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## Introduction

1. The formulation of the 2007 – 2011 Country Programme Document (CPD) is guided by the Government of Eritrea (GOE)'s priority needs and challenges as identified in the 2005 Common Country Assessment (CCA), the 2007-2011 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as well as the 2005 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report and other prior policy frameworks. The CPD is therefore derived from documents and processes entailing extensive consultations and meetings between senior government officials, representatives of civil society and United Nations agencies.

### I. Situation analysis

2. The Government's long term goal remains that of poverty reduction through rapid economic growth and accelerated human development. Embarking steadfastly on the path to economic growth and development is therefore the key challenge ahead for Eritrea. Without the resumption of rapid economic growth, the gains made so far to achieve the MDGs are at risk.

3. According to the first MDG report,<sup>i</sup> Eritrea is on track to achieve the MDGs dealing with gender equality at the primary school level, child health, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, and access to safe water. However, it remains off-track with respect to the eradication of extreme poverty and achievement of universal primary education, two critical goals towards human and economic development. Lack of adequate data on environmental sustainability did not permit a clear assessment of progress in this area.

4. Immediately after independence in 1993 and up to 1997, Eritrea formulated and implemented socio-economic policies and strategies, attaining an average annual growth in GDP of 7% and other marked improvements throughout key sectors. However, the border war (1998-2000) and the ongoing border stalemate, compounded by recurring droughts, have reversed positive post-independence gains. Since the end of the war, annual growth in GDP, a key factor of poverty reduction, has been low, averaging 1% (1998 – 2004),<sup>ii</sup> thereby intensifying the vulnerability of Eritrea's 3.66 million population.<sup>iii</sup> Internally displaced persons (IDPs), expellees and returnees from

Ethiopia, the urban poor, the disabled, pastoralists, female-headed households, orphans and high-risk HIV/AIDS groups have been particularly hard hit. In 2003, Eritrea was designated one of the four countries to be supported in the implementation of a joint UN transitional recovery response effort; the 4Rs (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction). 19,000 of the 60,000 IDPs left in camps were recently resettled.

5. The environment in Eritrea is naturally fragile. The climate is semi-arid and water is very scarce. Moreover, poverty has driven people to extract environmental resources in unsustainable ways leading to the vicious cycle of environmental degradation, food insecurity and increased poverty.

6. Food security is a key national priority. However, Eritrea remains in the grip of an emergency that has been prolonged and deepened by frequent droughts and the stalemate over the demarcation of the border with Ethiopia

7. National and human security issues have in turn affected the processes of institution building so critical to a newly independent state. Notwithstanding the fact that Eritrea has made much headway since independence in establishing national institutions, there is need to deepen the gains especially in ensuring that law enforcement mechanisms (e.g. judicial systems) and other public service institutions at national, regional and local levels function efficiently. Capacity building programmes and activities will hence be of critical importance, both to the national development agenda and to the achievement of the MDGs.

8. To address the development challenges it faces, the GOE has in the past 5 years taken important measures towards policy reform. These include the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), the Food Security Strategy (FSS), and the 2003-2008 National Gender Action Plan (NGAP). Delays and difficulties with their implementation have however highlighted significant human and institutional capacity gaps at all levels.

9. Eritrea's Human Development Index (HDI), having improved from 0.416 to 0.446 between 1999 and 2001, fell back to 0.439 in 2002. In 2005, Eritrea's ranking of 161 on the HDI was 6 points below its 2002 rank.

## **11. Past cooperation and lessons learned**

10. The second country cooperation framework for Eritrea (2002-2006) aimed to contribute to the achievement of a better life for all Eritrean, especially the poor. UNDP support to the national goal of poverty reduction encompassed the following three programme areas: (a) promotion of democratic governance; (b) promotion of sustainable management of natural resources, renewable energy and the environment; and (c) promotion of sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor economic growth.

11. In order to promote democratic governance, UNDP supported Eritrea's emerging civil/public sector, its nascent justice system as well as decentralization of its administrative structures. Results from UNDP's support in this programme area included: (a) establishment of a Civil Service Administration and strengthening of the Ministry of National Development's capacity; (b) review and harmonization of the Civil Code, Civil Procedures, Commercial Code, Penal Code and Procedures; drafting of procedures needed to enforce the implementation of the Constitution; and establishment of 683 Alternative Dispute Resolution-compliant community courts; (c) preparation of guidelines for decentralizing key planning processes in a pilot region (Anseba) and (d) empowerment of women through the design and delivery of gender sensitive training, provision of income-generation, enterprise and leadership skills.

