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**Evaluation**

**Management response to the formative evaluation  
of the integration by UNDP of the principles of  
leaving no one behind**

**I. Introduction**

1. In 2021, the Independent Evaluation Office carried out the formative evaluation of the integration by UNDP of the principles of “leaving no one behind”, covering the period 2018 to mid-2022 (DP/2023/8). The evaluation assessed the UNDP corporate approach to these principles and traced the effectiveness of the UNDP contributions to inclusive change, guided by principles of equality, non-discrimination and equity. It also looked at UNDP institutional capacity and data systems.
2. At the heart of the UNDP mandate is its focus on transforming the conditions of people living in poverty and of those who are marginalized. As a reflection of how important this is to everything that UNDP does, the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 made leaving no one behind one of its three overarching directions of change. One year into the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the findings and recommendations of this forward-looking evaluation are therefore timely and valuable. They will help to guide the organization’s strategic direction and inform the theory and practice of how UNDP integrates and operationalizes the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first in what it does and how it does it.
3. UNDP appreciates the recognition by the evaluation that equity and equality are intrinsic to its work; that it is committed to working with national counterparts on improving data and analytics on inequality around leaving no one behind; and that it increasingly focuses on strategic, innovative and upstream paths for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first in such areas as sustainable development finance, governance and social protection.
4. Management welcomes the evaluation’s reflection that the conceptual clarity and empirical work of UNDP on multidimensional poverty, i.e., the “five-factor framework” for leaving no one behind and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), connects leaving no one behind to broader debates around inequality and adds to the human rights-based focus of the United Nations. The results of the survey carried out for the evaluation are well noted, with UNDP support to civil society organizations (CSOs) “highly rated” and 80 per cent of respondents perceiving UNDP as a key partner on issues related to leaving no one behind.



5. On reaching the furthest behind first, UNDP welcomes the examples cited of how, including through its response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it helped to identify and support those most at risk of slipping further behind. The organization's upstream policy contributions in the areas of the rule of law and health and its energy "moonshot" are identified as opportunities for UNDP to fully realize its vision for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

6. There is much work still to be done, as this forward-looking evaluation sets out. UNDP welcomes recommendations to enhance organizational focus on non-discrimination and intersectionality; to pursue efforts to go beyond "projects" towards integrated portfolios; and to invest in emerging intersectional approaches that are not yet systematic across countries or workstreams. This includes work around the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence and fighting structural barriers to women's empowerment, including through the implementation of the new UNDP gender equality strategy.

7. UNDP welcomes and accepts the recommendation to further articulate its engagement on reaching the furthest behind first through the development of an "implementation glide path", and sees the implementation of recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as defining components of this glide path. The expanded support will be anchored in a three-pronged approach integrating leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across the UNDP: (a) corporate substantive offers; (b) resource mobilization and allocation strategies; and (c) programmatic metrics and systems. UNDP will institutionalize a dedicated inter-bureau mechanism to take this work forward.

8. The evaluation was designed to be formative, focused on organizational learning with a view to: (a) generating lessons, conclusion and recommendations that contribute to decision-making and learning to improve the UNDP contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; and (b) supporting corporate accountability by assessing the UNDP performance and contributions to date in delivering on its stated objective to integrate the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first by identifying contextual, strategic and operational factors that can influence progress.

## II. Leaving no one behind in the global development context

9. The current context of overlapping crises—from a rising conflict, worsening climate catastrophe and prolonged pandemic compounded by the war in Ukraine, economic instability and pushback globally on human rights—places a sense of urgency on collective efforts towards leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. People living in poverty—men, women, youth and children—and those experiencing intersectional and systemic discrimination face disproportionate exclusion and impacts in terms of access to services, not least health care, risk of violence, unemployment and well-being.

10. For the first time in 20 years, the number of people living in poverty globally is on the rise, and for the first time in 32 years, human development has declined for two years in a row.<sup>1</sup> While the pandemic plunged 77 million more people into extreme poverty in 2021, the cost-of-living crisis generated by the war in Ukraine alone has impoverished 71 million people in the first three months since it started. Many countries are still facing unprecedented losses of jobs, worsening poverty and vulnerability, particularly the 4.2 billion people who still do not have access to social protection.<sup>2</sup> For many women, this is coupled with time poverty that hinders even more their economic security, as they carry out most of the unpaid care work. This unpaid work amounts to 2.2 billion full-time jobs annually<sup>3</sup> and is increasing with climate change. Access to affordable energy is also shrinking, and green transitions are increasingly constrained by limited fiscal space. Ninety countries

1 UNDP (2022), Human Development Report 2021-22: Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World.

2 UNDP (2022), Addressing the cost-of-living crisis in developing countries: Poverty and vulnerability projections and policy responses

3 UN-Women (2020) COVID-19 and the Gender Monitor, <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-and-gender-monitor>

worldwide, in both democratic and autocratic-leaning contexts, passed laws or took actions to restrict freedom of expression during the pandemic<sup>4</sup> and only 3 per cent of the world's population currently live in countries with open civic space.<sup>5,6</sup>

11. According to the report, *Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022: Unpacking deprivation bundles to reduce multidimensional poverty*, 1.2 billion people continue to experience multidimensional poverty. Inequality has risen in several countries during the pandemic and is at record highs with the top 10 per cent of the population earning more than half of the world's income, while the bottom 40 per cent earn less than 8 per cent. Inequalities of opportunity, not least gender inequality, have also been amplified most visibly in unequal access to vaccines, health care, education, technology/Internet and access to jobs.

