inclusive and sustainable development pathways to improve the condition of the current generation without comprising that of future generations, disproportionately benefitting the poor and excluded; and effective governance for prevention and participation so that resources can be used accountably and effectively for development, give voice to the poor and excluded, maintain social cohesion, prevent crisis and conflict and sustain peace.

37. Two cross-cutting issues address ‘the how’ – the deeply embedded ways in which UNDP will work on both development pathways and governance and prevention. One of these issues

is systematically addressing a broad range of risks to development, to build in crisis and conflict prevention (and where necessary recovery) in a way that is context-sensitive and guided by national priorities. This approach will make it possible to monitor and respond to fragility and vulnerability, supporting Member States to deal with risk factors, particularly but not only in societies already affected by conflict, in danger of entering or relapsing into conflict and facing situations of protracted crisis.

38. UNDP will advocate for active risk management across government and society, to bring this issue from the periphery into the centre of development policy. To do this effectively will require building the evidence base and using a growing body of tools and practices to detect, analyse, understand, forecast and address a wide range of risks or vulnerabilities that are precursors to crisis or their direct consequence. Risk-informed and precautionary lenses are being mainstreamed already across UNDP work. The context will determine if the emphasis is to be placed on prevention, emergency development, reconstruction, recovery coordination, or getting core functions back on track after the shock. UNDP work on governance and development pathways, therefore, contributes to resilience and diminishes fragility.

39. UNDP will support integration of risk analysis, mitigation and prevention in development planning, setting of investment priorities, coordination mechanisms and capacity development of key risk-reduction institutions. UNDP will be ready as well to facilitate cooperation across borders and the application of new technologies and innovative partnerships, including with the private sector. A final building block will be contingency planning across government and with a wide range of social partners through the development of local and national plans.

40. The other cross-cutting issue is advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment through everything UNDP does on sustainable development. This will mean unlocking opportunities for women and girls in the development of their capacities, social relations, the economy, interaction with the environment, political participation and leadership, crisis and conflict management and equal protection of rights under the law, including freedom from violence and discrimination.

41. One aspect will be transformative economic policies that address the role of women in unpaid care work and domestic work. Another will be enabling governance institutions to ensure the inclusion of those left behind, especially women, by addressing embedded gender bias and exclusionary/discriminatory norms as well as supporting women’s participation and leadership not only in political parties, parliaments and government but also the private sector and civil society. Both aspects will be complemented by a gender-transformative view of prevention and crisis response. UNDP will implement locally-led initiatives to ensure that women play an essential role in peace processes and rebuilding efforts and that policies give them equal opportunities to livelihoods and access to essential services and resources. A final aspect will be eliminating gender-based violence. In all gender-equality work, UNDP will include men and boys and pursue more transformative actions.

IV. Vision and thematic areas of work

42. Guided by its approach to the 2030 Agenda, the proposed vision of UNDP is:

To help countries achieve sustainable development in peace, with poverty eradicated and inequalities and exclusion reduced significantly.

43. UNDP will be inspired in its work by the United Nations Charter and abide by its own longstanding institutional commitments. This means being guided by national ownership, use of national systems and strengthening of country capacities. It also means ensuring the well-being, voice and participation of those left behind as well as protecting and promoting universal economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights. UNDP is ultimately a resource for sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Commission: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
A. Inclusive and sustainable development pathways

Integration and mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda

44. UNDP will improve the reach and quality of its development research and analysis to deepen understanding and application of concepts that are central to sustainable development as well as adoption of Sustainable Development Goal indicators for which it is a lead or co-lead internationally. An important aspect will be to assess the poverty and sustainability impacts of growth strategies, addressing the role of the private sector as the main engine of increased output and employment. UNDP will strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems to monitor progress towards the Goals both for national reporting and voluntary country reporting to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. UNDP aims for full inter-agency implementation of MAPS by the UNDS, targeting bottlenecks to progress towards the Goals, working closely with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, agencies, funds and programmes and IFIs.