12. Towards the promotion of sustainable management of natural resources, renewable energy and the environment, UNDP supported the promotion and use of renewable and other energy sources; sustainable management of Eritrea's Coastal, Marine and Island Biodiversity (CMIB); and implementation of selected elements of the National Action Programme on Desertification. Amongst others, UNDP's support resulted in: (a) the establishment of a functioning Multi-Sectoral Planning and Coordination process and implementation of an Awareness Action Plan for CMIB; the drafting of a State of the Coast Report; and the planning of an Integrated Approach to Coastal Zone Management (ICZM); and (b) an ongoing programme to build the capacity of relevant public and private institutions to use and promote renewable (wind) energy.

13. With regards to the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and pro-poor economic growth, UNDP supported the formulation of Eritrea's first I-PRSP, the National Food Security Strategy, and the 2005-2009 National Strategic Plan for Mine Action. It also supported low-cost housing delivery as well as the demobilization process targeting the social and economic reintegration of Eritrean soldiers. The return/resettlement of close to 30,000 IDPs and expellees is being supported, including shelter and sustainable livelihood assistance. Furthermore, UNDP support to Eritrea's post-war recovery significantly contributed to the social and economic rehabilitation of infrastructure in war-affected regions through (a) reconstruction of 14700 houses, rehabilitation of 21 health centers and 39 schools; (b) provision of clean water supply to 20 village; (c) income-generating activities benefiting 125,000 people, mainly women, such as backyard poultry farming and beekeeping, cash-for-work projects, and resumption of agricultural activities through land clearing, provision of livestock, seeds and fertilizer, to farmers.

14. The past programme and the results it helped achieve demonstrated the added value of joint programming and collaboration with other UN Agencies. Overall, UNDP supported the implementation of five joint programmes, deepening the process of UN reform at the country level. The keen sense of national ownership demonstrated by the Eritrean Government was a key contributing factor to the results attained. These positive elements will be further encouraged and capitalized on in the present programme.

15. Another lesson is that while much has been accomplished in the past programme towards multi-sectoral capacity building of the nascent national administrative structure, capacity gaps remain at all levels and continue to hinder programme formulation and implementation as well as programme sustainability. Capacity issues and constraints at the national, regional and local levels have emerged as key concerns in the interim PRSP and in the CCA and UNDAF processes. While enhancing capacity at the central government level has been prioritized, capacity constraints remain.

16. Additionally, lack of data stands out as a major impediment to the formulation, monitoring

and evaluation of programmes and activities supporting the national development agenda and the achievement of MDGs. Limited resources have also had a noticeable impact on counterpart contributions to programmes, sometimes leading to delayed implementation.

17. While national execution will remain the favored mode to strengthen national ownership and build national capacity, past experience demonstrated the occasional necessity of resorting to direct execution given country-specific characteristics such as having achieved independence only 13 years ago. The current no-war-no-peace situation and the possible future need to re-orient national priorities will call for UNDP to show flexibility during the 2007-2011 programme cycle.

### **III. Proposed Programme**

18. The new Country Programme (2007-2011) will build on the achievements made during 2002-06. In its areas of intervention, UNDP will contribute to Eritrea's efforts to achieve the MDGs and ensure a better life for its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

19. UNDP interventions will, in most cases, be undertaken as joint programmes with other UN Agencies. Because of the specific development context in Eritrea as it fully undergoes its transition from war to peace and develops relevant institutional capacities; UNDP, based on its comparative advantage, will support key interventions within the underlisted five outcome areas identified under the UNDAF:

#### ***A) Increased equitable access and utilization of quality basic social services***

20. While the UN system will support the provision of basic social services in education, health and nutrition, women/child protection HIV/AIDs, water, sanitation and shelter, UNDP will focus on supporting the provision of shelter and the establishment of sustainable human settlements. This will include the finalization and implementation of the National Housing policy. Within the framework of the Joint UN Implementation Support Plan (UNISP), UNDP will support the development and implementation of an HIV/AIDS workplace programme within key institutions.

