



UN-Habitat's Role in Joint Programming for the Delivery of MDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Acknowledgements

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AECI	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation
ADESCO	Community Development Association (El Salvador)
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DaO	Delivering as One
FAM	Federation of Municipal Authorities (Costa Rica)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEDEMSUR	Federation of Southern Municipalities (Costa Rica)
FMLN	Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
FUNDASAL	Foundation for El Salvador
HolCim	Holderbank Cimeat (Company)
HPM	Habitat Programme Manager
HSO	Human Settlements Officer
ISER	Institute for Religious Studies (Brazil)
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
JP	Joint Programme
JUDESUR	Development Group for the Southern Region (Costa Rica)
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund
MEIC	Ministry of Economy, Investment and Commerce (Costa Rica)
MIDUVI	Ministry for Urban Development and Housing
MOP	Ministry of Public Works (El Salvador)
MPT-F	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
MSP	Ministry of Public Health (Ecuador)
MTSIP	Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Steering Committee
OIM	International Organization for Migration
PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
RC	Resident Coordinator
ROLAC	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-Habitat)
SENAGUA	Secretaría Nacional de Agua (Ecuador)
UCA	University of Central America
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNDG	United Nations Development Group (LAC)
UPP	Units for Pacification Programme (Brazil)
€	Euro (Currency)
USD	United States Dollar (\$)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The final evaluation of UN-Habitat's role in the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDG-F) joint programme for Latin America and the Caribbean was conducted between November 2013 and March 2014 by two independent consultants. The ex-post evaluation was expected to provide UN-Habitat management, entities responsible for project development and implementation in UN-Habitat Regional Offices and at headquarters, governing bodies, donors and key stakeholders with a forward-looking objective assessment of the value-added, achievements, lessons, challenges and opportunities resulting from UN-Habitat's participation in joint programming. In addition, consideration was given UN-Habitat's adherence to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and One UN Approach in attaining development results and supporting the achievement of MDG targets.
2. The evaluation was guided by key questions addressing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of UN-Habitat's performance at different stages of the programme cycle. The methodology that was applied combined a comprehensive desk review of joint programme documents, field visits to project sites in El Salvador, Costa Rica and Ecuador, and online interviews with UN-Habitat and Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) staff as well as country stakeholders from Guatemala.
3. The MDG-F joint programme for Latin America and the Caribbean has been an important driver of inter-agency collaboration and contributed to One UN policies, through experiences and lessons that have led to a better understanding of the joint programming modality. For UN-Habitat, it offered a window of opportunity to advocate innovative concepts supported by technical expertise and implementation capabilities at both local and policy levels. This has strengthened ROLAC's strategic positioning and institutional image in the region, with new project opportunities in some countries. One of ROLAC's present challenges is to sustain the momentum generated in various countries through the MDG-F joint programme, in order to consolidate medium-term programme opportunities with national authorities and other partners.
4. The predominance of crosscutting issues in the joint programme has been one of its outstanding features. UN-Habitat participated in projects that supported environment and climate change, democratic economic governance, gender equality and women's empowerment, conflict prevention and peace building, and development of the private sector. The thematic diversity of the project portfolio and involvement of various UN agencies (particularly when there was co-implementation) encouraged cross-fertilizing and broader conceptual frameworks that often transcended the traditional agency mandates. Many project evaluations have highlighted the 'transversality' of project components and their inter-linkages. When project activities were synchronized, the products and services supported by a UN agency provided inputs to or complemented the products of others. UN-Habitat's outputs often fed into those of other agencies (and vice-versa). When this happened, the products of individual agencies contributed to a larger picture with greater cumulative impact potential. Synchronicity was especially important for the more complex projects that were multi-thematic and worked at various levels with different timelines, or in isolated regions where activities were dispersed.
5. UN-Habitat contributed substantively and brought added value to the nine projects it participated in under the MDG-F joint programme for Latin America, which encompassed a total of 54 initiatives implemented between 2008 and 2013, with a combined budget of USD 301,2 million (of which USD 6.8 million were allocated to UN-Habitat). The UN-Habitat project portfolio covered five of the eight MDG-F's thematic areas; democratic economic governance, gender equality and women's empowerment, development and the private sector, environment and climate change, and conflict prevention and peace building. In several countries UN-Habitat assumed lead roles in project design; in all cases proposals were consulted with national partners, adjusted and validated by target beneficiaries. Partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement were at the core of the actions pursued under the joint programme, and UN-Habitat's contributions

to building cooperation linkages—leveraging collaboration of national/municipal authorities with community organizations; forging innovative partnerships with universities and private sector corporations—has been outstanding. Interviewed national government authorities and local community activists have recognized UN-Habitat's contributions both in terms of product —demonstrating inclusive approaches to urban improvement and the provision of basic services —and process, through consistent support for national participation and ownership at different levels.

6. All projects in the evaluation sample were supportive of national or local development priorities. The joint programme's relevance to national development objectives was manifested in the support and commitment levels of government authorities. Project design approaches were variable depending on the national context and established practices of UN agencies at the country level. In general, project components and activities were formulated according to the lead agency's vision and field of expertise. As a result, project work plans were often an agglomeration of individual agency contributions. When more interactive design processes were applied, the resulting proposals gained relevance and partner commitment. Joint arrangements for administration and financial management, monitoring and reporting were given little attention during project design in most cases; this represented one of the main internal obstacles to joint programme delivery. External obstacles included national electoral processes, turnovers of partner staff, and low institutional capacities—and is a key challenge that needs to be addressed by One UN policymakers in order to enhance the viability of joint programming.
7. The availability of MDG-F funding over a three-year period was a powerful incentive for agency 'buy-in' to the joint programme. In some cases this encouraged inter-agency competition, particularly in countries where resource mobilization options were limited or government cost sharing for UN agencies restricted. The distribution of MDG-F funding by thematic areas may have encouraged agencies to assume functions for which they had little experience in some cases (water governance is mentioned as an example by one evaluation). While there was institutional learning and new opportunities to be derived from diversifying into new areas, this did not improve the project's likelihood of achieving the planned results and outcomes.
8. Competition for programme funding also appeared to encourage ambitious project design by UN agencies in several cases, as reflected in complex institutional arrangements and excessive numbers of results that were unlikely to be achieved within the three-year implementation period. As a result, outputs and results were achieved by all projects under the joint programme, yet were often incipient and in process of consolidation by the end of the project. This situation was reinforced by an overall absence of exit strategies in project design, and 'boom to bust' project cycles that came to an abrupt halt when MDG-F financing was terminated. Likewise, the combination of short project timelines, slow start-ups and delays resulting from electoral processes focused the attention of project teams on immediate delivery demands; there was little space or opportunity to articulate gradual exit strategies or transfer processes (although more than one mid-term evaluation called attention to this issue).
9. Within this context, ROLAC's performance in designing, implementing and coordinating project components under the joint programme was generally satisfactory with examples of technical excellence, efficiency and good practice. Several UN-Habitat initiatives benefitted from prior experience in the region, and were designed with an understanding of national contexts and priorities. Attitude was also a determining factor, and interviewed country respondents often perceived UN-Habitat as one of the more responsive and user-friendly UN agencies within the joint programme.
10. The implementation approaches applied by ROLAC tended to combine interventions at different levels. UN-Habitat was most effective in influencing the enabling national policy and legal environments, especially when this was accompanied by local demonstration initiatives. Local demonstration projects were implemented with community organizations and successful approaches documented to inform government partners and encourage their replication. At the same time, UN-Habitat supported lobbying, gave technical advice, and organized work breakfasts and study tours for legislators to influence the national legal and regulatory frameworks for

themes as diverse as social housing, water and sanitation, and gender and race. The reinforcing loops of local and policy-level interventions offered a potentially wider range of impact by articulating outputs and results at different levels.