45. While continuing to advocate for meeting official development assistance (ODA) targets, UNDP proposes to improve access to financing, both domestic and external. Issues of interest would be domestic fiscal space; increasing the volume, efficiency and effectiveness of investment in basic services; combating tax evasion and tax avoidance; and expanding access to sources and instruments such as vertical funds, green bonds, impact investing, blended finance and diaspora bonds. This will include facilitating access to funding, such as through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, for service delivery in situations where local capacities do not meet threshold requirements, and strengthening existing partnerships such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity

46. Environmental sustainability is a principle observed and pursued in all UNDP work. Conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity will be important not just for environmental sustainability but also because they represent sources of employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded, who are often located in areas that are already environmentally degraded.

47. The plan proposes work on management and rehabilitation of ecosystem services, including protected, indigenous and community conserved areas. Other related elements will include integrated water resources management and efficient use of water, protection and restoration of the health, productivity and resilience of oceans and marine ecosystems, sustainable land management and restoration of degraded land, and management of chemicals and waste. This work will deepen and build on existing partnerships with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and United Nations Environment Programme.

Sustainable access to energy and energy efficiency

48. UNDP efforts will address energy poverty, looking at options that can improve access for populations that are off-grid, deprived of clean and reliable energy sources, using biofuels that are environmental and health hazards, and who are impoverished by the cost of energy. UNDP will help to lower investment risks, broaden and deepen markets and strengthen private and public sector capacities to expand investment, with the aim of achieving universal, affordable and clean energy access, especially to off-grid sources of renewable energy, prioritizing the energy-poor. Action on energy efficiency will be a vital complement.
Employment and sustainable livelihoods

49. The work of UNDP supports bringing everyone above a minimum threshold of well-being, recognizing that the human development approach includes non-income dimensions of well-being such as education, health and voice, in addition to decent employment and livelihoods as main sources of income. The proposed approach leverages the employment and livelihoods potential of sustainable growth, working with the International Labour Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, IFIs and the private sector. Acknowledging the decent work agenda, UNDP will focus on structural impediments to the economic participation of women and youth accompanied by a reduction of informality through better access to skills and assets as well as integration in formal markets. Integration and access will be a specific line of work for and with people living with disabilities. Direct employment and livelihoods creation at scale through work on sustainability will be targeted to make the shift towards a ‘green economy’ a win-win for growth and poverty reduction. UNDP will also develop its ongoing work with the International Organization for Migration, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian actors on employment and livelihoods creation under situations of long-term displacement within and across borders, focused on investment in refugees, migrants and the displaced in a manner that substantially improves their self-reliance, while integrating them within and benefiting host economies. Looking to the future, this plan proposes addressing the impact of digital technologies through policy pilots, especially targeting unemployed and underemployed youth.

Addressing risks

50. UNDP will actively pursue climate action focused on integrating low-emission, climate-resilient objectives into development plans and identifying priority mitigation and/or adaptation measures. Reforms will be supported to reduce financial risk and improve incentives for adaptation and mitigation responses that are gender-responsive and can work over the medium- to long-term. These will be complemented by concrete measures to reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity in affected sectors. Development of country capacities to access, utilize, report on and verify the use of climate finance will round out this portfolio.

51. Taking into consideration work with the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, disaster risk reduction and response will target minimization of adverse development impacts, especially on the poorest groups, and accelerated rebuilding. Preparedness will address disaster risk assessment through looking at differentiated vulnerabilities by gender, income and location; development of policies and long-term planning and investment frameworks that are disaster risk-sensitive, integrating disaster risk reduction with adaptation to climate change and addressing differentiated impacts; and disaster management and recovery, including innovation to manage risks through insurance and resilient infrastructure.

52. Given the scale of risks and their likely impacts, and ageing populations, UNDP will expand its work on social protection in response to growing demand. This will be based on the nature and sources of vulnerability, differentiated by groups specific to each context; support for formulation of national strategies, policies and laws for phased progress towards universal access; and implementation support through institutions and systems that are more transparent, prevent benefits ‘leakage’, lower costs and engage users, especially those most at risk.