12. According to a UNDP special report on human security, 1.2 billion people live in conflict-affected areas, with 560 million in countries not typically classified as fragile. By 2030, up to two thirds of the world's extreme poor are expected to live in countries characterized by fragility, conflict, violence and high levels of disaster risk. Half the global poor live in conflict-affected countries and more than 91 per cent of reported deaths from climate-related disaster events occurred in developing countries.<sup>7</sup>

13. The climate emergency currently interacts with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, and other crises. Disadvantaged and marginalized groups, particularly among children, women, persons with disabilities and youth are hit the hardest but have limited capacities to cope with and adapt to their impacts. Alongside stepped-up climate action, including financing, entrenched structural inequalities in access to services, not least social protection, opportunities, and voice must be supported to prevent and tackle climate-induced inequalities and detrimental human rights impacts.

### III. UNDP support to leaving no one behind

14. As acknowledged by the evaluation, UNDP has a long-standing engagement on issues related to leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first that predates the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017-2018, UNDP pioneered the development of a five-factor framework (discrimination; geography; governance; socioeconomic status; shocks and fragility) in the discussion paper, *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind?*, issued in 2018, which drew attention to the need to tackle multiple and intersecting drivers of marginalization and intersectionality to reach the furthest behind first. The framework contributed to informing the ways in which people are left further behind as a starting point for corrective action.

15. This pioneering work fed into the United Nations Sustainable Development Group operational guide on leaving no one behind,<sup>8</sup> which UNDP also co-authored. Launched as a tool for all United Nations country teams (UNCTs), the guidance incorporated the experience and lessons learned from piloting the approach in three countries (Cameroon, Nepal, Tunisia). The guide also informed the first wave of the SDG Joint Fund initiatives on social protection. The five-factor framework was picked up by other actors, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Southern Voice, which applied it to their own work and research.

16. The UNDP corporate commitment to and accountability on anti-discrimination has strengthened significantly, including through the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and its integrated results and resources framework, which requires reporting on the number of programme countries that have

<sup>4</sup> The Global State of Democracy 2021: Building Resilience in a Pandemic Era (idea.int)

<sup>5</sup> Facts - CIVICUS - Tracking conditions for citizen action

<sup>6</sup> Statement by the UNDP Administrator: Human Rights Day 2021, 10 December | United Nations Development Programme

<sup>7</sup> UNDP (2022), Special Report: New threats to human security in the Anthropocene – Demanding greater solidarity.

<sup>8</sup> [Leaving No One Behind: A UNSDG Operational Guide for UN Country Teams | SDG Integration \(undp.org\)](https://www.undp.org/publications/leaving-no-one-behind)

targeted systems with strengthened capacities to address discrimination and racism and expand civic space.

17. In the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, UNDP reiterates its commitment to support Member States in their efforts to respect and fulfil their human rights obligations and commitments under international law, as a critical tool to operationalize the pledge to leave no one behind pursuant to the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review.<sup>9</sup> Examples include working with over 100 national human rights institutions to promote and protect human rights, strengthening national human rights systems and working to support the follow-up to recommendations from the United Nations human rights mechanisms and processes such as the universal periodic review.

18. The new UNDP gender strategy for 2022-2025 places reaching the furthest behind first at its centre. For the first time, the strategy explicitly refers to sexual orientation and gender identity as forms of discrimination and calls for intersectional programmatic approaches to discrimination and for mobilizing men to advance gender equality. Internally, the UNDP Gender Equality Seal matrix, currently being implemented by 83 country offices, includes intersectionality and the principle of leaving no one behind in several of its benchmarks.

19. UNDP has significantly expanded its empirical and capacity development work on multidimensional poverty, vulnerability and inequality metrics. At the global level, the *Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report 2021 – Unmasking disparities by ethnicity, caste, and gender*, co-authored by UNDP and the Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), made a breakthrough in assessing the level and composition of multidimensional poverty with ethnicity/race/caste disaggregation for 41 countries.

20. Through the OPHI initiatives, UNDP has supported more than 30 countries to develop MPIs at both national and subnational levels to help them better identify and address the overlapping deprivations facing poor and vulnerable people, going beyond income poverty. In Uganda, the MPI helped to identify the poorest regions, and is expected to inform the implementation of the Government's Parish Development Model. In Nigeria, UNDP contributed to the highest-ever resolution MPI survey with a linked child poverty measurement and gender analysis. In Nepal, the MPI helped to identify deprivations faced by children, people with disabilities and those living in remote geographical areas and experiencing exclusion based on class, region, gender, caste and community. In Cuba, UNDP is supporting the design of a multidimensional vulnerability index to improve targeting of vulnerable people and communities under the programme on human development, equity and social justice. UNDP collaboration is also expanding in Uzbekistan, where the MPI is now seen as an important area of engagement for the implementation of the country's new poverty reduction strategy.

