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Evaluation

**Management response to the evaluation of UNDP support
to the Syria refugee crisis response and promoting an
integrated resilience approach**

I. Introduction

1. The UNDP Independent Evaluation Office carried out an evaluation to assess the UNDP contribution to the Syria crisis regional response, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), at the national and regional levels. While the primary focus of the evaluation was the Syrian regional refugee crisis response, for a broader understanding of UNDP support to refugee responses, the evaluation also assessed the positioning and approaches of UNDP in its response to other refugee crises. The objectives of the evaluation were to: assess the role and contribution of UNDP in countries affected by the Syrian refugee crisis; assess the contribution of the 3RP in enhancing a coordinated response to that crisis in the region; identify the factors that have affected the UNDP contribution; assess the extent to which the UNDP resilience-based development approach contributed to bridging the humanitarian and development divide; and assess the extent to which resilience-based development approaches have underpinned the Syrian refugee crisis response framework. The evaluation was prepared in accordance with the multi-year evaluation plan of the office (DP/2018/4), approved by the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2018. The executive summary of the evaluation is contained in document DP/2021/10.

2. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the humanitarian-development nexus and resilience-based development approaches have underpinned the Syrian refugee crisis response framework. The evaluation developed a theory of change for determining the UNDP contribution to countries affected by the Syrian refugee crisis and other refugee crises. The theory of change provided a framework for assessing three outcomes: resilient development in host countries; strengthened national and local systems and capacities; and improved solutions for refugees. These three outcomes are all strongly integrated within the 3RP response, and the 3RP 2020-2021 in particular.¹ Within the 3RP, the resilience approach is central to the regional and host country-level responses to the Syrian crisis and all programming is encouraged to adopt and promote the key tenets of the approach. In line with the resilience approach, enhancing local and national capacities across the region is one of the key strategic directions of the 3RP, with a focus on broadening the

¹ 3RP Regional Strategic Overview 2020-2021 - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/73116>



capacities of institutions and systems to provide protection and essential socioeconomic services. Likewise, the provision of sustainable livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities is deeply ingrained in the 3RP as it works to foster the conditions for durable solutions and increase opportunities for affected communities to lead dignified lives.

3. In terms of methodology, the evaluation covered Syrian refugee-response programmes in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt² for the period 2015-2019, including the 3RP coordination structure, key sectors of the UNDP country-level response and UNDP regional and national contributions to the 3RP in terms of leadership, coordination, partnerships, funding and advocacy. A case study and field visit were used.

4. UNDP welcomes the evaluation's findings and lessons, which will inform the organization's work in refugee-response situations in alignment with the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and beyond. The organization will build on the areas that have been identified as strong, while responding to the areas in need of strengthening.

II. Refugee crisis and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. The nature and scale of displacement crises have changed, becoming more protracted and intractable, and displaying increasingly complex interactions among social, economic, environmental, climatological, geographical, human rights, political and security drivers and consequences. Currently, forced displacement is at a record high at 26 million refugees and over 45 million internal displaced persons (IDPs) affected by violent conflicts and disasters.³ With an average length of displacement of 17 years, asylum seekers, refugees and IDPs face little possibility of return. Forced displacement occurs within a context where developing regions, with their own development challenges, are hosting 85 per cent of the world's refugees, with the least developed countries providing asylum to a growing proportion amounting to one third of the global refugee population.

6. The Global Compact on Refugees is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility- and burden-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. It provides a blueprint for Governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. It constitutes a unique opportunity to transform the way the world responds to refugee situations, benefiting both refugees and the communities that host them.

7. This is in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which fully recognizes that forced displacement presents complex humanitarian and development challenges. Central to the 2030 Agenda is the commitment to leave no one behind, in pursuit of ending poverty and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. The “special needs of people affected by complex humanitarian emergencies”⁴ are specifically recognized, as are refugees, displaced persons and host communities.

8. While the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic continues to devastate lives and livelihoods around the globe, refugees and IDPs are some of the hardest hit. They face a triple crisis:⁵ (a) a health crisis, with increased exposure to the virus in cramped and crowded conditions with a lack of health care, water, sanitation and nutrition; (b) a socioeconomic crisis, especially affecting those reliant on the informal economy without access to social protection; and (c) a protection crisis, with more than 150 countries imposing border restrictions to contain the spread of the virus, most making no exception for people seeking asylum from persecution. The already precarious situations

² Listed by the number of refugees they are hosting.

³ Based on 2019 data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>

⁴ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 25 September 2015, para. 23.

⁵ United Nations, ‘Policy Brief: COVID-19 and People on the Move’, June 2020.

of displaced women and girls are more dire, as they face higher risk of exposure to gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation.

III. UNDP support to the Syria refugee crisis response and promoting an integrated resilience approach

9. As the Syria crisis enters its tenth year, the conflict's complex, protracted nature has led to the largest refugee displacement crisis in the world, with massive humanitarian and development ramifications on the region. Since 2015, UNDP has played a central role in the Syria crisis regional response by co-leading the 3RP with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Within the 3RP, UNDP has led the resilience pillar, focusing on strengthening the response capacities of national and local institutions, the self-reliance of refugees and host communities and fostering social cohesion.