11. All projects within the joint programme have achieved programmed results and contributed indirectly to MDG progress at the country level. However, these contributions could not be measured practically all cases. There were methodological constraints in linking joint programme performance to the achievement of national MDG targets. Project impacts were often localized, spread over various pilot locations, and intended for demonstration purposes. Sub-national or municipal MDG targets on which to measure changes were not available, nor were the tracking systems in place. Most projects were designed without pre-implementation baseline data or indicators on which to assess impacts and other changes attributable to the joint programme. However, there were tangible improvements in local livelihoods through investments in urban infrastructure, improved access to water and sanitation services, and better neighborhood security through the recuperation of degraded public spaces for community events. In some projects there were changes in the configuration of local power relations as community organizations assumed management and oversight functions, gained capacity and confidence, and sought greater participation in municipal development. UN-Habitat contributed decisively to the approval/revision of policies and legislation in several countries that strengthen enabling conditions for MDG achievement; however, the new policies and laws need to be applied in order to have impact.
12. Despite the *ex post* timing of this evaluation, it is still early for a full-fledged assessment of the sustainability of joint programme results. The three-year implementation period supported by the MDG-F was barely adequate to implement project activities, and was in most cases insufficient to enable the transfer and consolidation of results by national partners. The influence on national policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks improve conditions for sustainability over time, provided the political and budgetary will is in place to ensure their application. There is a high likelihood of sustained improvements in local living conditions resulting from investments in urban infrastructure and services in pilot municipalities. Several of the urban improvement and peace-building approaches piloted by UN-Habitat are being replicated by partner organizations in other municipalities.
13. Although funding from the Government of Spain for the MDG-F was discontinued and there is no possibility of continued funding or follow-up to the LAC joint programme, there are a number of lessons and recommendations that are relevant for future joint programming initiatives. Most projects would have benefitted from a pre-implementation inception phase. The transfer and sustainability of results need to be built into project design and work plans—particularly for the second half of implementation. Inconsistent administrative and financial management practices among UN agencies are possibly the main obstacle to joint programme efficiency and effectiveness. The implementation and coordination strategies applied by UN-Habitat within the joint programme shared common attributes that can be systematized, in order to develop a 'working model' applicable to other countries and regions. The various lessons and recommendations—including those summarized above—are developed further in the final chapters of this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

14. This evaluation is expected to provide UN-Habitat management, the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), governing bodies (CPR) donors and key stakeholders in MDG-F joint programming with a forward-looking assessment of the value-added, achievements, lessons, challenges and opportunities linked to UN-Habitat's participation in Joint programming.
15. The evaluation findings should contribute to shaping strategies and exploiting opportunities, as well as towards enhancing UN-Habitat's collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners through joint programming; designing and replicating innovative implementation approaches, and accelerating the attainment of MDGs. The specific objectives of the evaluation are:
 - To assess the relevance of UN-Habitat's involvement in LAC Joint programming to attain development results and achieving MDGs targets and overall MDG-F objectives (MDGs, Paris Declaration, UN reform) and UN-Habitat MTSIP priorities;
 - To assess the extent to which the modality of joint programmes as well as funding processes and coordination mechanisms were enabling for UN-Habitat to define the results to be achieved, effectively deliver the projects/programmes or services developed, and to report on performance of UN-Habitat;
 - To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN-Habitat projects in Joint programming in achieving expected results. This will entail analysis of actual versus expected outcomes achieved by UN-Habitat in terms of delivery of outputs and expected outcomes and long-term effects in the six countries (Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico), in which join programming operated;
 - To assess the prospects for continuation of the activities and the extent of ownership of beneficiaries;
 - To assess the extent to which UN-Habitat incorporated cross-cutting issues of gender, climate change, youth, human rights, advocacy in the design, implementation, and performance reporting of its joint programmes;
 - To identify why and how successful approaches and strategies worked—and which did not—drawing out key findings, lessons from UN-Habitat's joint programming experience;
 - Taking into account the intended users of the evaluation, make recommendations on what needs to be done for effective participation of UN-Habitat in Joint programming aiming at accelerating attainment of MDG targets in ROLAC.
16. These objectives were articulated into a set of guiding evaluation questions addressing focus areas of relevance, efficiency effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation questions provide the basis for the reporting format, and are annexed to this report with the full Terms of Reference (Annex 1).

1.2 PAST EVALUATIONS

17. All projects under the MDG-F joint programme were subject to mid-term and final evaluations, applying a common format that was developed by the MDG-F. Following the mid-term evaluation, several projects elaborated Improvement Plans that outlined proposed changes to project implementation, institutional coordination and management practices among other aspects. All documents are available and can be downloaded from the MDG-F website. This evaluation represents the only programme-wide exercise that is focused on UN-Habitat performance.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 MANDATE AND FOCUS OF THE MDG-F AND UN-HABITAT

18. Over the years, the UN system has sought ways to strengthen programming and coordination practices between its constituent agencies, funds and programmes in order to encourage institutional synergies, offer integrated responses to development challenges, and improve the cost-effectiveness of programme delivery. The One UN and Delivering as One (DaO) policies have embodied this endeavor, with an increasing number of agencies and country offices applying joint implementation modalities that aim to operationalize the One UN/DaO approaches at programme and project levels. Within this context, the UN Development Group for the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region has repeatedly confirmed its intention in promoting the joint implementation of UN programmes in the region.
19. In December 2006, UNDP and the Government of Spain signed an agreement to establish a new fund to accelerate efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and to support UN reform efforts at the country level. The Government of Spain committed €528 million to the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) for programming between 2007 and 2010.
20. The MDG-F is aligned with the UN programming and financial systems. Its Secretariat and Steering Committee are located at UNDP, which administers the funds through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPT-F Office). The MDG-F Steering Committee provides MDG-F with overall leadership. The Steering Committee sets the strategic direction of the Fund, decides on financial allocations to joint programmes, monitors strategic allocations and delivery amongst priorities and countries, and tracks Fund-wide progress. The MDG-F Secretariat, located in the Partnerships Bureau of UNDP headquarters, services the Steering Committee. It ensures policies and strategies decided by the Steering Committee are implemented and adhered to. The Secretariat also manages the proposal review process and manages the Fund's overall monitoring and evaluation strategy.
21. The MDG-F has supported 128 initiatives in 59 countries within the framework of the Millennium Development Agreement and Paris Declaration, with the intention of accelerating national progress towards MDGs through the application of innovative development practices. MDG-F support was implemented through the joint programming modality; the availability of financing for joint programming initiatives has provided a valuable incentive for inter-agency collaboration and has clearly contributed to One UN and DaO policies.
22. UN-Habitat is the lead United Nations agency for cities and human settlement. The agency was established in 1997 and has its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. In 1996, as part of an initiative to decentralize UN-Habitat activities, the agency established the Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) with the intent of improving presence and to providing better support for implementation of UN-Habitat normative and operational initiatives in the region. In 2002, governments attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) mandated UN-Habitat to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015. UN-Habitat is fully involved in the eight MDGs and contributes to their achievement through the Joint programmes in collaboration with other UN agencies as reflected in the current UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and Work Programme 2014-2015.
23. Through the Millennium Development Fund (MDG-F), UN-Habitat has engaged in joint programming in the Latin American and Caribbean Region in Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. The participation in the Joint Programmes (JPs) has provided a number of opportunities for the UN-Habitat Regional Office (ROLAC), in furthering UN-Habitat's mandate, developing and implementing innovative operational activities and improving collaboration and communication with other UN agencies,

implementing partners and the civil society. Other experiences of joint programming such as in Haiti have included aid and post disaster perspectives.