21. UNDP has invested in large-scale internal and external capacity development on MPIs. In 2022, jointly with the OPHI, UNDP delivered the third edition of its massive open online course on designing an MPI (in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic), which engaged over 2,800 participants from 156 countries.

22. In the context of COVID-19, the experiences of many of the countries supported by UNDP and UNCTs with the preparation of socioeconomic response plans, MPIs and related vulnerability indices have been used to conduct assessments and proved instrumental in guiding the response to the pandemic and ensuring better outreach to the most vulnerable.

23. The newly-launched UNDP Data Futures Platform has contributed with disaggregated analysis of COVID-19 vaccine distributions, highlighting the problems of vaccine equity. The platform is currently doing a similar analysis for energy access.

24. Stepped-up efforts to strengthen internal capacities on transformative change for gender equality, with a strong focus on addressing gender-based discrimination and implementing an intersectional approach, are ongoing through the UNDP Leadership for Gender Equality Certificate.

<sup>9</sup> A/RES/75/233, Para 28.

Thirty UNDP resident representatives have been trained on strategies to advance gender equality, including learning about the intersection of gender, race and gender identity.

25. The UNDP network of accelerator labs, reaching 115 countries through 91 locations, is actively engaging with grass-roots organizations and informal sector groups to collect new data and ascertain people's views on their needs and those of their communities and on potential solutions to address the challenges facing them.

26. UNDP operates eight corporate communities of practice connecting thousands of staff members and external development partners in government, civil society, think tanks and academia on the most pressing global challenges. Organized to reflect the Strategic Plan's six signature solutions and its enablers, UNDP knowledge networks connect across mandated areas to generate new insights and share learning and knowledge at scale, benefiting the core principle of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

27. Through SparkBlue, since June 2020 UNDP has brought together the development community, connecting United Nations staff with external expertise, and creating spaces for internal and external peer learning. To date, the UNDP community platform has engaged more than 8,000 UNDP staff and more than 15,000 external practitioners. Leaving no one behind has been at the centre of 40 events and 70 discussion forums.

28. As acknowledged by the evaluation, UNDP has a track record of working with and supporting CSOs, recognizing their role as key partners on issues related to leaving no one behind. Promoting an enabling operating environment for civil society actors is a long-standing objective of UNDP governance work, although impact in this area has been uneven. The new UNDP global programme, Governance for People and Planet (2022-2025), will ensure an increasingly coherent and integrated people-centred approach to UNDP governance work, prioritizing leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first in delivery of the Strategic Plan and its signature solution 2 (governance), including on issues of civic space and civic engagement, inclusive political participation, disability inclusion and youth empowerment.

29. As an example of work on promoting civic space, UNDP collaborated with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law in producing the publications, *Legal frameworks for civic space: a practical toolkit* and *legal frameworks for civic space: a primer*, which provides guidance on how to ensure that national legislative frameworks are aligned with human rights standards.

30. UNDP recognizes that young people are experiencing exclusion from decision-making processes and experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and that youth organizations often lack accessible and relevant funding. UNDP acknowledges the need to partner with youth organizations, movements and networks, and to build on existing work to strengthen youth advisory groups/sounding boards/platforms at all levels. UNDP has been a strong advocate, as evidenced by the inter-agency guiding principles on youth and the Sustainable Development Goals, developed in close collaboration with young partners.

31. UNDP partners with civil society through several global advocacy campaigns and initiatives that include youth representatives, climate activists and volunteer groups. For example, in climate change policies and strategies, the "Mission 1.5" gaming application was conceptualized and designed by a working group consisting primarily of civil society actors.

32. The "Generation17" and "16x16" initiatives involve partnering with youth and women's empowerment actors, as well as activists, as co-designers, co-moderators and panellists in events and consultations. These initiatives include the development of guidance documents on how to engage youth representatives. In the "Don't Choose Extinction" campaign, UNDP actively sought the participation and input of civil society groups from all regions. The success of such initiatives highlights the need for UNDP to partner with civil society, not just continually and increasingly as implementation partners, but as development actors who help formulate, design, communicate and advocate for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and further the commitment to leaving no one behind.

33. The UNDP Sustainable Finance Hub has scaled up an impact management and finance tracking offer to increase the integrity and transparency of the private sector impact claims. Business Call to Action is leading an impact management movement to help inclusive businesses develop the capacity to collect impact data and integrate it into decision-making for effectively serving low-income and vulnerable populations. Since 2015, Business Call to Action has supported approximately 2,774 companies, entrepreneurs, and employees from multinational companies, such as General Electric, Essilor and L'Occitane, to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises operating across sectors.

34. UNDP has engaged in various awareness-raising, advocacy and knowledge-sharing initiatives in support of the business and human rights agenda, such as B+HR, the UNDP global business and human rights initiative, and the FairBiz initiative. In India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, UNDP trained companies on how to conduct due diligence on human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Viet Nam, UNDP worked with business schools to include business and human rights in their curricula and instil respect for human rights and promote responsible business practices. UNDP has become the leading convener of regional stakeholders on business and human rights and the principal organizer of annual forums in South Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Attendance at these regional forums has grown from 120 participants in 2016 to over 6,500 in 2021.<sup>10</sup>

35. UNDP has established an internal informal economy facility to expand its programmatic, knowledge and policy work to address the challenges facing informal workers and businesses, particularly women and youth, with a focus on protection, resilience-building and empowerment.