10. Through its Sub-Regional Response Facility, UNDP has played a key role in setting the resilience agenda and incorporating it within the Syria crisis regional response in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In partnership with UNHCR, the facility was successful in bringing about a major strategic shift in the aid architecture of the 3RP, by integrating a resilience component along with the humanitarian component in the crisis response. This allowed the 3RP to address both the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees and the longer-term developmental needs of host communities and countries, while building national, local and municipal capacities. The facility was also successful in bringing resilience into financial discussions, decision-making and advocacy with national Governments.

11. This evaluation confirms that the 3RP model is the first of its kind in combining humanitarian support and a resilience-based development approach to address the needs of refugees, host communities and national Governments. As the evaluation notes, the approach piloted by the 3RP has helped to inform other refugee responses by showcasing how humanitarian and development actors can collaborate to address protracted crises.

12. UNDP has played a critical role in promoting a common understanding of the concept of resilience and an integrated resilience approach through workshops, training, knowledge products and advocacy at multiple levels. The Dead Sea Resilience Agenda was a key milestone in furthering the resilience response at the regional level and provided a common basis for resilience-based responses across the 3RP countries. UNDP also organized the Resilience Development Forum which boosted new partnerships and enabled setting the stage for resilience-based programming.

IV. Findings and conclusions of the evaluation

13. UNDP welcomes the evaluation's findings as useful to inform its work in protracted refugee crises in the current and next strategic plans. UNDP notes the identified areas of strength upon which it can build, and the areas highlighted in the evaluation which need strengthening in line with the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and in anticipation of the future of development in refugee-hosting countries.

14. UNDP management notes four key conclusions in this regard: (a) the UNDP niche and contribution to global debates and formulation of intergovernmental agreements to further the humanitarian-development nexus in response to refugee crises has been significant; (b) UNDP was successful in bringing a resilience approach to the Syria crisis regional response discourse; (c) UNDP was successful in providing employment models when there was a longer programme time frame and interventions were anchored in its development support; and (d) the development approach to strengthening capacities of national and local service providers, rather than a humanitarian approach of substituting services, contributed to strengthening municipal capacities and providing replicable models.

15. In relation to the evaluation's recommendations:

(a) UNDP takes note of recommendation 1, which stresses that UNDP should invest resources to provide thought leadership in promoting practical nexus approaches at the country level. UNDP acknowledges the need for a corporate strategy for engagement in protracted crises, including strategic investments to combine thought leadership and country programming on the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus. As part of the process of formulating the new strategic plan, UNDP is developing a framework on crisis and fragility, building on lessons learned from its early recovery and resilience offering towards an approach based on renewed integrated development solutions as informed by country context and demand. UNDP programming and prioritization on the ground are informed primarily by countries' demands. As discussed in the next section, all regional bureaux are developing regional plans on migration and displacement which will inform the global plan and strategy on human mobility and sustainable development. The fact that the Sub-Regional Response Facility has been better integrated into the UNDP regional hub and its technical expertise, will further support the ongoing discussions on updating and strengthening the 3RP to better address current development challenges. As part of its partnership with UNHCR, UNDP is producing a brief on advances and challenges with the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in 3RP countries. The note will provide recommendations for strengthening the triple nexus in the Syria crisis regional response;

(b) UNDP acknowledges recommendation 2, which identifies the need to build on its experience with municipal assessments to prioritize data and subnational assessments that would inform humanitarian, development and nexus initiatives as well as the consolidation of data for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP recognizes the efficacy of linking data from municipal assessments with data for the assessment of the Goals and data is to inform policy and programming, while recognizing the need to invest in ensuring coherence and comparability of the data sets. Building on the UNDP role as integrator of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNDP and UNHCR are jointly developing a tool for collecting data and analysis to identify the people most marginalized and left behind in forced displacement situations. The UNDP-UNHCR Global Framework on Rule of Law and Local Governance seeks to provide integrated assistance to enable national and local partners to better fulfil their protection responsibilities and develop sustainable solutions for displaced populations and host communities;

(c) UNDP fully endorses recommendation 3 that it should play a catalytic role in enabling private sector solutions to promote the resilience of both host communities and refugees. UNDP recognizes the opportunity to expand the offer on private sector engagement in forced displacement situations. One of the UNDP commitments made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum is to promote decent work to drive forward the self-reliance of refugees and host communities as part of its digital transformation. Within the Syria crisis regional response, building partnerships with the private sector remains key. In this regard, the Sub-Regional Response Facility established the Innovation 4 Crisis ("I4C")⁶ platform in 2016 to develop new partnerships between actors responding to the Syria regional crisis and the private sector. The platform has helped to strengthen the linkages between the private sector and 3RP partners working on the Syria crisis regional response, generating innovative ideas for addressing the ramifications of the Syria regional crisis in multiple sectors, including livelihoods and education. However, looking ahead, UNDP acknowledges the need to tailor its support to private sector engagement to country contexts, given the diversity of situations, including challenges and opportunities;

(d) UNDP agrees with recommendation 4 to consolidate partnerships with UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies to promote nexus and resilience approaches and durable solutions. Most recently, in 2017, UNDP and UNHCR renewed their commitments to work together in implementing the Global Compact on Refugees and identified five common priority areas of work, implemented through a global joint action plan. This has led to collaboration between UNDP and UNHCR teams at all levels, in other refugee and mixed migration contexts currently spanning over