Innovation for inclusive development pathways

53. UNDP will make use of innovation to speed up the identification, adoption and scaling-up of solutions for inclusive growth, whether this arises from new financing or technological, organizational, collaborative or information-based options. This could range, for example, from application of new techniques for sustainable management of natural resources to
introduction of technologies to maximize employment and business models to grow markets for clean energy, especially renewables.
B. Effective governance for prevention and participation

Accountability and integrity

54. UNDP will continue providing support to electoral processes, working with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) as the United Nations focal point for electoral assistance, on issues such as voter awareness, civic education and voter registration, targeting women and other groups that may have less access to and voice in the electoral process; dialogue processes; women’s representation; development of electoral management bodies; support to domestic election observation and monitoring; and, where requested, operational support services to elections, especially after conflicts and when country capacities may be limited.

55. UNDP will help to strengthen capacities for parliamentary oversight of committees overseeing development plans and budgets; greater transparency in proceedings; and consultative processes that give voice to those left behind and furthest behind.

56. Anti-corruption will remain a top priority. UNDP will help to integrate the United Nations Convention against Corruption into national policies and strategies, working with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Capacity development of anti-corruption agencies will improve their legal frameworks, operations and ability to formulate national anti-corruption strategies and carry out integrity assessments in sectors such as basic services, and in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Strengthened social cohesion and conflict prevention

57. The largest area of UNDP work involves strengthening institutions to deliver services for effective poverty reduction and greater social cohesion. UNDP will also address human rights, non-discrimination, justice, the rule of law and citizen security, whether in peaceful and stable conditions or in situations of conflict, recovery and State- and peacebuilding. UNDP will focus on the status of women and girls as well as the condition of those more at risk, as relevant in each country context. Vital partnerships in this regard, among others, will be with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNHCR, UN-Women and UNODC through the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections.

58. On human rights, working with OHCHR, UNDP will emphasize capacity development of national human rights institutions to monitor, report and act; engage with the international human rights machinery, i.e., universal periodic reporting; and ensure respect for human rights during recovery from crisis and in situations of protracted crisis, not least the treatment of women and girls under conditions of displacement.

59. UNDP will strengthen justice systems, whether traditional or formal, where they have the greatest impact on the most disadvantaged in society. This will embrace women’s rights to legal identity, ownership of property, inheritance and equal pay for equal effort; the status of persons living with HIV and AIDS; access of the poor, indigenous populations and local communities to natural resources and to benefits arising from the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services; and electoral justice. The plan also proposes improving service delivery and expanding access to justice.

60. A stronger system of justice depends on improved security sector institutions. UNDP will support security sector reform, especially those reform efforts aimed at citizen security; improve police oversight mechanisms; expand community-oriented and gender-sensitive policing; develop the knowledge and skills needed for the police to uphold human rights laws and standards; and target armed violence through community driven solutions to address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

61. Both the justice and security sectors will remain cornerstones of UNDP assistance in post-crisis and post-conflict situations. A specific aspect will be transitional justice with emphasis on nationally owned mechanisms and strengthening of country capacities.
62. As an essential part of preventive action, UNDP will work on infrastructures for peace in volatile environments and in post-conflict situations. This will include improved skills for local actors to detect growing risk of violence; and development of ‘insider mediation’ capacities to advance non-violent means of conflict resolution. As part of this effort, UNDP will continue to implement with DPA a joint programme on building national capacities for conflict prevention that deploys in-country peace and development advisers.

63. A final element cuts across the UNDP portfolio: combating sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Within the framework of system-wide legislation and partnerships, including with UN-Women, efforts will tackle impunity for sexual and gender-based violent crimes; improve access to justice, legal aid, and service delivery for women and girls; and community-level prevention to raise awareness and mobilize men and boys as advocates for change.

**Innovation for effective governance**

64. UNDP will look at how innovation can become an accelerator of better governance. The focus will be on finding practical solutions to governance challenges by combining several elements: new or updated technologies or techniques such as artificial intelligence, modelling and simulation; quick and low-cost access to mobile networks and ‘big data’; and open methods of collaboration bringing together government, tech companies, individual developers, development partners, civil society, students and academic experts. The most ambitious expression of this work will be a network of publicly and privately funded, open access ‘governance for sustainable development labs’ that will test integrated governance solutions for sustainable development at scale in secondary and tertiary cities. UNDP will also innovate on ways to increase the participation of people living with disabilities, mirroring the work to enhance their economic opportunity.