24. UN-Habitat's share of the global MDG-F is USD 10,5 million. It is ranked fourteenth in funds size out of 27 UN Agencies that have received MDG-F funds. UN-Habitat's global delivery rate as of February 2013 was 59.8 per cent (fifth lowest out of the 27 UN Agencies).
25. Between 2008 and 2013, the MDG-F supported a joint programme for the LAC region. The MDG-F financed 54 joint programmes across Latin American and Caribbean countries for a global amount of USD 301.2 million, out of which USD 6.794 million was allocated to UN-Habitat. The thematic areas that received the highest share of resources for the region were Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (10 programmes

and USD 53.4 million) with emphasis in citizen security programmes, Children, Food Security and Nutrition (8 programmes and USD 52 million), Democratic Economic Governance, with emphasis on water and sanitation management (7 programmes and USD 40 million), Development and Private Sector (7 programmes and USD 38.7 million) and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (5 programmes and USD 35.4 million). Joint programmes were developed in 18 countries of the region: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. UN-Habitat participated in nine projects under the LAC joint programme. These projects were implemented in six countries over a three-year period, and focused on five thematic areas. They are summarized in figure 1:

FIGURE 1: MDG-F Joint Programme for LAC: Country Projects that involved UN-Habitat

Project Title	Country	UN-Habitat Budget (USD)	Thematic Area
F071 Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve Natural and Cultural Heritage	Ecuador	128,394	Environment and Climate Change
F074 Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation to support the Achievement of the MDGs in peri-urban contexts	Mexico	780,000	Democratic Economic Governance
F079 Inter-agency Programme for Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality	Brazil	177,677	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
F080 Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	Ecuador	2,741,776	Democratic Economic Governance
F082 Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear	Costa Rica	582,080	Conflict Prevention and Peace-building
F084 Consolidating Peace in Guatemala Through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management (MDGs)	Guatemala	529,960	Conflict Prevention and Peace-building
F085 Contribution to the UN Joint Programme Security with Citizenship in Brazilian Communities	Brazil	798,808	Conflict Prevention and Peace-building
F090 Regional Competitiveness for the Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region with emphasis on the creation of green and decent jobs	Costa Rica	427,010	Development and the Private Sector
F092 Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador	El Salvador	1,157,740	Development and the Private Sector

26. The projects were consistent with three focus areas of the UN-Habitat Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) 2008-2013. These were *Focus Area 1*: Effective advocacy, monitoring, and partnership, *Focus Area 2*: Urban planning, management, and governance, and *Focus Area 4*: Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services.
27. The total value of the UN-Habitat LAC MDG-F portfolio was USD 6,794,015. Project budgets ranged from as little as USD 128,394 (F071) to USD 2,741,776 (F092). The first project began implementation in July 2008, and all projects were implemented by June 2013. All projects underwent mid-term and final evaluations.
28. In each country, the UN Resident Coordinator was entrusted with leadership of the overall joint programme design, and provided oversight to the

joint programme's implementation. A National Steering Committee (NSC) was established in each country to provide oversight and strategic guidance to the programme as well as approving annual work plans and budgets. NSC members consisted of non-implementing parties to allow for independence and included representatives of the national government, a representative of the Government of Spain and the RC. Other participants from civil society or the donor community were occasionally invited as well. NSC meetings were usually held on a biannual basis. Finally, a Project Management Committee (PMC) was established at the national level for each individual project under the joint programme. The PMC's role was to provide operational coordination through the participant UN organizations and relevant government counterparts.

3. EVALUATION APPROACH

3.1 METHODOLOGY

29. The evaluation was conducted between November 2013 and February 2014 by Mr. Hugo Navajas (team leader) and Mr. Giorgio Brandolini. As outlined in the inception report, the evaluation methodology followed the following stages:
30. **Initial Desk Review:** The consultants devoted the first weeks to take stock of the available documentation and draw data related to the evaluation questions. The desk review was based on the review of project documents, mid-term and final evaluations, monitoring reports and project improvement plans when applicable (Annex 3: Bibliography). Overarching information about the joint programme—background, funding and institutional arrangements, overall performance and achievements—was obtained from ROLAC and the MDG-F website. The desk review informed the evaluators on what data was available and provided an overview of project design and performance. The review of project documents provided insight into the consideration of cross-cutting issues in project design. The review was also useful for flagging specific project issues to follow up on during the interviews and site visits; and for identifying information gaps. The findings of the desk review were triangulated with the findings derived from interviews with UN-Habitat staff and national partners, and with the findings emerging from discussions with representatives of the targeted beneficiaries.
31. **Inception Report:** Based on the desk review and preliminary discussions with the UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit and ROLAC focal point, the evaluators elaborated an inception plan. The plan described how the evaluation would be carried out; the expectations for evaluation; methods to be used; the countries/projects that would be visited; and the reporting schedule. The inception plan was approved by the Evaluation Unit, UN-Habitat, and thus became the main reference document for the evaluation.
32. **Regional Inception Workshop:** A two-day workshop was planned in San Salvador with the participation of evaluators, UN-Habitat's

Evaluation Unit, ROLAC and UN-Habitat Programme Managers (HPMs). The initially planned purpose of the workshop was to review the draft inception report and work plan, introduce adjustments and discuss logistical and substantive issues relating to the evaluation. This would have contributed towards building a shared vision on how the evaluation would be conducted, and served to plan country visits and interviews with national stakeholders and other respondents. However, the workshop was cancelled due to unexpected connectivity problems that prevented the online participation of Habitat Programme Officers (HPMs). Information was gathered from local stakeholders, the Apopa municipal government and ADESCO community association who participated in the *Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador* project.

33. **Project Visits and Stakeholder Interviews:** Following the regional workshop, the evaluators visited a pre-selected sample of projects and were able to interview country-based UN-Habitat staff, project partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders (Annex 2: Persons Interviewed). Due to time and budget constraints, the evaluators were not able to visit all or most MDG-F projects; three country visits were scheduled applying the following criteria:
- **Project size:** Projects in which UN-Habitat received comparatively large resource allocations from the MDG-F or other sources, i.e. above USD 500,000.
 - **Leadership/Best Practices:** Projects in which UN-Habitat played a lead role in project design and implementation and/or show evidence of "best practices" by UN-Habitat.
 - **Thematic focus:** The evaluators should try to cover at least three of the five thematic areas supported by the joint programme.
34. On this basis, the following projects were selected:
- F092 - Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador

- F080 - Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- F082 - Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear (Costa Rica)
- F090 - Regional Competitiveness for the Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region with emphasis on the creation of green and decent jobs (Costa Rica)

35. **E-consultations with regional and global programme levels:** After the country visits, the evaluators held skype calls with assorted respondents from Guatemala, the UN-Habitat Regional Office for LAC (ROLAC), the MDG Fund at UNDP New York, and some of the Technical Branches at UN-Habitat headquarters that were thematically consistent with the focus of the projects. The consultations offered insight on the links between headquarters, ROLAC and the joint programme at the country level; as well as on the strengths, weaknesses of the joint programming modality. The calls also helped to identify organizational and operational issues that need to be considered by the evaluation.