⁶ Innovation 4 Crisis - <http://www.innovation4crisis.org/>

30 countries. UNDP is a member of the core group in the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Support Platform for Somali Refugees and Returnees, and has a partnership framework in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework for the Americas. For the Syria crisis regional response, UNDP is a key member of the Regional Durable Solutions Working Group, which is led by UNHCR. Within this group, UNDP and the World Food Programme (WFP) are leading work on livelihoods and return preparedness, working to strengthen linkages in livelihoods programming between Syria and 3RP countries in particular as safe, dignified and voluntary returns increase. Furthermore, UNDP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have committed as of October 2020 to a strengthened partnership with a focus on the socioeconomic response to COVID-19 and to joint programming to better integrate migration into the work of United Nations country teams. UNDP is also co-leading with IOM the regional issue-based coalition on the humanitarian-development nexus in the Middle East and North Africa/Arab States;

(e) UNDP takes note but does not accept recommendation 5 on reformulating and scaling down the 3RP architecture. Given the protracted nature of the Syria crisis and the ramifications of COVID-19 in the region, a strong 3RP coordination mechanism remains more critical than ever. Addressing the increasing vulnerabilities across 3RP countries will require enhanced collaboration and coordination across different pillars and sectors. Scaling down the 3RP architecture would undermine the ability of UNDP and other 3RP partners to respond effectively to the crisis, with profound implications for the region. Furthermore, as the 3RP is co-led by UNDP and UNHCR and includes more than 270 humanitarian and development partners, reformulating its architecture lies outside the scope of UNDP alone and would require joint efforts with other stakeholders;

(f) UNDP agrees with recommendation 6 for enhanced contribution in the areas of livelihoods and services, with further emphasis on sectoral approaches to gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender mainstreaming is contributing to the achievement of gender results in the 3RP. UNDP recognizes, however, that more can be done to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in UNDP projects and programmes in forced displacement settings. UNDP will continue investing in methods and instruments to ensure that gender analysis is at the centre of its policy, advocacy and programming work in forced displacement situations. Building on the UNDP gender and recovery toolkit, UNDP will further scale up transformation in priority sectoral areas through gender-responsive prevention, peacebuilding, rule of law, local governance and digital livelihood offers.

V. Future UNDP support to the Syria refugee crisis response and promoting an integrated resilience approach

16. Within the Syria crisis regional response, UNDP and UNHCR continue to see the 3RP as a priority for international support for the affected countries and a key element in a highly relevant, strategic partnership. Initial discussions have begun between UNDP and UNHCR on the need to review the 3RP and to co-lead a strategic discussion on upgrading the plan in light of the challenges faced the countries impacted by the Syria crisis.

17. Under the new 3RP planning cycle for the period 2021-2022, UNDP, through the Sub-Regional Response Facility and its closer integration into the technical capacities of the UNDP Amman Hub, will continue to advocate for and promote a strong resilience response. Given the growing vulnerabilities in the region, in particular with the continued impact of COVID-19 and other overlapping crises in some countries, strengthening the resilience of refugees and host communities, as well as of the national and local institutions that support them, is more critical than ever.

18. In this regard, and in line with the new strategic direction of the 3RP and the humanitarian, development (and peace) nexus, UNDP will continue to foster evidence-based, longer-term approaches to planning and programming, including efforts to strike a greater balance between supporting vulnerable populations and supporting national and local

institutions, and to ensure greater linkages with national development plans and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Global Compact on Refugees.

19. Particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening 3RP resilience monitoring and reporting frameworks. In December 2020, the Sub-Regional Response Facility organized a kick-off technical workshop on vulnerability and measurement and monitoring of resilience. The workshop allowed various United Nations agencies and other 3RP partners to exchange knowledge on recent approaches to vulnerability and resilience measurement at individual, community and institutional levels, and to discuss options for better tracking support by partners for resilience under existing 3RP regional and country-level monitoring frameworks. Follow-up workshops are planned for the new 3RP cycle. Likewise, efforts will be made, in collaboration with UNHCR, to further track advances in the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus under the 3RP.

20. The focus will also be on advancing durable solutions for refugees, in particular around resettlement and ensuring safe, voluntary and dignified returns. Both of these durable solution options have been substantially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with curtailed travel and movement due to lockdown measures. Ensuring that refugees have access to both of these options, alongside continuous efforts to identify and leverage local opportunities for self-reliance in compliance with host countries' legal and policy frameworks, is central to providing refugees with the opportunity to live their lives in dignity and peace.

21. Exploring new opportunities to promote livelihoods for refugees and host communities will also be key, particularly given the impact of COVID-19 on this sector. Special attention will be paid to issues around digitalization and the digital divide, which can curtail the ability of vulnerable communities to find employment.

22. Consultations with UNHCR and other 3RP partners underscored the need for enhanced collaborations with international financial institutions (IFIs), in particular around data and assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region. Strengthening synergies with the IFIs will also be key in relation to the current global financial environment that will likely continue to impact the operations across the region.

23. At the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, UNDP committed to working with UNHCR and with national and local governments, justice, security and human rights actors, the private sector, civil society and most importantly, host communities and displaced populations, on prevention, peacebuilding, rule of law, local governance and digital livelihoods. Building on all these commitments, UNDP and UNHCR have agreed to consolidate the partnership to develop a global joint initiative on inclusion and solutions to support the implementation of the commitments made by UNDP at the Global Refugee Forum in 40 priority countries by 2022.