**V. Building back better after crisis**

65. UNDP will integrate prevention into everything it does. UNDP interprets development in a way that builds resilience, which is essentially preventive. When crisis hits, however, a rapid reaction is needed: expertise and programmatic capacity are necessary to help countries reduce adverse impacts and get back on a sustainable development pathway, with effective governance, as soon as possible. The strategic plan allows UNDP to respond better and faster before, during and after a crisis. This section describes the specific ways in which UNDP works in the post-crisis context.

66. Recovery planning will be the starting point. UNDP will assist by encouraging community participation in all assessments, planning and implementation; and by placing at-risk and/or affected communities at the centre of recovery efforts. Assessments conducted immediately after the crisis, through partnership instruments with regional organizations and IFIs, will lead to recovery design and delivery, focused on four key elements: setting a recovery vision; determining recovery priorities; designing a programme framework; and agreeing on an implementation, monitoring and accountability plan. A targeted aspect of this approach will be recovery of state capacities, working closely with national and subnational authorities to enable the return of displaced populations, restoration of governance functions and public services, recovery of the local economy and improvements in public safety.

67. An important concern throughout will be monitoring and accounting for recovery. This will focus on tracking financial flows and impacts on community recovery and development; improving access to resources and capacities necessary to track recovery support; and enabling oversight of recovery efforts.

68. An equally important consideration across all phases of recovery will be stronger recovery coordination. UNDP will contribute to country-level coordination through the UNCT and HCT to achieve humanitarian and development results and strengthen the
humanitarian-development nexus at the time of response; and with the United Nations system through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and inter-agency task forces.

69. Recovery efforts will build in risk and gender issues. The first cross-cutting element is represented by the principle of ‘building back better’, to learn lessons from the root causes of the crisis, avoiding reoccurrence and relapses. The second element includes gender analysis as a precursor to the development of sex-disaggregated data systems and determination of gender-specific recovery outcomes with associated budgets; and programmatic work to strengthen women’s participation in their achievement.

VI. Development outcomes and targeting

70. The UNDP vision and thematic areas of work translate into four proposed outcomes:

(a) Outcome 1. Development plans, policies, partnerships and investments integrate the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Outcome 2. An economy- and society-wide transition to inclusive and sustainable development is accelerated to end poverty in all its dimensions and reduce inequalities;

(c) Outcome 3. Effective and inclusive governance promotes democratic participation, prevents conflict and builds peaceful societies;

(d) Outcome 4. Response to crisis is timely and effective, integrating pathways towards recovery and sustainable development.

71. Each of these outcomes will be integrated and monitored through gender-responsive indicators that track gender-differentiated effects through evidence and data, which will allow aggregated gender reporting. In addition, UNDP will develop a mix of outputs and associated indicators under each outcome that are either gender-focused or gender-responsive.

72. More broadly, the proposed outcomes will focus on those population segments that are currently being left behind, aiming at universal access to basic services and targeting of underserved groups; these groups overlap in many instances and will be prioritized depending on context. They are:

(a) those living in conditions of poverty – both relative and absolute, unemployed, underemployed or working poor – as defined by national poverty lines and the international line of $1.25 purchasing power parity/day as well as multidimensional poverty measurements;

(b) women and girls, especially the poor, and those who are subjected to any forms of violation of their rights;

(c) youth aged 15–24 years, especially those at highest risk of exclusion, abuse or exploitation;

(d) populations that are particularly vulnerable such as those forcibly displaced, the elderly, indigenous peoples, minorities, persons living with HIV and AIDS and persons with disabilities.

73. In terms of geographic targeting within countries, UNDP will address poverty, territorial imbalances, exclusion and vulnerability where they occur. Based on its analysis, however, UNDP intends to systematically address the needs of poor and disadvantaged groups living in underserved urban and hard-to-reach rural areas.