36. Through the “Inclusive Innovation Journey”,<sup>11</sup> UNDP is leveraging private sector engagement in improving access to services for poor and vulnerable populations. In Colombia, the programme helped to train and structure an ecosystem of local entrepreneurs in tele-health that the Government can rely upon to expand care capacity and implement self-diagnosis tools and virtual care to improve access to basic medical services, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, for people in rural areas, indigenous peoples, and persons with a disability.

37. UNDP has oriented its external engagement around the three themes of poverty and inequality, climate and crisis. Accordingly, it has engaged partners on poverty and inequality issues, including through flagship publications calling for collective action to tackle systemic and structural issues that are holding back people trapped in poverty. In its campaign for a clean and just energy transition away from fossil fuels and fuel subsidies, UNDP has underscored the disproportionate effects on the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind. UNDP advocates for solutions such as targeted social protection programmes and policy changes that provide a cushion to vulnerable people against socioeconomic shocks.

38. The success of UNDP in mobilizing a significant amount of regular (core) and other (non-core) resources is due partly to its ability to demonstrate how its interventions benefit those left behind (women, indigenous people and minorities), as captured in the “who” marker. The UNDP focus on ensuring human agency and transforming the systems and institutions that address structural challenges – be they access to justice or basic services to those who are left out – remains its unique contribution.

39. The Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 introduced specific language on leaving no one behind by associating the vision of the Plan with “universality” and “equality and universality.” UNDP has made important strides in fostering a systematic integration of reaching the furthest behind first in its programmatic framework. The UNDP social and environmental standards were revised to include a specific mandatory programming principle on leaving no one behind. The principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first have been incorporated as part of the criteria for the quality assurance assessment of country programme documents.

40. UNDP pioneered project markers in 2018, making it the first United Nations agency to go beyond the gender marker, enabling the organization to monitor not only what is achieved (results)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/UNDP%20GP\\_%20Business%20and%20Human%20Rights\\_0.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/UNDP%20GP_%20Business%20and%20Human%20Rights_0.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.businesscalltoaction.org/inclusive-innovation-journey->

but also how, for whom and with whom the results are achieved. One of the project markers was the “Who” or “leaving no one behind” marker, which was designed in line with the five-factor framework discussed in paragraphs 14 and 15 above. Several agencies are implementing the UNDP project marker model in their results management systems.

#### IV. Findings and conclusions of the evaluation

41. UNDP welcomes the findings of this formative, forward-looking evaluation. Its recommendations will help to guide the organization’s efforts to step up its important focus on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, with leaving no one behind now promoted to one of three directions of change of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022- 2025.

42. **UNDP accepts recommendation 1, broaden the UNDP approach to leaving no one behind.** UNDP should systematically adopt an “equality+” promise, including a stronger commitment to non-discrimination initiatives, and strengthen the architecture of its signature solution 1 to lead programmatic integration of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

43. UNDP appreciates the recognition by the evaluation that important strides have been made in this direction, providing a foundation on which to build, including the five-factor framework, the leaving no one behind marker, and not least its large-scale empirical work and capacity development support on multidimensional poverty.

44. UNDP acknowledges that there is potential to further leverage its internal capacities to foster a better and deepened integration of the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, including intersectionality in UNDP programmatic and policy development work at the country level.

45. UNDP welcomes the recommendation to strengthen its positioning and institutional capacities on leaving no one behind and especially on reaching the furthest behind first, with a greater focus on equity and non-discrimination interventions and further engagement with groups left or at risk of being left behind.

46. UNDP will bring together efforts to identify and leverage existing capacities related to leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across the organization, drawing upon the talent mapping of expertise taking place as part of the People for 2030 strategy and as part of corporate efforts to implement the new knowledge management strategy.

47. Bearing in mind that leaving no one behind is a strategic direction that cuts across all solutions of the Strategic Plan, this will involve leveraging specialized expertise at global, regional and country levels, e.g., the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, the Crisis Bureau and the Global Policy Network, and from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices expertise in Sustainable Development Goal integration, governance, rule of law, security and human rights, gender, nature, climate and energy, innovation and accelerator labs. UNDP will mobilize this internal pool of experts to nurture a community of practice and foster broad-based knowledge-sharing and learning to strengthen and systematize programming to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first- (cf. management response to recommendation 3).

48. The five-factor framework and related action streams on “examine, empower and enact” and the human rights-based approach will continue to provide a strong foundation to foster a common approach to leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across UNDP signature solutions and related offers.

49. As part of the implementation of its new gender equality strategy, UNDP will support the generation of new evidence and more sophisticated analysis to enhance the understanding of how gender intersects with many other risks faced by the poorest and the most marginalized groups, such as disability, racism, xenophobia, sexual orientation, etc. For example, the strategy envisions the creation of a global learning lab on gender-equal economies, which, among others, will allow to generate understanding and disseminate evidence on intersectional economic biases, discrimination and inequalities. Through the roll-out of two cohorts per year of the UNDP Leadership for Gender

Equality Certificate between 2023 and 2025 UNDP will continue building solid awareness and expertise to engage senior management at country level on issues of discrimination and intersectionality.