Annex. Key evaluation recommendations and UNDP management response

Recommendation 1. Addressing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in conflict contexts, including refugee contexts, is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP should now invest resources to provide thought leadership in promoting practical nexus approaches at the country level.

UNDP should outline its corporate strategy for engagement in protracted crises that affect refugees, and the areas and approaches it will prioritize. UNDP should clarify the concepts it offers, invest resources in their operationalization and take specific measures to promote them for wider use. Steps should be taken to ensure that the UNDP resilience offering promotes linkages with humanitarian response rather than as a parallel activity. Measures should also be taken to strengthen regional strategies to comprehensively address protracted refugee crises and their interface with conflict.

Management response:

UNDP accepts this recommendation, acknowledging the need for a corporate strategy for engagement in protracted crises, including strategic investments to combine thought leadership and country programming on the triple nexus. UNDP adheres to the “Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus” of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The Crisis Bureau is developing a “UNDP Framework for Development Solutions for Fragility and Crisis” (working title) that will guide strategies, operations and programmes for UNDP support to fragile and crisis-affected countries. This framework will provide guidance on: where to focus – major risks and opportunities for transformative change in fragile contexts; what to do – linking to important UNDP technical offers in areas such as prevention, peacebuilding, governance, rule of law, human rights, disaster risk reduction, human mobility and recovery; and how to work – to ensure that UNDP is fit for purpose for these difficult operating environments. The framework will enhance UNDP engagement in relevant global policy and advocacy, highlight areas of focus to deliver specialized support in fragile contexts, and support more joined-up and demand-driven support from UNDP in fragile and crisis contexts.

Following the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, UNDP has identified migration as a priority theme and set up a cross-practice, cross-bureau task team on migration and displacement. In 2020, every regional bureau developed a regional workplan on migration and displacement, aligned with regional strategies and priorities. These will inform the UNDP global strategy/plan on human mobility and sustainable development within the framework of the current and next strategic plans. Specifically, in the Africa region, UNDP will continue to build on the partnership with UNHCR in the Nigeria regional refugee-response plans, 2019-2020, using this as an entry point for broader collaboration in the Sahel region.

Furthermore, the resilience-based development approach that UNDP has been promoting since 2013 under the 3RP, is fully aligned with the new way of working and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus through its emphasis on local/national ownership and capacity strengthening, the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and social cohesion. As part of its support to the joint UNDP-UNHCR 3RP secretariat, UNDP has continuously invested in building evidence on the operationalization of the nexus under the 3RP (including more recently a paper on Localised Resilience in Action: Responding the Regional Syria Crisis, launched in March 2019) to highlight achievements in support of commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit. UNDP also produced two compendiums highlighting innovative practices, including partnerships, that can inform current and future nexus-based policy and programme design, making clear that working at this nexus is no longer “business as usual”. UNDP acknowledges the importance of fully mainstreaming the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the monitoring and reporting processes of the 3RP at regional and country levels, and of continuous evidence building and learning in this critical area.

Outside the 3RP framework, UNDP has supported strategic thinking and dialogue on the implementation of the nexus in the Arab States region; since May 2020, UNDP and IOM have been co-leading the newly established regional issue-based coalition on the humanitarian-development nexus, which brings together more

than 10 United Nations agencies to provide strategic guidance, identify and share good practices to advance nexus-based programmatic approaches in countries in the region affected by conflict or crisis.				
Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1 Finalize the “UNDP Framework for Development Solutions for Fragility and Crisis” (working title) that will guide strategies, operations and programmes for UNDP support to fragile and crisis-affected countries	June 2021	Crisis Bureau		Initiated
1.2 Support the development of scaled-up integrated development solutions programming, with other United Nations agencies, in at least five protracted displacement settings (including in the Sahel region)	December 2022	Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux, country offices		
1.3 Finalize practical guidance on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and what this means for UNDP headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices	December 2021	Crisis Bureau		Initiated
1.4 In collaboration with UNHCR, produce a report on advances and challenges in the operationalization of the humanitarian-development (and peace) nexus under the 3RP (including through joint assessments, joint programming efforts and interventions to strengthen social cohesion)	June 2021	Regional Bureau for Arab States, Sub-Regional Response Facility, country offices		Initiated
Recommendation 2. UNDP should build on its experience on municipal assessments to prioritize data and subnational assessments that would inform humanitarian, development and nexus initiatives as well as the consolidation of data for the Sustainable Development Goals. Learning from the 3RP experience, in conflict and refugee contexts, UNDP should prioritize support to data for the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the capacities to collect, manage, analyse and feed the data into policy processes. UNDP has supported the development and conflict-sensitivity analysis at the municipal level in countries hosting refugees but needs a streamlined approach to institutionalize data-collection processes and ensure uniformity and quality to be able to link them to the Goals and policy processes. UNDP should forge corporate-level collaborations with United Nations agencies to avoid duplication of efforts at the country and local levels.				

Management response:

UNDP accepts this recommendation, acknowledging the efficacy of linking data from municipal assessments with data related to the Sustainable Development Goals to inform policy and programming, while recognizing the need to invest in ensuring coherence and comparability in the data sets. As part of the UNDP-UNHCR Global Joint Action Plan, a joint tool for forced displacement situations is being developed and will be piloted in selected countries. Building on the UNDP role as integrator of the Goals, the tool is expected to help countries and United Nations country teams conduct analyses and collect data focusing on protractedly displaced populations and host communities to identify those most marginalized and left behind. The data will be used to inform joint humanitarian and development assessments and refugee-response programming at the local and national levels, with the Goals as the overall framework.