74. No country should fall behind for prolonged periods of time in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, UNDP will pay close attention to fragility, especially in States affected by conflict, at risk of entering or relapsing into a conflict, and those suffering from significant vulnerability that could trigger major development reversals. UNDP will tailor office leadership and configuration to the specific needs of the context and monitor
effective performance, in particular of its coordination functions. All capacities will be adapted to service the type of programme agreed with programme and partner Member States, based on needs and priorities, especially when critical needs are defined by fragility.

VII. Partnerships

75. To be a partner to programme countries that adds value alongside and jointly with the private sector, foundations, development banks, civil society, academia and other players, will require from UNDP a much higher level of agility, openness, innovation, flexibility in procedures, willingness to take risks and ability to manage with confidence in a dynamic context. UNDP will focus on partnerships that have the greatest potential to deliver transformational results.

76. The first relates to the partnership modality of South-South and triangular cooperation, aiming for implementation of the corporate strategy finalized in 2016, working closely with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Building on work already underway, UNDP will launch a global development solutions exchange to accelerate and scale up the exchange of knowledge, expertise, experience and technology within the global South. A complementary step will be to support global dialogue and system-wide coordination and partnership, in collaboration with UNOSSC. This will benefit from strengthening of country-level policies, legal frameworks and regulations to make them more conducive for South-South and triangular cooperation; and expansion of sustainable capacities of Governments, intergovernmental bodies, civil society, think tanks and the private sector to participate in such cooperation.

77. The second major focus will be a significant increase in partnerships with the private sector. UNDP proposes to encourage the private sector to engage in context-specific responses to the Sustainable Development Goals; improve policy coherence and partnership with government on the 2030 Agenda; carry out monitoring, reporting and accountability; co-create solutions; accelerate adoption of responsible and inclusive business practices; and de-risk investments in priority areas. Mobilization of private capital for the Goals will complement this work through services that expand private sector access to socially and environmentally impactful investment proposals; match demand for capital with the available offer; help to align, manage and insure against risks; and offer on-granting, including design of blended financial vehicles.

78. The third major focus will be partnerships with civil society. These will focus on two aspects: (a) integrating the role of civil society in shared areas of work on sustainable development pathways and effective governance, across all contexts; and (b) development of capacities within civil society. The latter will focus on appropriate policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; improving internal governance; formation and/or strengthening of networks and coalitions; and constructive dialogue and partnering with government and other social partners to increase civic space.

79. Fourth, UNDP work with IFIs, including multilateral development banks and select bilateral banks, is showing promise and could be a key lever of greater effectiveness in support of the 2030 Agenda. There is already close collaboration with the World Bank on MAPS; targeting development bottlenecks on the Sustainable Development Goals; and funding for interventions in situations of conflict, assessment of damage, planning for recovery, delivery of relief and solutions to protracted crises. The potential for deeper collaboration on growth and risk management is also considerable. More broadly, there has been substantial work with IFIs on post-conflict recovery and employment creation in post-conflict settings that can advance the New Way of Working.

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2 ‘Accelerating Sustainable Development: South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve the SDGs, A UNDP Strategy’, 20 July 2016.
VIII. Institutional transformation

80. Sustained focus and attention on improving institutional effectiveness is an essential element of the strategic plan. UNDP delivers $4.5 billion–$5 billion annually in development and crisis response programmes. It has the most extensive network of country offices and sub-offices of any development organization, and has invested in a platform of regional hubs to provide strong, integrated support for country office programme and operations. UNDP draws on a workforce of about 7,000 staff, along with 10,000 service contractors and United Nations Volunteers with a broad range of experience and expertise.

81. New areas of focus in the agenda for organizational transformation have been guided by QCPR recommendations. UNDP has well-established, strong annual review, planning and resource allocation processes that will facilitate the operationalization of the strategic plan and ensure adjustment on a rolling basis. The midterm review of the strategic plan will also be an essential opportunity to assess and adjust its focus and implementation strategies.

82. Three interrelated areas of work have been identified to support the vision and outcomes in the strategic plan:

   (a) higher-quality programmes and managing for results;
   (b) making UNDP a more efficient and adaptable organization;
   (c) improving sustainability and enhancing financing capacities.