**50. UNDP accepts recommendation 2, turn the commitment to reach the furthest behind first into action.** UNDP should devise a clear implementation glide path operationalizing its commitment to supporting those furthest behind first.

51. UNDP welcomes and accepts the recommendation to further articulate its engagement in reaching the furthest behind first through the development of an “implementation glide path”. Management envisions the actions related to recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as defining components of this glide path and will institutionalize a dedicated inter-bureau mechanism for the systematic tracking and implementation of the glide path.

52. Management notes that the evaluation invites UNDP to focus on the populations that are not included in the mandates of other agencies (and perhaps less visible), such as the elderly and persons with disabilities, while retaining its focus on intersectionality. UNDP notes that important strides have been made when it comes to engaging and empowering persons with disabilities. The UNDP social and environmental standards ensure the meaningful, effective and informed participation of all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities. The UNDP guidance note on disability-inclusive development ensures a human rights-based approach including guidance on civic engagement and the meaningful participation of persons with disabilities and partnerships with organizations of persons with disabilities in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects. UNDP is a major participant in the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a partner in joint programming to support countries to design and implement disability-inclusive response and recovery planning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

53. In various countries, UNDP has engaged in reducing the systemic barriers, including the “digital disconnect” that makes it harder for elderly people to participate, collaborate or make their voices heard in society. In Chile, UNDP helped develop a digital ecosystem to support the elderly with educational platforms for care and e-learning courses, publications about the reality facing the elderly and a new website with information about support for the elderly population in different territories. In Cambodia, UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation in June 2021 to explore various pathways to operationalize the National Ageing Policy, including pilot efforts to link traditional care systems for the elderly with older peoples’ associations and key health, financial, economic, and other services.

54. The lessons learned from the socioeconomic response to COVID-19, through the socioeconomic impact assessments and United Nations response plans covering over 140 countries, will help UNDP to calibrate its approach to leaving no one behind to meet the evolving needs of vulnerable groups, including ageing population groups. UNDP worked with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Development Coordination Office to produce a checklist for a human rights-based approach to the socioeconomic responses to COVID-19,<sup>12</sup> which focused on matching interventions and actions to populations most at risk of being left behind. This checklist was subsequently rolled out to UNCTs.

**55. UNDP accepts recommendation 3, implement programming that responds to the need for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.** UNDP should curate and disseminate development solutions for the integration of both concepts for country-level staff and for different development settings through a resourced learning hub.

56. As part of its newly-launched knowledge management strategy, cited in paragraph 46 above, UNDP will leverage its SparkBlue collaboration platform and the communities of practice that will serve as a learning hub on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, contributing to the generation and dissemination of knowledge and know-how within UNDP and widely within

<sup>12</sup> Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19 | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

the United Nations development system. The communities of practice will empower country-level staff and the wider development community to think out loud, learn from each other, connect, collaborate, co-create and to support the programmatic activities of country offices.

**57. UNDP accepts recommendation 4, engage non-governmental actors as partners.** UNDP should strengthen its engagement with CSOs and private sector partners and help build capacities to advance the agenda for leaving no one behind. This should go beyond project-based, contractual and funding relationships and move towards a partnership model, which is particularly important for reaching the furthest behind. .

58. UNDP is committed to enhancing its support for accountability, voice, human rights, gender equality and inclusion, leveraging existing multi-stakeholder platforms at national level but also and especially at the local level through CSOs, community-based organizations, national human rights institutions, organizations of indigenous peoples and grass-roots organizations.

59. UNDP acknowledges the scope for strengthening its engagement with civil society actors by going beyond engaging them as implementing partners for service delivery and taking more systematic action to support and empower them in their roles as advocates for change, catalysts of civic organizing and promoters of accountability. The need to promote long-term partnerships that extend beyond time-bound project implementation is also acknowledged, together with the importance of expanding partnerships with less professionalized organizations, while continuing to fulfil relevant due diligence requirements.

60. UNDP appreciates the positive evaluation of its support to CSOs and the recognition of its role as a key partner on issues related to leaving no one behind. This is supported by the findings from the survey of CSOs carried out for the evaluation,<sup>13</sup> as well as the evaluation's recognition of the UNDP capacity to bring diverse stakeholders together. The promotion of an enabling operating environment for civil society actors is a long-standing objective of the organization's governance work, and the lessons learned from this evaluation will help to strengthen this approach. This will be further enhanced in the new integrated approach to governance programming and the nature, climate and energy local action service offer.

61. UNDP notes that the gender equality strategy, 2022–2025 places a special emphasis on engaging with feminist organizations, women's movements, grass-roots organizations and groups advocating for their own rights (e.g., representing people with disabilities, those experiencing racial discrimination and those led by and for youth, including young feminist movements, among others), acknowledging their critical role to shift policy and ensure durable change.

62. UNDP recognizes that young people are experiencing exclusion from decision-making processes and are facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and that youth organizations often lack accessible and relevant funding. UNDP acknowledges the need to partner with youth organizations, movements and networks. UNDP has been a strong advocate for young people, as evidenced for instance by the inter-agency guiding principles on youth and the Sustainable Development Goals, developed in close collaboration with young partners.