Municipalities are at the forefront of the response to the Syria regional crisis by ensuring the delivery of basic services to all (including Syrian refugees), and therefore assistance to municipalities is critical in promoting social cohesion and strengthening the resilience of local systems. Municipal assessments and interventions implemented by 3RP partners in Lebanon and Turkey have been collected and analysed. In Lebanon, UNDP has been key in developing the vulnerability map to identify priority municipalities for interventions, making a direct link with the wider work of UNDP on poverty data in the country. In Turkey, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM and local authorities organized the Gaziantep Municipal Forum⁷ in 2019, with the aim of sharing good practices on municipal strategies for addressing migration and displacement; showcasing the role of municipalities in linking refugee and resilience responses. In 2018, UNDP also published a report highlighting its support to municipal resilience in Turkey to increase the capacities of municipalities to respond to additional demands for services for Syrian refugees and host communities.⁸

Building upon the interest generated among 3RP partners by the pilot workshop on vulnerability and resilience held in December 2020, UNDP will continue supporting improvements and harmonization of approaches to monitoring resilience under the 3RP, including strengthening linkages with monitoring and localization efforts for the Sustainable Development Goals.

2.1 Support the development, piloting and roll-out of the joint UNDP-UNHCR tool for Sustainable Development Goals appraisal in forced displacement situations	December 2021	Crisis Bureau		
2.2 Collect and analyse municipal interventions led by UNDP in the region, which help advance the Sustainable Development Goals, and map their impact on the resilience of individuals and systems	December 2021	Crisis Bureau, in coordination with the Sub-Regional Response Facility for countries affected by the Syria crisis		
2.3 Identify options to strengthen linkages between measurement/monitoring of resilience, localization of the Sustainable Development Goals	December 2021	Sub-Regional Response Facility with relevant country offices		

⁷ <https://www.municipalforum2019.org/>

⁸ UNDP Support to Municipal Resilience in Turkey, 2018, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjmnq-MjpTuAhUPEFkFHx87DkIQFjAAegQIAxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tr.undp.org%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Fturkey%2FUNDP-TR-SUPPORT-TO-MUNICIPAL-RESILIENCE.pdf&usq=AOvVaw0Pcm4rwBsTSlaTH34_BT2S

Recommendation 3. UNDP should play a catalytic role in enabling private sector solutions to promote the resilience of both host communities and Syrian refugees. UNDP should develop private sector country strategies as its 3RP offering, to address context-specific issues and institutional bottlenecks; and develop mechanisms to derisk the policy environment to facilitate investments for sustainable livelihoods and employment.

The UNDP corporate private sector strategy was approved recently and assessments were carried out to inform its engagement with the private sector in crisis contexts. Moving forward, UNDP should be consistent in the implementation of private sector development initiatives in 3RP countries, prioritizing this as a key offering. UNDP should strengthen its capacities to increase the pace of its engagement with appropriate tools, particularly in contexts of conflict in the least developed countries. UNDP should adapt tools for engaging the private sector in value-chain development and investment in the service sector and, where possible, leverage impact investment, capacities and policy frameworks. UNDP should partner with financial intermediaries that are expanding their businesses in areas of UNDP support.

One of the areas of UNDP strength in 3RP countries is substantive engagement at the local level, which should be used to leverage private sector engagement in addressing development challenges. To be successful, there should be considerable flexibility in the use of tools, combining long-term goals with short-term milestones.

Management response:

UNDP accepts this recommendation, noting that its private sector strategy seeks, in partnership with Governments, civil society and business associations and networks, to make markets work for the Sustainable Development Goals, with a strong emphasis on the inclusion of the poor and marginalized communities. This strategy builds upon the long-standing adoption by UNDP of a market system approach,⁹ which is also the main basis for the work on private sector development and partnerships championed by a number of other international agencies.^{10, 11} It is deploying a suite of service offers, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies in areas such as sustainable value chains and inclusive business, gender equality in markets, digital finance and closing the energy gap.

UNDP recognizes the opportunity to expand the offer on private sector engagement in forced displacement situations. At the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, one of the UNDP commitments was to promote decent work to drive forward the self-reliance of refugees and host communities as part of the UNDP digital transformation. UNDP, UNHCR and Microsoft are currently collaborating to bring together innovative digital initiatives that foster the economic inclusion of refugees. Furthermore, both organizations are developing, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a project proposal within this framework to develop a suite of solutions and services that can be used by Governments, UNDP country offices and partners to catalyse digitally-enabled livelihood opportunities for crisis-affected people.

⁹ The features of a market system approach “focus on interventions that modify the incentives and behaviour of businesses and other market players – public, private, formal and informal – to ensure lasting and large-scale beneficial change to poor people. It also requires that each market is a complex ‘system’ involving many stakeholders, each with a particular set of unique characteristics, any intervention must take this complexity into account” <https://beamexchange.org/market-systems/key-features-market-systems-approach/> and characterize the market system “in terms of three distinct elements: core market transactions, institutions (including the business environment) and services and infrastructure.” BEAM Exchange. (2014). [Market systems approaches: A literature review](#).