A. Higher-quality programmes and managing for results

83. UNDP will boost investment in all aspects of results management and learning for strategic, data-driven and timely programme decision-making and improved performance.

84. UNDP will work with the rest of the UNDS to implement the UNDAF guidelines to better support programme countries implement the 2030 Agenda and address country challenges. UNDP will support better planning and analysis to ensure that UNDAFs reflect the multidimensional nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. More explicit theories of change will allow the comparative advantages of UNDS members to be identified and will highlight areas where agencies should work jointly to develop and implement assistance.

85. New UNDP country programme documents (CPDs) will flow more directly from the UNDAF. They will reflect country priorities oriented towards supporting the 2030 Agenda and will be aligned with the strategic plan outcomes. More rigorous quality assurance processes will require that CPDs be underpinned by stronger theories of change. To better operationalize new CPDs, explicit partnership and resource mobilization strategies will be required to be submitted along with the CPD. Pipeline development will be expected to be an integral part of country programme management.

86. To drive stronger outcome-level results and encourage more innovative programming, UNDP will implement a deliberate shift from design at the project level to design at the portfolio level, shaped at the country programme outcome level, or at complex or cross-thematic result areas. This will enable a stronger multidimensional approach to results management and partnership management. More streamlined delivery instruments will also reduce the project administration burden for both UNDP and partner Governments. A minimum project size will be piloted to ensure that all projects appropriately cover their costs of implementation.

87. Existing programme quality assurance standards (including social and environmental standards) will be enhanced through a suite of measures that build a stronger ‘managing for results’ culture. These will include updated monitoring standards, organization-wide programme and project management and results-based management training, higher-quality
decentralized evaluations and organizational investments that facilitate learning and knowledge management.

88. The UNDP in-house policy and programme advisory capacity will be focused on key strategic plan areas. Building on the established ‘development solutions approach’, programming support will continue to strengthen the focus on integrated support to countries that connect the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and the humanitarian-development nexus. UNDP will maintain capacity for thought leadership and policy and programme development across its focus areas. In-house expertise will increasingly partner with quality-assured external expertise, drawing on readily available and highly-skilled country and regional capacities to provide cost-effective, integrated support for programme design and implementation.

89. The integrated results and resources framework linked to the strategic plan will be simplified and strengthened and more directly linked to country-level results contributions.

B. Making UNDP a more efficient and adaptable organization

90. UNDP strives to be an adaptive organization, identifying continuous business change requirements, informed by cost and performance data, ensuring it delivers value for money for its partners.

91. Country offices need appropriate capacity for the development settings in which they operate and the programmes they deliver. Individual country office capacities need to change over time, in line with the scale and nature of demand for UNDP programmes and partnerships. As part of each country programme development process, UNDP will assess country office capacities so that each country office has access to the skills and resources it needs to deliver on the agreed country programme. UNDP will differentiate requirements for smaller country offices to reduce the administrative burden, while globally, efficiencies will continue to be driven through the clustering of finance, human resource and procurement functions in service hubs.

92. Country offices will be supported to deliver agile and speedy programming in crisis situations through signature crisis packages adapted for individual country contexts. The development of the next iteration of ‘fast-track’ administrative reforms will support more rapid mobilization of emergency development programming, and better integration of risk and prevention practices into all programming will ensure that offices are better prepared for crisis.

93. UNDP staff are the organization’s most valuable resource, and surveys show there is a high level of staff engagement. UNDP will continue to manage its human resources to secure the necessary skills in high-priority areas, attract and retain talent to meet gender parity goals, particularly at senior levels, and take steps to make UNDP a more disability-inclusive workplace. UNDP will develop more flexible staffing modalities that will allow for improvement in the responsiveness, cost-effectiveness and scalability of its operations, and will contract external expertise as required in response to demand for services outside core focus areas.

94. Management services will continue to become more client-focused, providing efficient, timely and quality business partnering support in key areas of procurement, legal, finance and human resources. Efficiencies and cost reductions will be achieved through ongoing measures to reduce regulatory and compliance requirements and leveraging economies of scale in operations. A clear articulation of value for money will be developed, and indicators developed around which UNDP can demonstrate improving value to its partners over time.