3.2 LIMITATIONS

36. **Limited sample of projects and participants:** That funds and time were insufficient to visit all or most project sites was understood from the start. The question was how to reach a representative sample of national partners and stakeholders for all projects—or at least in all countries—for information gathering and systematizing perceptions and emergent trends. The evaluators proposed the design of an online survey (with *survey monkey* software) with key evaluation questions, to capture the full project portfolio and obtain feedback from a broader audience of national stakeholders. The survey modality was considered useful to document the perceptions of different focus groups, ranking responses, and detecting trends on a multi-project scale. This would have enabled quantification of ratings of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, combined with open questions.

The survey was not pursued because ROLAC was unable to recuperate sufficient contact information, because records were not kept or activities terminated; most countries lacked a UN-Habitat focus person to provide information needed.

37. **Short visits to project sites:** The country visits were well organized, extremely useful and provided valuable insight into the *ex post* situation. Representatives from different stakeholder groups were contacted and in several cases the main participants had moved on or institutional memory was fading. This was not enough for an in-depth review but it did serve to update the final evaluation findings with a post-project perspective, and focus the analysis more specifically on UN-Habitat's role and performance.

38. The depth and quality of the evaluators analysis was limited by the following factors:

- There were no over-arching performance indicators or stated expectations for the LAC joint programme as a whole. Moreover, most of the outputs and results contained in the project results frameworks did not have measurable indicators. Under these conditions, the evaluation analysis becomes qualitative and descriptive.

- It is not possible to link project accomplishments to the achievement of national or sub-national MDG targets—even though this was the fundamental rationale for MDG-F funding. Likewise, the scale of UN-Habitat intervention makes it difficult to link UN-Habitat's to broader project achievements beyond stating its direct or indirect contribution.

- There are practical difficulties in re-establishing contact with consultants, government counterparts and other partners after the project has terminated. People move on to other jobs, are reassigned or simply do not wish to participate. The lack of accessible respondents may undermine the rationale of conducting country visits or preparing e-surveys, jeopardizing the quality of the evaluation.

- Ex-post evaluations such are well placed to assess post-project sustainability, yet must cope with declining institutional memory as time passes.
- In Ecuador, the evaluators visit coincided with the festivities and a holiday in the capital city, which affected the availability of some stakeholders.

3.3 REPORT OUTLINE

39. The outline of this report is based on the analysis of the key questions and thematic foci that are contained in the terms of reference (Annex 1). They include a description of the joint programme background and MDG-F context, the methodological approach utilized (and limitations encountered), and an in-depth assessment of the following evaluation criteria: Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and replicability. The analysis contained in these sections is complemented by a set of final chapters addressing conclusions/key findings, lessons learned and recommendations.
40. At the request of the UN-Habitat Evaluation Unit, the report outline follows the standard format that is applied to UN-Habitat evaluations, both to ensure consistency and enable comparability with other evaluations.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE UN-HABITAT MDG-F PORTFOLIO

41. UN-Habitat has played a substantive role and added value to its projects under the joint programme. This was often reflected in the number and level of achievements realized within the joint programme's three year duration. In particular, UN-Habitat was able to influence national policy and legal/regulatory frameworks in countries such as Mexico, Ecuador and El Salvador, which has impact potential to the extent that new laws and policies are adequately budgeted and enforced. In several projects there were localized impacts through the demonstration of integrated approaches to urban improvement, access to basic services and citizen security. Many of these experiences have been documented and systematized by UN-Habitat, which facilitates their replication on a broader scale. The implementation approaches piloted by UN-Habitat have influenced the way some national partner institutions now work in their respective core areas. "Soft" achievements such as changes to local attitudes and organizational capacity were achieved in several countries (El Salvador, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador among others) and have influenced the momentum and post-project continuity of joint programme initiatives.
42. While there were achievements, the joint programme's contribution towards advancing the achievement of national MDGs was indirect and cannot be measured. Final project evaluations do not describe achievements in terms of their influence on MDGs, nor was such information available to the evaluators. Project design and monitoring did not correlate outputs or results to

MDG advancement; and there are understandable difficulties in making such a connection.

43. For most projects, the scale of intervention needed to influence MDG progress required a medium-term programmatic and budgetary commitment that was not possible under the joint programme. Project interventions were often localized and served demonstration purposes, small-scale and unfeasible to track in MDG terms (more so with the absence of sub-national or municipal MDG targets and monitoring systems). As mentioned earlier, several UN-Habitat initiatives have contributed to new or revised policies, laws and regulations that improve the enabling conditions for MDG achievement, but their effects are not measurable at present. Policies and laws must be implemented, which in turn requires a medium-term political and budgetary commitment by government authorities that were outside the scope and responsibility of the MDG-F joint programme.

4.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

44. UN-Habitat contributed to the achievement of development results in most of the joint programme initiatives it participated in. In particular, achievements were related to the demonstration of livelihood and service/infrastructure improvements in pilot communities, changes to national/regional legal and regulatory frameworks, and the attitude and commitment of local stakeholders to urban improvement processes. Achievements under the joint programme that were led by UN-Habitat are summarized in Figure 2, and described in more detail in sections 5.3 "Effectiveness" and 5.4 "Impact".

FIGURE 2: Achievements attributable to UN-Habitat's participation in the MDG-F Joint Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean

Project Code	Project Title	Specific Achievements	Overall Level of Achievement
F082	Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear (Costa Rica) *	Community participation enhanced by communities agents and networks	High
		Improved citizen security through the recuperation of public spaces ensuring better livelihood conditions and municipal services deployment	Medium
		Collaboration of public, private and academic institutions to community development	Medium
F090	Regional Competiveness for the Tourism and Agroindustrial Sectors in the Brunca Region (Costa Rica) *	Strengthening policies and regulations fostering PPP in local development	High
		Establishment of services guiding / supporting the enterprises development	High
		Collaboration of public, private and academic institutions to local development	High
F071	Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve Natural and Cultural Heritage (Ecuador)	Enhanced communication between communities and institutions in local / community development and natural resources conservation	Medium
		Elaboration of land-use plans	High
		Integration of project and ongoing initiatives	Medium
		Environmental protection	Medium
F080	Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals (with UNDP)	Promotion of women participation in local development	Low
		Improved policy and regulatory framework: Ley de Prestación de Servicios de Agua y Saneamiento Plan Nacional de Vigilancia de la Calidad de Agua Política Nacional de Cultura del Agua	High
		Buildup of communities and municipalities capacities in performing decentralized community development services / support to the decentralization policies	Medium
		Improved community access / management of WASH infrastructure and services (water sourcing, treatment delivery to rural communities, public buildings, schools)	High
		Enhanced PPP in the supply of WASH services supply	Medium
F092	Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador *	Enhanced women participation to community development	Medium
		Improving policy and regulatory framework: Ley de Loteamiento and Ley de Banca de Desarrollo. Likewise, the Ley de Reducción de Trámites	High
		Enhanced participation in urban planning fostering local learning and empowerment in community development	High
		Mobilization of local creativity in urban planning and local development enhanced on the basis of territorial and land-use planning	high
		Social inclusion in community development	
		Analysis of productive chains to the construction sector and income creation along the urban development chain model	High
		Leverage of external contributions to community development	Medium
		Urban improvements in public and private infrastructure in low-income municipalities	Medium
		Collaboration of public, private and academic institutions to community development	High
Mainstreaming environmental protection in urban development (environmental friendly technology)	Low		
F079*	Inter-agency Programme for Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality (Brazil)	Enhanced framework for mainstreaming gender and racial/ethnic equality at the community level	High
		Enhanced community participation in promoting gender and racial/ethnic equality through communities agents and networks	Low
F085	Improved citizen security through the recuperation of public spaces (Brazil)	Establishment of secure spaces based on local participation and creativity	Medium
		Local capacities in community development enhanced through the coordination of local institutions initiatives	Medium
		Enhanced participation of institutions and civil society in ensuring security in urban areas	Low