¹⁰ It builds on the UNDP “inclusive markets development” approach adopted in 2007 and a number of other approaches championed by various international agencies including value chains (particularly by GIZ and the United States Agency for International Development), and “Making Markets Work for the Poor” (known as M4P) supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the Donor Committee on Enterprise Development, and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor. It also provides the conceptual underpinnings for the current United Nations Capital Development Fund policy on “inclusive finance” and for various UNDP programme initiatives. The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development is the forum consisting of 22 funding and inter-governmental agencies that support the growth of the private sector in developing countries and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor is a global partnership of 34 development organizations that seek to advance financial inclusion.

¹¹ See <http://www.uncdf.org/financial-inclusion>

The aim of these solutions and services is to achieve the four elements required to facilitate digitally-enabled livelihoods: ensuring an enabling policy and regulatory environment for digital transformation; promoting investment and innovation to make transformative technologies available; enabling access to and usage of transformative technologies for livelihood outcomes; and research, prototyping and dialogue on solutions to promote digitally-enabled livelihoods. As part of the UNDP-IOM joint programme on making migration work for sustainable development, UNDP is also leading on strengthening private sector engagement in delivering on national migration strategies.

UNDP is committed to risk-informed decision-making for private sector partnerships and has a dedicated, rigorous policy for due diligence with regard to such partnerships in its programme operations policies and procedures. All private sector partnerships are informed by a risk assessment of the proposed partner and expected outcomes, which guides senior management in its decision-making, and are also supported as relevant by risk management and communication plans. UNDP will continue to explore ways of making it easier to maximize private sector solutions and partnerships.

In the context of the 3RP, Iraq, Turkey and Jordan have implemented livelihood programmes in partnership with the private sector to increase the employability of vulnerable populations. Several assessments have been conducted across the region to inform the engagement of 3RP with the private sector. In Lebanon, UNDP produced the “Mind the Gap” report,¹² which examines the skill gaps that exist in the key sectors of the Lebanese economy and provides concrete recommendations on how to improve the situation.

In the context of COVID-19, UNDP has a digital socioeconomic impact assessment tool tailored for assessing the impact of COVID-19 (and disasters) on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). The tool provides information for evidence-based policymaking and digital solutions in this case focusing on MSMEs.

In Jordan and Turkey, UNDP conducted studies to examine the impact of COVID-19 on the private sector and local enterprises to inform the UNDP response. In Turkey, this assessment was conducted in collaboration with the “Business for Goals” platform”, which aims to develop policies with the private sector and coordinate the contributions of the private sector to the Sustainable Development Goals. The Turkey chapter of the 3RP is for the first time including formal consultation with the private sector (both Syrian-owned businesses and Turkish ones) in the 2021-2022 planning process. Meanwhile, in this new context, the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility is exploring the possibility of integrating support to “business resilience” as a key dimension of the resilience response under the 3RP.

3.1 Support the development of scaled-up digital livelihood initiatives for refugees and host communities in partnership with UNHCR, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and relevant partners	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/ Chief Digital Officer		
3.2 Design a corporate offer on private sector engagement and development in fragile and conflict-affected countries, complemented with tools and guidance on inclusive market development and engagement adapted to fragile and conflict-affected settings	December 2021	Crisis Bureau, Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility Team / Bureau for Policy and Programme Support /Finance Sector Hub/ Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development)		

¹² https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/democratic_governance/Mind-The-Gap.html

3.3 Map out and analyse UNDP private sector engagement initiatives in the response to the Syria regional crisis and compounding crises, including innovative practices and lessons learned, and reactivate dialogue on opportunities and challenges for scaling-up	December 2021	Sub-Regional Response Facility		
3.4 Develop a private sector engagement strategy for the 3RP. This will be led by UNDP as the co-lead of the 3RP in close coordination with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, IOM and UNHCR, among others, including, business networks such as Business for Goals	Second quarter, 2021	Sub-Regional Response Facility /UNDP Turkey		
<p>Recommendation 4. UNDP should consolidate partnerships with UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies to promote approaches based on the humanitarian-development nexus and resilience in the Syrian refugee crisis response. UNDP and UNHCR have embarked upon a significant partnership to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and there is need for continued commitment to further strengthen this alliance.</p> <p>UNDP should further consolidate partnerships with UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies to promote programming based on the humanitarian-development nexus in 3RP countries and reduce compartmentalization of refugee-related development support and other development programming in the country.</p> <p>The joint UNHCR-UNDP action plan is an important step forward in outlining areas of global and country-level collaboration. The action plan should clarify the way forward in enabling development linkages with humanitarian initiatives at the country level, rather than programmes in two areas implemented in parallel. Lessons from 3RP will be important, particularly in developing common outcomes for future collaborations at the country level. UNDP should clarify expectations regarding its resource investments and explore cost-sharing mechanisms.</p> <p>Management response:</p> <p>UNDP accepts this recommendation and is committed to further consolidating its partnership with UNHCR. UNDP and UNHCR have concluded two global cooperation agreements, the first in 1987 and the second and current one in 1997. In 2011, UNDP and UNHCR were designated by the Secretary-General in his decision no. 2011/20 to provide technical expertise and support to the development of the strategy for durable solutions. Most recently, in 2017, UNDP and UNHCR renewed commitments to work together in the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and identified five common priority areas of work, implemented through a joint global action plan. This has led to collaboration between UNDP-UNHCR teams at all levels, including in other contexts involving refugees and mixed migration currently spanning over 30 countries. UNDP is a member of the core group in the Support Platform for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Support Platform for Somali Refugees and Returnees, and has a partnership framework in the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework for the Americas.</p> <p>At the 2019 Global Refugee Forum, UNDP committed to working with UNHCR and with national and local governments, justice, security and human rights actors, the private sector, civil society and most importantly, with host communities and displaced populations, on prevention, peacebuilding, rule of law, local governance and digital livelihoods. Building on these efforts, UNDP and UNHCR have agreed to consolidate the partnership to develop a global joint initiative on inclusion and solutions to support the implementation of the commitments made by UNDP at the Global Refugee Forum in 40 priority countries by 2022. The regional memorandum of understanding (MoU) between UNHCR and UNDP on the response to the Syria crisis was renewed in October 2019 for two years by the High Commissioner for Refugees and the UNDP Administrator. The MoU reiterates the commitment between UNDP and UNHCR to ensure, through the joint UNHCR/UNDP 3RP secretariat, an informed and coordinated response to the Syria crisis at regional and country levels. Jointly with UNHCR,</p>				