63. UNDP will continue to engage the private sector in the leaving no one behind agenda, bringing more efficiency and innovation to help Governments better serve those left behind, with a particular focus on the Inclusive Innovation Journey initiative. Relying on the successful implementation of this initiative in Colombia (and Tunisia) and engaging local authorities and UNDP country offices, the approach can be introduced to regional bureaux and replicated by country offices.

**64. UNDP accepts recommendation 5, deliberately fund programmatic integration of leaving no one behind.** When allocating regular resources and negotiating cost sharing, UNDP should strategically consider the principles of reaching the furthest behind and countries' scores on the corresponding corporate marker. Resource mobilization strategies should specifically clarify the UNDP value proposition for reaching the furthest behind first and the cost of inaction.

<sup>13</sup> See paragraph 88 and figure 6 in the full evaluation report, to be available online at the Evaluation Resource Centre (<https://erc.undp.org/>).

65. UNDP agrees that there are challenges in mobilizing and adequately allocating financial and human resources for integrating leaving no one behind into programming, which depend on the funding decisions of both donor and programme Governments and the resultant projectized nature of UNDP work. To counter this trend, UNDP continued to make the case for regular resources funding by emphasizing the pro-poor nature of regular resources and the flexibility they afford UNDP to target those left behind.

66. UNDP shares the concern that the gross domestic product (GDP)-based allocation criteria for regular resources funding fall short of the reality on the ground. UNDP will explore the criteria to better align them with countries' development needs and leaving no one behind principles, going beyond GDP-based criteria. The corporate resource mobilization strategy currently under development aims to clearly articulate the UNDP value proposition, in line with the Strategic Plan, to key audience groups and leverage the various strategies, engagement plans and institutional capabilities for advocacy, partnership and fundraising. By countering the current difficult and restricted funding practice, the strategy will help mobilize adequate and flexible funding, which in turn will enable UNDP to strategically allocate resources to underfunded areas and mandates, including the leaving no one behind agenda.

**67. UNDP accepts recommendation 6, update metrics and learning for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.** UNDP should invest in more holistic corporate-level metrics and learning that highlight the perspectives of those furthest behind, demonstrate a systems-thinking approach and strategically consider intersectionality.

68. The Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 set out steps towards UNDP becoming a more agile and anticipatory organization. As part of these efforts, a new enterprise resource planning system – Quantum – is expected to be rolled out in January 2023. UNDP has started developing improved metrics for the leaving no one behind marker, incorporating an intersectionality function. In addition, new project markers will be introduced in Quantum, including for human rights, climate and digitalization work. Cross-tabulation analysis of marker data will facilitate systems-thinking of complex development challenges and intersections among various interventions. Detailed guidance notes, trainings and quality assurance mechanisms on the updated leaving no one behind marker will be provided in conjunction with the Quantum roll-out.

69. UNDP is currently rolling out the portfolio initiation framework to integrate portfolio approaches in programme and project management policies and procedures with the objective of promoting dynamic and holistic approaches to managing development interventions to achieve systemic change. The framework will be tested in 40+ pilot country offices in addition to projects and to provide additional metrics to improve the quality assurance guidance on leaving no one behind. The updated guidance on implementing the portfolio approach will encompass appraisal, approval, governance, monitoring, oversight and closure of portfolios.

70. UNDP is upgrading its results-based management strategy (including project quality assurance standards and systems) to improve targeting and measuring impact. A new online social and environmental standards tracker will improve access to data on those left furthest behind and provide insight to improve the design of impactful interventions to address their specific needs. The revised results-based management strategy will incorporate a capacity-building component to operationalize the new approach, including systems-thinking and adaptive management.

71. UNDP has been undertaking outcome evaluations and will conduct impact and portfolio evaluations of its programmes once the requisite guidelines have been developed. These steps will further lift UNDP efforts to measure, report on and demonstrate the impact of its work on the lives of the people who are left behind.

## V. Future UNDP support for leaving no one behind

72. The expanded UNDP support on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first is anchored in the transformative, holistic approach set forth in the Strategic Plan, 2022-2025. The UNDP glide path prioritizes a three-pronged approach: integrating leaving no one behind and

reaching the furthest behind first across its corporate substantive offers: resource mobilization and allocation strategies; and programmatic metrics and systems.

#### **A. Integrating leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across UNDP corporate substantive offers**

73. UNDP will foster operational linkages and synergies between the various service offers supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan, ensuring that its work on governance, nature, climate and environment, gender, social protection, jobs and the future of work and digitalization and financing contributes to a just transition to the green economy.

74. UNDP will leverage its internal expertise and activate its knowledge networks to generate new knowledge and good practices and connect experts on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first as a cross-cutting priority for all knowledge communities.

75. UNDP will continue to work on issues related to accountability, voice, gender equality and inclusion, including sustained efforts to challenge norms and structures that perpetuate discrimination, particularly gender-based discrimination, as the most widespread and pervasive form of discrimination across the world.

76. UNDP will further leverage its convening power, technical capacity, and partnership networks to promote the meaningful participation of civil society actors in public life, with a strong focus on removing barriers to participation of specific population groups as well as strengthening the capacity of civil society actors representing those furthest behind. UNDP will amplify formal and informal partnerships with civil society including activists, youth groups, volunteers, indigenous people non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advocating for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and its commitment to leaving no one behind.