Project Code	Project Title	Specific Achievements	Overall Level of Achievement
F084	Consolidating Peace in Guatemala Through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management	Improved citizen security through the recuperation of public spaces: establishment of safe spaces by mobilization of local participation, national and local institutions	Medium
		Support to decentralization processes	Medium
		Promotion of local creativity in enhancing community development through social communication	High
		Cooperation of institutions and civil society in community building	Low
F074	Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation to support the Achievement of the MDGs (Mexico)	Enhanced policy and regulatory framework in the WASH sector through formulation and revisions of the Ley de Aguas and Ley de Agua y de Sustentabilidad.	Medium
		Buildup of a knowledge base on WASH ecologically-sound practices, including monitoring indicators	High
		Strengthened local authorities capacities in the WASH sector	Medium
		Integrated environmental friendly technologies in WASH infrastructure of demonstrating ecologically-sound public schools (pilot level)	High
		Collaboration of public, private and academic institutions to community development	High

Note: The list of project achievements and associated ratings are based on the desk review of project evaluations and other documentation. Projects marked with an asterisk () were visited on an ex-post basis and national stakeholders interviewed by the evaluators.*

5. ASSESSMENT OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 RELEVANCE

5.1.1 Relevance and value-added of UN-Habitat in joint programming

45. UN-Habitat has contributed substantively to joint programming in different stages of the project cycle. In particular UN-Habitat stands out for bringing innovative concepts and technical quality for inclusive urban development and settlement planning, as well as participatory project design and implementation that engaged very different actors. It demonstrated know-how in working both with marginal peri-urban neighborhoods and at national policy and legislative levels. The relevance of UN-Habitat's approach is additionally reflected in the fact that several partnerships and project initiatives have continued beyond the project term and in some cases are being replicated.
46. UN-Habitat's contribution to linking national stakeholders—public institutions, local governments, community-based organizations, private partners and academia—has been outstanding. The project teams and the methods applied have encouraged participation of local organizations, and guided collaboration towards common objectives that addressed local needs as well as policy/regulatory issues. In several cases this was critical to building consensus and applying innovative approaches in complex socio-economic environments.
47. ROLAC demonstrated a strategic awareness of the 'window of opportunity' offered by joint programme, and used it to full advantage. Another contributing factor was the effective timing of project implementation vis-à-vis political cycles, as happened El Salvador where implementation coincided with a new national government. The project components that were coordinated by UN-Habitat were very well designed in most cases, supporting both national development and policy priorities and specific local needs. They were designed in most cases to tackle constraints to the development of marginal urban settlements and peripheral regions. In countries such as El Salvador, UN-Habitat's performance triggered follow-up initiatives and the approval of a country

cooperation agreement. This has strengthened ROLAC's institutional presence in the region.¹

5.1.2 Relevance to national/local needs and the achievement of MDGs

48. All projects in the evaluation sample were supportive of national or local development priorities. Yet their value added towards the achievement of MDGs is difficult to assess. While all projects have indirectly contributed to MDG advancement, their contributions cannot be measured in most cases. This reflects in part on the methodological limitations in linking joint programme performance—and agency performance in particular—to the achievement of national MDG targets: Most projects failed to consider pre-implementation baseline data in their design². Likewise, there are difficulties in measuring the effects of incremental capacity building or awareness-raising processes. And disaggregated MDG targets on which to measure advances at sub-national or municipal levels do not exist in most cases.
49. As a result, most project evaluations do not correlate project results and impacts to MDGs beyond a brief and often superficial analysis. The final evaluation of F090 Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region noted "...incoherencies in the logic of intervention that undermine the measurement of results. There are products that lack clarity. In the same manner, the indicators adopted during project formulation do not facilitate the assessment of the Joint Programme's contribution to the MDGs."³ The mid-term evaluation of F080 Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals found participating

¹ Whereas in countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica, the level of UN-Habitat activity fell sharply or was discontinued entirely following the termination of the joint programme and MDG-F funding in particular.

² In this respect, F092 Urban and Productive Integrated Settlements in El Salvador offers a "good practice" in project design by documenting pre-implementation baseline levels and measuring changes according to established indicators.

³ Development of competitiveness for the Brunca region in tourism and agro-industry sectors: Mid-term evaluation (C. Carballo, June 2011), pg. 33

UN agencies to be inexperienced in water and sanitation governance, lowering the project's potential contributions towards MDG achievement under this theme 4. The mid-term evaluation of F084 Consolidating Peace in Guatemala through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management recognized that the project was relevant 'in spirit' to MDGs 3 and 5 (gender equity, women's empowerment and improved maternal health), yet did not contribute to environmental sustainability (MDG 7) or to development alliances (MDG 8)—nor had indicators been determined to measure such contributions—despite claims made to the effect in the project document.⁵ Several evaluations noted that the results achieved were at an incipient stage and required further consolidation in order to influence MDGs, i.e. F080 Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador and F090 Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region among others.

5.1.3 Involvement of local and national stakeholders

50. Community participation in project design has been understandably variable and conditioned by social leadership capabilities, political junctures, local cultures of participation and beneficiary motivation. In all cases observed, local stakeholders were made aware of the projects' objectives and encouraged to collaborate with government partners. They expressed their agreement in several ways—through direct endorsement and participation, through their tacit support to initiatives led by the municipal government, and by offering ideas that were incorporated to project implementation.
51. The evaluation findings support these observations. UN-Habitat built on prior experience in designing F090 *Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region*, Costa Rica's most unequal in terms of income distribution and access to basic services (despite containing the nation's richest biodiversity). By promoting associations of municipalities in combination with the promotion of small and medium-scale enterprises, UN-Habitat articulated regional actors and strengthened the region's ability to

build consensus around common development priorities. These initiatives have assisted the region in leveraging central government and multilateral funds for key capital investment projects. Municipal development plans were elaborated with inputs from local neighborhood organizations and the private sector for the first time.

52. To a large extent UN-Habitat led the design of the Brunca project. This was done *in situ* through workshops that enabled direct interaction of UN agencies with regional stakeholders, enhancing local validation and ownership of the project. This approach was recognized by the UN joint programme coordinator in Costa Rica as a "best practice" that departed significantly from the earlier design of project F082 *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear*, which led by UNDP with little agency or beneficiary involvement. The inclusive process used to formulate the Brunca project is considered an example of adaptive management by the UN agencies, by correcting the earlier design deficiencies. Although *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear* got off to a bad start due to its design approach—most municipal governments initially refused to participate—UN-Habitat demonstrated the ability to engage local partners and build work relations around a common vision. This was essential to build trust and commitment among municipal partners.

"The municipal government was tired of projects and experts, and that generated internal resistance towards the joint programme.... However, UN-Habitat has validated our work and confirmed that we are moving in the right direction. Our work with UN-Habitat focuses on social strategies; everything revolves around collective participation and public spaces."