UNDP is providing regular updates on the implementation of this partnership and related collaborative activities and outputs, as part of the monitoring process for the global UNHCR-UNDP action plan. As a follow-up action to the latest UNHCR-UNDP global update meeting (24 July 2020), the two agencies produced a joint note that provides an overview of their regional and country-level collaborations and achievements within the framework of the 3RP, along with more detailed information on some joint UNHCR-UNDP programmes in 3RP countries (specifically Turkey and Lebanon).				
4.1 Finalize and launch the global joint initiative on inclusion and solutions with UNHCR	December 2021	Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux, country offices		
4.2 Deepen collaboration with UNHCR and partners in joint assessment, planning and programming in at least three new and protracted refugee-response situations	December 2021	Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux, country offices		
4.3 Adopt a renewed UNDP-UNHCR MoU to ensure sustaining the joint secretariat as a backbone of the UNDP-UNHCR partnership under the 3RP	December 2021	Regional Bureau for Arab States		
<p>Recommendation 5. UNDP jointly with UNHCR should consider scaling down the 3RP architecture so it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>An almost decade-long crisis response needs catalytic initiatives and advocacy that demonstrate a holistic approach to humanitarian challenges rather than investments primarily in a heavy 3RP coordination mechanism. Refocusing the 3RP and anchoring it in medium- to longer-term development outcomes would enable durable solutions for refugees and sustainable outcomes for the host countries. Such refocusing may necessitate alternate structures, strategic selection of intervention areas and a renewed resource mobilization agenda. Leveraging 3RP resources for additional private sector financing should be prioritized.</p>				
<p>Management response:</p> <p>UNDP takes note of recommendation 5, that it should consider reformulating and scaling down the 3RP architecture. However, UNDP does not accept this recommendation. Given the protracted nature of the Syria regional crisis and the ramifications of COVID-19 for the region, a strong 3RP coordination mechanism remains more critical than ever. Addressing the increasing vulnerabilities across 3RP countries will require enhanced collaboration and coordination across different pillars and sectors. Scaling down the 3RP architecture would undermine the ability of UNDP, and other 3RP partners, to respond effectively to the crisis and its profound implications for the region. Given the growing vulnerabilities in the region and the need to update the 3RP, as outlined above, to secure its relevance, this may actually mean further scaling-up the of the 3RP and its architecture with regard to scope of activities and partnerships. Furthermore, as the 3RP is co-led by UNDP and UNHCR, and includes more than 270 humanitarian and development partners, reformulating the architecture of the 3RP lies outside the scope of UNDP alone and would require joint efforts with other stakeholders.</p> <p>UNDP and UNHCR organize annual intercountry/sectoral coordination meetings that bring together intersectoral coordinators from all five 3RP countries, as well as members of the 3RP Regional Technical Committee. While taking into account the diversity of country contexts, this process has proven critical in ensuring a common vision of emerging issues and programmatic priorities and adapting strategic directions in a highly changing environment. The ongoing 3RP cycle is guided by a set of four priority strategic directions (protection, durable solutions, supporting dignified lives and strengthening national and local capacities) and advocates for a greater anchorage of related 3RP interventions within longer-term national/sectoral development plans, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact on Refugees. The latest edition of the Jordan response plan, for example, fully embraces the resilience approach and integrates the Goals.</p> <p>At the regional level, the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility is proactively engaged in the UNHCR-led Regional Durable Solutions Working Group and spearheaded the launch of a new workstream, “Livelihoods and Return Preparedness”. UNDP however acknowledges the need to further stimulate strategic dialogue between UNDP and UNHCR representatives at the regional and country levels on the implementation of the MoU and other critical issues such as</p>				

lasting solutions. A key strength of the 3RP has been its network of 270 partners across the countries concerned including United Nations actors, Governments and both local and international NGOs.