77. UNDP will strengthen its focus on building partnerships with youth and youth organizations in the context of implementing the Goals, monitoring, and accountability throughout the programme cycle. It will more systematically involve women's organizations and other groups advocating for rights in dialogues with national and international institutions.

78. UNDP will continue to dedicate efforts to leverage the capacities of the private sector, including for innovation, to engage in the leaving no one behind agenda.

#### **B. Integrating leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across UNDP resource mobilization and allocation strategies**

79. UNDP will use the corporate resource mobilization strategy that is being developed to clearly articulate the UNDP value proposition to stakeholders, including key principles such as leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first that the Strategic Plan has committed the organization to. The strategy will design and package thematic offers, including poverty and inequality, that reflect the dynamic partnership landscape and are closely aligned to partners' interests. UNDP will continue to make the case for core funding and improve our analytical capabilities to demonstrate impact and the cost of inaction to our key stakeholders.

80. The UNDP Strategic Plan's emphasis on a portfolio approach also provides an opportunity for more coherent integration of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first thinking, alongside less projectized funding.

#### **C. Integrating leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first across programmatic matrices and systems**

81. The Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 set out steps for UNDP to become a more agile and anticipatory organization. The roll-out of the new enterprise resource planning system – Quantum – in January 2023 will be accompanied by improved metrics for the leaving no one behind marker, incorporating an intersectionality function.

82. UNDP is currently rolling out the portfolio initiation framework with the objective of promoting dynamic and holistic approaches to managing development interventions to achieve systemic change.

83. UNDP is upgrading its results-based management strategy to capture higher-quality development results through an integrated approach of promoting effective, agile and adaptive ways of working.

## Annex. Key recommendations and the management response

**Recommendation 1. Broaden the UNDP approach to leaving no one behind. UNDP should systematically adopt an “equality+” promise, including a stronger commitment to non-discrimination initiatives, and strengthen the architecture of its signature solution 1 to lead programmatic integration of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.**

**Management response:** UNDP welcomes and accepts recommendation 1.

UNDP will leverage the talent mapping of expertise led by the Office of Human Resources as part of the People for 2030 strategy to strengthen integration of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first, including intersectionality and anti-discrimination, across the signature solutions of the Strategic Plan. . This will involve leveraging specialized expertise from across the organization, including Sustainable Development Goal integration, governance, rule of law, security and human rights, gender, nature, climate and energy, innovation/accelerator labs, and effectiveness group teams as well as the Crisis Bureau. This internal pool of experts will be mobilized to nurture a community of practice on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first and foster broad-based knowledge-sharing and learning (as called for by evaluation recommendation 3)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Leverage the talent mapping of expertise co-led by the Global Policy Network, the Bureau for Management Services, including the Office of Human Resources, as part of the People for 2030 strategy, to maximize capacities to strengthen integration of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first principles, including intersectionality and non-discrimination, across the signature solutions of the Strategic Plan.	Q2 2023	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), Crisis Bureau, Bureau for Management Services (BMS), Office of Human Resources (OHR)		
1.2 Strengthen UNDP capacities for engagement on discrimination and intersectionality through the roll-out of the Leadership for Gender Equality Certificate.	Q4 2025	BPPS, BMS, OHR		

**Recommendation 2. Turn the commitment to reach the furthest behind first into action. UNDP should devise a clear implementation glide path operationalizing its commitment to supporting those furthest behind first.**

**Management response:** UNDP accepts recommendation 2. Management envisions the management actions related to recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the evaluation as defining components of this glide path and will institutionalize a dedicated inter-bureau mechanism for the systematic tracking and implementation of the glidepath.

2.1 Institutionalize an inter-bureau mechanism for the systematic tracking and implementation of the leaving no one behind glide path, comprising of the management actions relating to recommendations 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.	Q3 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), Executive Office		
<b>Recommendation 3. Implement programming that responds to the need for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. UNDP should curate and disseminate development solutions for the integration of both concepts for country-level staff and for different development settings through a resourced learning hub.</b>				
<b>Management response:</b> UNDP <u>accepts</u> recommendation 3.. Through SparkBlue, communities of practice will serve as the learning hub on leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first and continue to generate and, disseminate knowledge and know-how within UNDP and widely within the United Nations development system, empowering country-level staff and the wider development community to think out loud, learn from each other, connect, collaborate, co-create and support country offices' programmatic activities.				
3.1 Foster a community of practice, as part of the UNDP knowledge management strategy, to offer curated knowledge, tools and other resources, and internal and external peer learning to strengthen and systematize programming based in leaving no one behind-reaching the furthest behind first.	Q2 2023	BPPS (in collaboration with Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux)		
<b>Recommendation 4. Engage non-governmental actors as partners. UNDP should strengthen its engagement with CSOs and private sector partners and help build capacities to advance the agenda for leaving no one behind. This should go beyond project-based, contractual and funding relationships and move towards a partnership model, which is particularly important for reaching the furthest behind.</b>				
<b>Management response:</b> UNDP accepts recommendation 4. UNDP will renew its efforts to utilize its convening power, technical capacity and partnership networks to promote the meaningful participation of civil society actors in public life, with a strong focus on removing barriers preventing the meaningful participation of specific population groups as well as strengthening the capacity of civil society actors representing those furthest behind. UNDP will continue to amplify formal and informal partnerships with civil society, including activists, youth groups, volunteers, indigenous peoples and NGOs in its work advocating for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and commitment to leaving no one behind. UNDP will more systematically involve women's organizations and other groups advocating for rights in dialogues with national and international institutions. UNDP will also continue to dedicate efforts to engage the private sector in the leaving no one behind agenda, bringing more efficiency and innovation to help Governments better serve those left behind.				
4.1 Develop dedicated policy and programme guidance to support implementation of the governance global programme, supported by dedicated advisory capacity with a strong focus on nurturing civic space and ensuring equality of opportunities for participation in the public sphere, especially for population groups that historically have been marginalized and disadvantaged.	Q2 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux		