- Gerardo Madrigal, Montes de Oca municipality focal point for "Convivial Networks/Communities without Fear" (translated from interview)

53. UN-Habitat also had a lead role in the design and implementation of F092 *Urban and Productive Integrated Settlements in El Salvador*. The project was developed in consultation with the local government authorities of two municipalities, and was supportive of national and local policy priorities—in Apopa, by improving urban conditions through slum upgrading and the legalization of informal settlements; and in Santa Tecla, through the planned construction of a multi-family housing and commercial complex as part of

4 *Governance of the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals: Mid-term Evaluation* (C. Carballo, March 2010), pg. 14

5 *Consolidating peace in Guatemala through the prevention of violence and handling of the conflict: Mid-term Evaluation* (Carlos Carravilla, no date), pg. 21

a wider urban redevelopment scheme. UN-Habitat worked directly with the municipal governments throughout the implementation process, and created substantial participation opportunities for community-based development organizations (ADESCOs) and local residents.

5.1.4 Consideration of crosscutting issues

54. The predominance of crosscutting issues in the joint programme has been one of its outstanding features. UN-Habitat participated in projects that supported environment and climate change, democratic economic governance, gender equality and women's empowerment, conflict prevention and peace building, and development of the private sector. The thematic diversity of the project portfolio and involvement of various UN agencies (particularly when there was co-implementation) encouraged cross-fertilizing and broader conceptual frameworks that often transcended the traditional agency mandates.
55. Indeed, many project evaluations highlighted the 'transversality' of project components and their inter-linkages. This was often reflected in the mainstreaming of gender and ethnicity issues, as was the case with F079 *Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality*, F074 *Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation* and F080 *Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador. Security with Citizenship: preventing violence and strengthening citizenship in Brazilian communities* stands out in this respect, with the final evaluation noting that "... approximately 60 per cent of the programme's actions contemplated more than one thematic area, guaranteeing the inter-sectoriality of implemented activities in a satisfactory manner."⁶

"In terms of results and outcomes, a very interesting exercise was UN-Habitat's collaboration with the Gender & Water Alliance to transversalize the gender focus within the programme's water management component, and promote equal access to safe and adequate water resources."

- F080 *Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador: Final Evaluation* (translated from the Spanish text)

⁶ F085 *Security with Citizenship: preventing violence and strengthening citizenship in Brazilian communities: Final Evaluation* (C. Knijnik, August 2013), pg. 3 (translated from the Portuguese text)

56. Various UN-Habitat initiatives promoted the direct involvement of women and youth groups. Their expectations were taken into account during project implementation, and their participation sustained through community-based organizations as observed in F092 *Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements* in El Salvador and F082 *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear*. This approach strengthened social cohesion in municipalities affected by high insecurity levels, by organizing vocational training, sports and cultural activities for youth (i.e. Apopa and Santa Tecla in San Salvador; Montes de Oca and Guararí/Heredia in the San José metropolitan area) and engaging community organizations in the planning and management of local water and sanitation services in Mexico and Ecuador. The inclusion of gender dimensions within its project components was recognized as a ROLAC strength by interviewed partners in El Salvador and Costa Rica.

5.1.5 Partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement

57. Partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement are at the core of the actions pursued under the joint programmes. In this respect, UN-Habitat's contribution to building cooperation linkages between local and national authorities and forging public-private partnerships has been outstanding. It has helped in building local consensus on project matters and spearheaded innovative solutions for infrastructure, housing and livelihood improvements in marginal urban neighborhoods. Established private enterprises such as Holcim and Tigo offered expertise and financial support to UN-Habitat-led initiatives in El Salvador; likewise, UN-Habitat's partnership with DSF, a private chemical company, contributed substantively to Mexico's water and sanitation project. UN-Habitat's abilities to engage community organizations in projects and mobilize public and private resources were demonstrated in all countries visited.
58. The joint programme's relevance to national development objectives was manifested in the support and commitment levels of government authorities. This was evident in El Salvador (a country in which approximately 30 per cent of the national housing stock lacks legal title), where UN-Habitat's approach influenced housing and urban development policies of the newly elected FMLN government. Likewise, UN-Habitat was

made responsible for territorial planning within the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve, one of the richest biodiversity areas in the world and focus of a high-profile international conservation scheme that was included in the Plan Nacional de Buen Vivir and supported by diverse conservation organizations. The mid-term evaluation of F084 Consolidating Peace in Guatemala through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management noted the convergence of project objectives with those contained in Paris Declaration and 2008-2012 Government Plan.⁷ Likewise, the transversalizing of race and gender in Programme for the Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality (F079) was directly aligned to objectives of the Brazilian government's Plano Plurianual (PPA).⁸ In other cases, national commitment levels were affected by changes in government, turnovers of counterpart staff and other externalities that were outside the joint programme's control. For example, central government support for pilot participatory municipal plans in Brunca declined after national elections and the arrival of new authorities to the Ministry of Economy (MEIC) who refocused the project's approach.

5.2 EFFICIENCY

5.2.1 ROLAC's capacity to design and implement projects with national partners through joint programming

59. Project design has been highly variable depending on the national context and established practices of UN agencies at the country level. In general, project components and activities were formulated according to the lead agency's vision and field of expertise. In some cases this was done with little inter-agency input, e.g. Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear. Project work plans were often the agglomeration of individual agency contributions; which is partly understandable given the broad scope and multiple approaches of most projects. It often happened that similar actions (training, awareness-raising and capacity building) were performed independently by each partner according to its own vision, without framing

these actions under a common methodological approach.

"The institutional dimension of the UN system is extremely complex. In this sense, the Joint Programme made a positive contribution by integrating their activities. The fact that most people could not tell which agency did what is an indicator of success."

-Roberto Gochez, Vice Minister of Housing (El Salvador)

60. Joint arrangements for administrative coordination, monitoring and reporting were given little attention during project design, as noted in the mid-term evaluation of F080 Governance in the Water & Sanitation Sector in Ecuador.⁹ According to the final evaluation of Mexico's Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation, the project's main weakness was its design: External variables such as national elections and changes of national/local authorities weren't considered, inter-agency coordination was neglected and the resources needed to consolidate project achievements were underestimated.¹⁰
61. There were good examples of project design and agency cooperation in the cases of F092 Urban and Productive Integrated Settlements in El Salvador, F090 Regional Competitiveness for the Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region and F071 Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve, which included an Integrated Management Plan. As a result, these projects tended to offer better conditions for inter-agency coordination and encouraged higher levels of joint implementation and procurement, the pooling of equipment and cost sharing for common services.
62. The project evaluations and progress reports offer little insight into ROLAC's design and implementation capacities. This is due to their aggregate scale of analysis (with limited in-depth analysis of individual agency performance) and to the variable country contexts, political junctures

⁷ *Consolidating peace in Guatemala through the prevention of violence and handling of the conflict: Mid-term Evaluation*, (Carlos Caravilla, 2011), pg. 66

⁸ *Interagency Programme for the Promotion of Gender and Ethnic-Racial Equality: Final Evaluation* (L. Pereira, 2012) pg. 1

⁹ *Governance of the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals: Mid-term Evaluation* (C. Carballo, March 2010), pg. 21

¹⁰ *Strengthen the Handling Effective and Democrática of the Water and Sanitation in México to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Final Evaluation* (M. Torregrosa, I. Ahumada and S. Makowski) July 2012, pg. 37

and partner capacities that influenced performance in each case. The evaluators have attempted to deduce ROLAC's overall performance through the analysis of the UN-Habitat-managed project components, where a number of contextual factors come into play. It is therefore important to consider attribution issues when assessing performance and achievement.