UNDP and UNHCR, as well as other 3RP partners, acknowledge the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration with other actors (e.g., IFIs and other development partners) that operate outside 3RP structures but still provide significant support to host countries and institutions. UNDP has notably supported mappings of IFI support to national and local institutions in Turkey, Lebanon and now Jordan with a view to having a more comprehensive picture of the international community's response to the Syria refugee crisis while assessing potential gaps and areas where greater coordination and synergies are needed.

5.1 Organize strategic-level discussions between UNDP representatives and UNHCR representatives and other 3RP partners at regional and country level to identify strategic and actionable options to improve existing 3RP coordination mechanisms and allow for a greater focus on longer-term resilience and common position on the durable solutions agenda	December 2021	UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility and the joint 3RP secretariat		
5.2 (Continued) analysis of IFIs support to national and local institutions in host countries in the response to the Syria crisis to inform 3RP coordination and planning processes and pursue synergies with national development frameworks	December 2021	UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility, country offices		Ongoing

Recommendation 6. UNDP should build partnerships to boost the scale and scope of support for gender-related initiatives. Resource constraints in addressing gender equality in refugee response are no different than challenges in development programming.

UNDP should outline sectoral areas where it will be consistently engaged. A sectoral focus will enable UNDP to provide well-tested transformative solutions, engage the private sector and build partnerships for enhanced gender outcomes.

Support for gender equality and women's empowerment needs resources. UNDP has been a pioneer in institutionalizing measures such as the minimum budget of 15 per cent of programme resources for gender programming in crisis contexts, which is now a United Nations system-wide policy. UNDP should follow the standards it set and take measures to strengthen organizational capacities to respond appropriately to gender challenges.

Management response:

UNDP accepts this recommendation and is committed to ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in UNDP projects and programmes in forced displacement settings. Under outcome 3 of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, UNDP work on gender equality has focused on improving livelihoods in crisis and post-crisis settings and on increasing women's participation and leadership in prevention and recovery processes and in social dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms. In 2020, UNDP enhanced efforts to increase technical and programmatic capacities on the ground while ensuring that the 15 per cent allocation target for gender-dedicated activities is met. This includes the allocation of 15 per cent of TRAC 3 funds to support GEN3¹³ programming and co-fund gender-related capacities in crisis countries, and a commitment to a dedicated call for country offices in crisis settings to be certified by the Gender Seal.

¹³ The gender marker aims to sensitize programme managers on gender mainstreaming through the assignment of a rating in the UNDP programme and financial reporting system. The ratings are: GEN3 = outputs that have gender equality as the main objectives; GEN2 = outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective; GEN1 = outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly; GEN 0 = outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality.

In 2021, the Global Policy Network will launch the Gender and Crisis Engagement Facility which will be jointly managed by the Crisis Bureau and the challenges Bureau for Policy and Programme Support Gender Team. The facility represents an institutional commitment to harness the considerable strengths of UNDP, dedicate resources and attract donor funding with the aim of strengthening the organization's capacity to support gender equality and women's empowerment in crisis and fragile contexts. Acting as a one-stop-shop, the facility will consolidate, coordinate, communicate and bring coherence to UNDP support for gender equality and women's empowerment in fragile and crisis countries, focusing on four outcome areas: women's economic empowerment; women's leadership and participation; rule of law and human rights; and a gender-responsive fragility strategy.

In line with its commitments at the Global Refugee Forum in the areas of prevention, peacebuilding, rule of law, local governance and digital livelihoods, UNDP will develop practical guidance on gender mainstreaming and programming in refugee-response situations. This will be done in consultation with UNHCR and partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). This will build on the UNDP "Gender and Recovery" toolkit and its practical application in forced displacement situations. The gender marker will be used as a guide to establish the baseline and targets for investments in gender programming for refugees and host communities.

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment is an important focus of UNDP programmatic and advocacy activities under the 3RP. As a follow-up to the flagship report by UNDP, ILO and WFP, "Jobs Make the Difference",¹⁴ the UNDP Sub-Regional Response Facility commissioned additional research (forthcoming) to identify specific challenges and opportunities related to women's economic inclusion and options to increase women's participation. Furthermore, the Turkey chapter of the 3RP 2021/2022 plan was extensively reviewed by UN-Women to reinforce the gender terminology, and training on the gender with age marker (GAM) was delivered to 3RP sector partners. UNDP acknowledges that the unfolding of COVID-19 poses additional risks of reversals in gender equality and women's empowerment in affected 3RP countries, and the need to further mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in livelihoods and other key areas of the 3RP response.

6.1 Creation of a gender and crisis engagement facility	March 2021	Crisis Bureau/Gender Team (Bureau for Policy and Programme Support)		Initiated
6.2 Develop specific tools and guidance on gender programming in refugee-response situations according to UNDP sectoral priorities	December 2021	Crisis Bureau/Gender Team (Bureau for Policy and Programme Support)		
6.3 In coordination with UNDP regional bureaux, launch a Gender Seal track for country offices affected by crisis	December 2023	Gender Team (Bureau for Policy and Programme Support) Crisis and Fragility Policy and Engagement Team (Crisis Bureau)		Initiated
6.3 Strengthen advocacy efforts around and support to evidence-based gender-responsive programming and monitoring in UNDP livelihood and other relevant response areas in the context of the Syria refugee crisis and COVID-19	December 2021	Sub-Regional Response Facility		

¹⁴ <https://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/SyriaResponse/Exec-Summary-Jobs%20Make%20the%20Difference.pdf>