95. UNDP will strengthen risk management, taking deliberate steps to expand its risk appetite through piloting innovative approaches in business practices as well as programming, and applying lessons learned. UNDP remains committed to transparency in its operations and will deepen organizational transparency standards in accordance with best practice.
C. Improving sustainability and enhancing financing capacities

96. The composition of UNDP funding has evolved over the years, and the current balance of funding, with other (non-core) resources (85 per cent of total funding) mobilized from a smaller regular resource base (15 per cent), is expected to continue. A continuous focus on organizational sustainability is therefore critical, as is adapting to new development financing opportunities for country development.

97. UNDP will ensure the most effective use of the variety of funding sources by more clearly differentiating its business model with four distinct, although interdependent, service lines, implemented flexibly at global and country levels, depending on client needs and priorities. UNDP provides:

(a) **Coordination services for the UNDS.** These include coordination support at country, regional and global levels for the resident coordinator function, the effective functioning of the UNDG and hosting of multiple system-wide assets on behalf of the United Nations system such as DOCO and UNOSSC. This service line is funded from regular resources;

(b) **Programme implementation support and technical advisory services for partner Governments.** This includes technical advisory services, capacity development and programme implementation support for agreed development programmes. Programmes are financed from a combination of regular resources, funding from donor Governments, programme countries’ own resources and European Union funding. A general management services fee is levied to contribute to UNDP institutional costs;

(c) **Support for country access to development financing from non-government providers.** This includes technical, advisory and brokering services for partner country access to development financing from non-government providers including vertical funds, the IFIs and the private sector. UNDP also provides implementation and capacity development support for resulting programme implementation. Partner-specific implementation agreements provide for UNDP overhead costs;

(d) **Operational support services.** This includes operational support services in areas such as procurement, finance and human resources as requested by partner Governments, UNCTs, United Nations agencies and other partners such as the IFIs. UNDP services are provided on a fee-for-service basis.

98. Each of these services lines are likely to grow or contract at different speeds. The importance of coordination of the UNDS going forward suggest the need for increased investment in this area in the coming years. The importance of increasing the range and partners with which UNDP works and the need to move towards greater focus on private and non-State funding to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals means this service line is increasingly the area where UNDP sees the potential for most growth. UNDP has already developed capacity to become one of the largest global implementing partners for the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, combining policy and operational expertise to deliver results and manage high levels of risk in the most difficult environments.

99. Steady improvement in its own operational efficiency will allow UNDP to offer other agencies operational support, either in implementing programmes in countries where funders are not present, or to reduce the need for other agencies to have operational capacities on the ground.

100. To support this differentiated service offering, UNDP will be more explicit about the use of regular resources for institutional costs and ensure there is no cross-subsidization between regular and other resources. Implementation of strengthened internal institutional planning and budgeting processes will more transparently track costs and better link institutional resources to delivery and results, whether programmatic delivery or corporate enabling services, and with an equal emphasis on both current delivery and pipeline for
future years. This will help UNDP to develop a more coordinated and future-focused resource mobilization strategy.

101. To implement the strategic plan, 2018-2021, UNDP will need to rely on a sound regular resources base to leverage other resources for sustainable development, support coordination and management of the resident coordinator system, and support its infrastructure, which enables UNDP to perform to the high standards of the United Nations and deliver on each of its service lines. UNDP will continue to promote the effective use of ODA and expects to maintain a strong funding portfolio from bilateral funding, European Union funding, pooled funds and funds from United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations, while capitalizing on areas of growth for 2018-2021, which include funding from vertical funds, IFIs, government-cost sharing and the private sector.

102. UNDP will help countries to access, manage and leverage additional resources for sustainable development, based on country demand, ownership and the strategic plan's offer. In particular, UNDP will continue to shift from being a direct funding partner towards an organization that leverages development financing through catalysing a better enabling environment for private sector funding and providing services to help mobilize private capital and other investments for country development. To do so, UNDP will update its offering on new financial instruments to respond to emerging interest from partner countries for support in designing, combining and sequencing new forms of finance to achieve development objectives.