63. The prior experience of UN agencies in the joint programme countries and past collaboration with national institutions were the principal 'entry points' that guided project identification and design under the thematic areas. In some cases the resulting projects continued where previous initiatives had left off, as with Ecuador's governance projects that fed into the MDG-F Water and Sanitation Governance project. The design of F090 Regional Competitiveness for the Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region and F074 Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation in Mexico built on the achievements and lessons of prior initiatives; the latter project benefitted from the direct involvement of a national officer linked to the UN-Habitat's Urban Services Technical Branch, who had served as Chief Technical Adviser for an earlier regional water initiative. Other project proposals were reviewed to varying degrees by the relevant technical branches during the appraisal stage for quality assurance purposes, although the level of depth varied considerably. While project identification relied largely on the input of national government authorities, field activities were in most cases customized to the needs and expectations of local beneficiaries. Thus at the start of the project community organizations, neighborhood residents and other stakeholders were encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions; several were incorporated to project implementation.

5.2.2 Efficient projects and programmes

64. The processes led by ROLAC for designing and implementing projects generated considerable 'value added' by strengthening project relevance, encouraging local and national ownership, and creating public-private partnership opportunities that otherwise might not have materialized.
65. ROLAC and national partners have shown good capacities for designing and implementing projects under the joint programme in most countries, with examples of recognized 'best practice' that

improved relevance, performance and results. In several cases UN-Habitat assumed a lead role and has been outstanding in involving local stakeholders, leveraging collaboration of national/municipal authorities with community organizations, and encouraging innovative public-private partnerships (for example, with the University of Central America, Holcim and Tigo in El Salvador). These aptitudes gave UN-Habitat and ROLAC a higher country profile and provided enabling conditions for demonstrating innovative approaches that departed from conventional practices.

"UN-Habitat played a very special role during the project inception and activation phases, largely due to its prior experience in the region."

- Flor Seas, Inter-agency Coordinator for F090 "Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region, Costa Rica"

"UN-Habitat was the tractor that pulled the local actors into action."

- Roberto Chinchilla, National Director for Territorial Planning, Vice-Ministry of Housing, El Salvador

66. UN-Habitat project components often worked simultaneously at different levels. The reinforcing loops of local interventions and actions at national policy levels offer a potentially wider scale of impact that can be sustained through new laws and policies. Ecuador's Water and Sanitation Governance project tackled national policy issues, strengthened public sector actors and supported communities in accessing economic resources with public-private partnerships. ROLAC's collaboration ensured that such actions were consistent with national priorities and associated MDGs, and available to a wider audience through the systematizing of project experiences. The design of several projects shows a tendency to pilot innovative urban improvement processes that enable local participation and ownership, followed by the validation and systematization/dissemination of the approaches used to influence policy and encourage replication.
67. Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements was designed to demonstrate alternative approaches of slum upgrading in two municipalities, selected by indicators of poverty,

vulnerability to disasters and insecurity. The learning derived from piloting comparative approaches has clearly enhanced the project's demonstration value. Project design supported the creation of local capacities and productive chains of stakeholder linkages for construction and income generation. UN-Habitat played a lead role in the project's design and implementation, working directly with the municipal governments of Apopa and Santa Tecla, guiding the design of community improvements, and encouraging the participation of local residents and community-based organizations (ADESCO's) throughout implementation.

"The joint programme has offered an excellent — and unique — contribution to the projection of the smaller UN agencies. Because of their small size, these agencies face difficulties in developing work relations with the larger established agencies or national governments, even when they have country representation."

- Alberto Paraña, retired Senior Human Settlement Officer for ROLAC

68. UN-Habitat's project components often combined interventions at local levels with activities for influencing the legal and regulatory frameworks. The integration of upstream/downstream dynamics has been fruitful, contributing to the approval of new legislation that facilitates titles for informal settlements and ensures credit access by low-income families for housing improvements. Such approaches have shaped a knowledge-intensive, inclusive project that attracted the participation of the academic and private sectors (University of Central America, Holcim, Tigo), and recognized NGOs such as FUNDASAL and Habitat for Humanity. Project activities in Apopa provide an interesting and replicable case study for slum upgrading and the legalization of informal housing settlements (both of which are critical issues in LAC). Some of the practices piloted by the project continue to be applied by partners such as FUNDASAL. Urban Integrated and Productive Sustainable Settlements was the only project of the evaluation sample that developed baseline indicators and is able to quantify changes attributable to the project.
69. ROLAC played a lead role with UNIDO and OIM in designing and activating F090 *Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region*. The project's design

benefited from UN-Habitat's earlier experience in this region and local workshops that engaged UN agencies with the municipal and regional governments, community organizations, the regional development corporation, NGOs and private enterprises. This approach departed significantly from the earlier design of F082 *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear*, which was led by UNDP with limited participation by other agencies or target municipalities. The formulation of the Brunca project is considered a best practice within Costa Rica's joint programme and is attributed to UN-Habitat (in spite of design flaws found by the mid-term evaluation such as the absence of baseline indicators or unclear products that were difficult to measure).

5.2.3 Adequacy of MDG-F institutional arrangements and financing

70. The UN system is very complex institutionally and in terms of its coordination challenges. There is general consensus that the joint programme provided an important stimulus for inter-agency convergence, particularly at the design stage. In most countries the joint programme democratized agency access to funding; the MDG-F made an important difference by 'levelling the playing field'. Agency access to funding was opened, inter-agency collaboration was encouraged, new project and partner opportunities emerged, and core areas of expertise were enriched by the experience.¹¹
71. MDG-F funding appears to have been adequate for most if not all UN-Habitat project components; bearing in mind that these projects often had a demonstration purpose and resources were mostly earmarked for technical assistance. UN-Habitat received USD 10.5 million from MDG-F for its participation in the LAC joint programme, with individual project allocations ranging from USD 128,394 to USD 2,741,766 million. UN-Habitat occupied the 14th place out of 27 agencies in terms of the amount of funding received. In most cases, however, the three-year timeframe was insufficient to achieve all project results, reach the intended outcome or measurably have an effect on national MDG achievement. MDG-F funds were released on schedule and

¹¹ Likewise, Resident Coordinator attitudes and agency hierarchies at the country level were also key determinants in facilitating – or obstructing – inter-agency collaboration and overall programme efficiency.

disbursed by tranches upon certification that the project had spent 70 per cent of the remaining balance—an efficient way to encourage delivery and avoid accumulations of unspent balances. Unfulfilled outputs and below-expected impacts were usually the result of time constraints and unrealistic programme design.

72. The assurance of MDG-F funding for a three-year period was a powerful incentive for agency 'buy-in' to the joint programme, aside from organizational commitments to *One UN* and *Delivering as One* (DaO) policies. In some cases this encouraged inter-agency competition, with the larger resident agencies seeking to prevail over smaller agencies to capture shares of project activity and funds. This was the case particularly in countries where resource mobilization options were limited or government cost sharing for UN agencies restricted. The distribution of MDG-F funding by thematic areas may have encouraged agencies to assume functions for which they had little experience in some cases (water governance is mentioned as an example by one evaluation). While there was institutional learning and new opportunities to be derived from diversifying into new areas, this did not improve the project's likelihood of achieving the planned results and outcomes.