4.2 Develop and roll out strategy to further strengthen youth advisory groups, sounding boards and platforms to meaningfully engage young people in partnership-building and policy and programme support.	Q2 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, regional bureaux, BERA		
4.3 Develop and amplify existing civil society partnership platforms to empower remote and hard-to-reach local actors as active agents in social transformation, including through a review of operational modalities to support CSOs beyond a limited service-provision role in project implementation.	Q3 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, BERA		
4.4. Develop tools and guidance under the Inclusive Innovation Journey to advance private sector engagement on leaving no one behind.	Q2 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, BERA		
<b>Recommendation 5. Deliberately fund programmatic integration of leaving no one behind. When allocating regular resources and negotiating cost sharing, UNDP should strategically consider reaching the furthest behind principles and country scores on the corresponding corporate marker. Resource mobilization strategies should specifically clarify the UNDP value proposition for reaching the furthest behind first and the cost of inaction.</b>				
<b>Management response:</b> UNDP <u>accepts</u> recommendation 5. UNDP shares the concern that the GDP-based allocation criteria for regular resources funding fall short of the reality on the ground. UNDP will explore the criteria for allocation of regular resources to better align with countries' development needs and leaving no one behind principles, going beyond GDP-based criteria. The corporate resource mobilization strategy currently under development aims to clearly articulate the UNDP value proposition in line with the Strategic Plan to key audience groups, and leverage the various strategies, engagement plans and institutional capabilities for advocacy, partnership and fundraising. By countering the current difficult and restricted funding practice, the strategy will help mobilize adequate and flexible funding, which in turn enables UNDP to strategically allocate resources to underfunded areas and mandates, including the leaving no one behind agenda.				
5.1 The midterm review of the Strategic Plan will offer the opportunity to explore the criteria for allocation of regular resources to better align with the development needs of programme countries, to better target those left behind.	Q3 2023	BERA, BMS, BPPS		
5.2 Develop the corporate resource mobilization strategy to secure adequate, flexible and predictable funding to enable UNDP to have the means to deliver on its mandate, including the leaving no one behind agenda.	Q4 2022	BERA	Ongoing	
5.3. Integrate leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first in external engagement plans and advocacy campaigns.	Q2 2023	BERA		
<b>Recommendation 6. Update metrics and learning for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first. UNDP should invest in more holistic corporate-level metrics and learning that highlight the perspectives of those furthest behind, demonstrate a systems-thinking approach and strategically consider intersectionality.</b>				
<b>Management response:</b> UNDP <u>accepts</u> recommendation 6 and acknowledges the need for more holistic metrics and learning with specific focus on intersectionality of left-behind groups in its programming. Work is already under way to significantly improve the leaving no one behind marker and its metrics by incorporating an intersectionality function in Quantum, which is expected to go live in January 2023. UNDP is currently rolling out the portfolio initiation framework to integrate portfolio approaches in programme and project management policies and procedures with the objective of promoting dynamic				

and holistic approaches to managing development interventions to achieve systemic change. The framework will be tested in 40+ pilot country offices to in addition to projects and to provide additional metrics to lift the quality assurance guidance on leaving no one behind. The UNDP project quality assurance standards and systems will be revised, as part of the update of results-based management, to improve targeting and measuring impact to advance the leaving no one behind/reaching the furthest behind first agenda. UNDP will conduct impact and portfolio evaluations of UNDP programmes, upon the availability of guidelines, that will credibly help measure, report and demonstrate impact from UNDP support in the lives of people, especially those left behind.				
6.1 Update the leaving no one behind marker to enable intersectionality analysis of leaving no one behind groups, including a guidance note and training on the use of the new marker-	Q3 2023	BPPS, Crisis Bureau, BMS	Ongoing	
6.2 Integrate portfolio approaches in the UNDP programme and project management policies and procedures to promote dynamic and holistic approaches to managing development interventions to achieve systemic change. Roll out the portfolio approach through the portfolio initiation framework in 40+ pilot country offices to operationalize the programme in addition to projects and to provide additional metrics to lift the quality assurance guidance on leaving no one behind.	Q4 2023	BPPS	Ongoing	
6.3 Update the UNDP project quality assurance standards and systems, as part of the results-based management update, to improve targeting and measuring impact to advance the programming principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.	Q4, 2023	BPPS		
6.4 Conduct impact and portfolio evaluations of UNDP programmes, upon the availability of guidelines, to help measure, report and demonstrate impact from UNDP support in the lives of people, especially those left behind.	Q4 2023	BPPS		

\* The implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.