#### ***B) Improved planning, monitoring and evaluation capacities addressing shortfalls towards attainment of MDGs/MD.***

21. This component aims to strengthen institutional and human capacities to ensure the effective delivery of services to meet basic needs and sustain progress towards the achievement of MDGs.

22. UNDP will support the establishment of a comprehensive gender responsive national database within the National Statistics Office (NSO), regional and sectoral levels to provide datasets dealing with MDG indicators, humanitarian operations and mapping information.

23. UNDP will also focus on strengthening the planning, budgeting monitoring and evaluation processes at national, regional and local levels in order to provide evidence-based, gender-responsive policy decisions and resource allocation. Support will be given to develop the capacity of selected key public service institutions including the Ministry of National Development. The pilot local development planning process in Anseba region will be consolidated for replication in other regions.

24. National capacity will also be strengthened to improve quality coverage of and access to public services. UNDP will continue its collaboration with Government to deepen access to justice, including training for the judiciary and other law enforcement bodies.

#### ***C) Improved access of food to most vulnerable and contributing towards the achievement of halving extreme poverty, hunger (MDG1) and ensuring environmental sustainability (MDG7) by 2015***

25. Achieving food security is a key objective of Eritrea's national development agenda and UNDP will strengthen capacity at national and local levels for enhanced food security planning and implementation.

26. UNDP's support in strengthening capacity for sustainable natural resources management will also be critical to addressing food insecurity. Conservation of marine resources, sustainable land use and management as well as promotion of diversified, renewable energy sources are some of the areas that UNDP

is and will continue to support in collaboration with GEF. The programme will also aim to strengthen Government's capacity to accede and implement global conventions and international agreements.

***D) IDPs, expellees, returnees and other war/drought affected are reintegrated and have secure livelihoods and access to basic services.***

27. This integrated multi-sector programme is intended to resettle the remaining IDPs, expellees, returnees and host/war-affected communities by 2009. UNDP will focus on the provision of shelter as well as assist the target communities' increase and diversify their livelihood opportunities and economic reintegration, including training.

28. An element of this programme will be the undertaking of humanitarian de-mining activities and clearing of UXO in affected areas.

***E) Gender Equity and the Advancement of Eritrean Women***

29. To address gaps in gender-related information and ensure that development programmes and initiatives are gender responsive, support will be provided to the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), key governmental institutions (including the Gender Research Center) and NGOs to strengthen capacities for gender-sensitive research and analysis, advocacy and communication. This will be linked to the support provided to the NSO and other pertinent national institutions.

**IV. Programme Management, Monitoring and Evaluation**

30. A Country Programme Action Plan: CPAP (2007-2011) and annual work-plans will be prepared, ensuring that UNDP's programme priorities are aligned with national ones. National ownership and the involvement of national institutions in implementing activities will remain a guiding principle for UNDP, and National Execution (NEX) will be the main implementation option. Whenever implementation capacity of national and local authorities prove limited, Direct Execution (DEX) might be chosen. The Ministry of National Development (MND) as coordinating authority and UNDP counterpart in Eritrea will

approve projects; ensure coherence of activities with national policies and objectives through participation in the preparation of national projects and in their appraisal process.

31. Partnership building will be deepened through the implementation of Joint Programmes with other UN Agencies. UNDP core funds will be used as catalytic resources to mobilize additional resources from Donors.

32. UNDP will place greater emphasis on M&E to enhance programme coordination and will work with other agencies and government counterparts to review projects/programmes thus contributing to more effective decision-making. Project steering committees representing relevant stakeholders will continue to be important mechanisms for project monitoring and review, together with annual reviews and outcome evaluations. M&E will be carried out using both internal and external human and financial resources and by involving all stakeholders.

33. In light of the vastly increased requirements for development assistance resulting from the recent war and drought, UNDP will collaborate with the Government in the mobilization of resources for mutually agreed initiatives

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<sup>i</sup> Millennium Development Goals Report, 2005 (unpublished), pg 4.

<sup>ii</sup> Ministry of National Development, refer to Table 2, p. 36.

<sup>iii</sup> National Demographic Health Survey, 2002, p. 10