5.2.4 Progress and efficiency gains for UN-Habitat attributable to its participation in joint programmes

73. The opportunities created by the joint programme have clearly benefited UN-Habitat and the smaller UN agencies by facilitating their insertion and positioning in countries where representation and activity were lacking. As noted by the evaluation Terms of Reference, the joint programme has offered opportunities to advocate UN-Habitat's mandate, demonstrate innovative approaches and improve relations with other UN agencies, national partners and civil society organizations.

"UN-Habitat's technical contribution was substantive and of a very high level. Their basic message is that we need to do things differently if we want to achieve different results."

- Roberto Gochez, Vice Minister of Housing and Urban Development (El Salvador)

74. The visibility provided has strengthened ROLAC's profile in the region. Institutional relations were expanded and the work of other agencies influenced—for example, incorporating the territorial dimension to UNDP's local development initiatives or adapting UNIDO's analysis of productive chain linkages to human settlements. In some countries, the joint programme provided the vehicle to consolidate UN-Habitat's presence over the medium term. As mentioned, UN-Habitat's performance in El Salvador led to new project opportunities and the approval of a country cooperation agreement with the Vice-Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
75. UN-Habitat's administrative practices appear to have been comparatively efficient and 'user-friendly' in relation to other agencies. In El Salvador and Costa Rica, local purchases and expenditures of partner UN agencies were often processed through UN-Habitat because this was an easier and quicker option. UN-Habitat was the only agency to achieve full delivery at the time of the mid-term evaluation of Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region. The report found "...evidence of adequate implementation based on the progress achieved in their work in the region and the greater flexibility of its internal procedures to recruit, bid, purchase etc...."¹²

The project evaluations offer limited insight on UN-Habitat's performance. Nevertheless, the evaluation's general findings point to a set of organizational strengths that benefited implementation and helped towards achieving planned results. They are the described below.

76. *Technical expertise and "innovativeness"*: This is an important comparative advantage that was recognized by interviewed respondents and highlighted by several project evaluations. ROLAC consistently assembled technical teams of international and national consultants (ranging in background from an ex-Vice Minister to university graduate interns) who demonstrated motivation and high technical expertise, as well as an understanding of the issues being addressed and a commitment to participatory implementation. In the words of a senior government partner, "... they brought a new vision of what habitat is really

¹² *Development of the competitiveness for región Brunca in the tourism and agro-industry sectors: Mid-term Evaluation* (C. Carballo, June 2011), pg 16.

about. This was important to 'break the mold' and not see housing as a commodity but rather in a broader context, as part of the social fabric that includes access to employment and basic services in addition to housing construction or quality."¹³

77. Indeed, the phrase 'for the first time' was used several times during interviews in El Salvador and Costa Rica when describing UN-Habitat's work. Examples include the participatory municipal plans and a municipal authorities association promoted in the Brunca region, which raised the region's capacity to mobilize central government and multi-lateral funding for capital investments; shaping public-private-academic cooperation around urban slum improvement; and organizing high-profile urban design contests for social housing in San Salvador's marginal neighborhoods with the participation of international jurors. Some respondents pointed to an almost ethical dimension when describing UN-Habitat's way of working with national partners and clients—assuming the low-key, catalytic role of facilitator, building on local priorities and initiatives, and consistently engaging local stakeholders while attempting to work at their pace.

78. **The ability to influence policy and legislation:** In addition to organizing local stakeholders around community-based activities, UN-Habitat has been very efficient at influencing national policy levels. In El Salvador, UN-Habitat played a decisive role in the design and approval of landmark legislation—the *Ley de Loteamiento* and *Fondo de Garantía*—that enables the legalization of informal housing settlements, provides credit guarantees to finance titles and property improvements for low-income residents, and facilitates the administrative process for obtaining permits. UN-Habitat's support for the design and approval of draft legislation presented to national Congress included providing technical guidance on short notice, scheduling periodic 'work breakfasts' with legislators, and organizing congressional study tours to countries with legal best practices in the areas of interest. These activities raised the momentum in favor of the legislative proposals and influenced their discussion and approval. Both the *Ley de Loteamiento* and *Fondo de Garantía* are presently being regulated and are

expected to be operational in 2014. Another important piece of legislation that addresses land use planning—the *Ley de Ordenamiento Territorial*—was also formulated with UN-Habitat support and approved, but is considered to be very complex in its institutional arrangements and incompatible with some laws. It will require considerable revision to become viable.

"This was innovative; it was not an ordinary project"

- Maria Morales, Executive Director of Santa Tecla Municipality, San Salvador

"[UN-Habitat] assembled a team that was technically competent and which respected our local decisions. Whereas UNDP tended to be prescriptive, Habitat was more open to consultation, generating consensus among participants and facilitating the implementation of our programme priorities."

- Gerardo Madrigal, Montes de Oca Municipal Focal Point for "Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear".

"The UN-Habitat team was transparent, extremely clear and conciliating on issues that seemed impossible to resolve... We would like to see the model applied on a wider scale."

- Claudia Blanco, Vice Executive Director FUNDASAL

79. **Motivation and commitment:** In all visited countries, national partners praised the responsiveness of UN-Habitat staff and their commitment to the projects. Their efforts to sustain project implementation during difficult junctures was also recognized: Assuming the direct management of its regional partner FEDEMSUR during a period of institutional crisis and political change that paralyzed project activities in the Brunca region; standing up for the continued participation of ADESCO community development organizations in project implementation after the election of a politically-opposed municipal government in Apopa; or ensuring that the views of local residents were considered in the design of infrastructure and services. During many interviews it was evident that UN-Habitat project staff had gained the appreciation and trust of senior government partners.

¹³ Interview with Roberto Gochez, Vice Minister of Housing, El Salvador (translated from Spanish)

80. **Disposition towards partnerships and inter-agency collaboration:** UN-Habitat's pre-disposition to cooperate with other UN agencies was often mentioned during the country visits. The decision to manage *Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region* from the region's capital and house the different agency staff in a common office positively encouraged joint implementation of project activities, cost sharing for common expenditures, and pooling of equipment. For *Urban and Productive and Integrated Sustainable Settlements*, the various agencies also shared office premises in the Vice-Ministry of Housing (Ministry of Public Works); this facilitated project coordination while encouraging a group identity. There are positive examples of synergy between UN-Habitat, UNDP and UNIDO, for example, by incorporating a spatial dimension to local development or adapting the analysis of industrial production chains to the housing sector. The Integrated Management Plan that guided *Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve* was important in facilitating inter-agency cooperation and harmonizing agency-driven initiatives for the development of a baseline database (led by FAO), the Reserve's delimitation and design of local sustainable development plans (led by UN-Habitat), design and approval of the Reserve's regulations (UNESCO) and design of financial sustainability mechanisms (UNDP). The final project evaluation found that the Integrated Management Plan had raised the project's adaptive management capabilities through better communication among partners and periodic revisions that helped the project adjust to changing circumstances.¹⁴

"A lesson learnt is that agencies should never be allowed to manage funds through their own systems under joint programmes. When each agency manages funds through their own system, it is very difficult to coordinate implementation and delivery."

- Krystia Brade, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative for Costa Rica and ex-UN coordinator for the Joint Programme

"The differences in administrative procedures and financial monitoring systems between UN agencies are an additional difficulty for the implementation of [the Conflict Prevention and Peace-building Thematic Area]. An evolution towards the unification of procedures along the lines of One UN would simplify the bureaucratic burden for the participating social entities."

- Consolidating Peace in Guatemala through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management: Mid Term Evaluation

81. UN-Habitat's validated approaches and partnerships with donor institutions have also helped in leveraging or otherwise influencing funding for other projects. This was also an indicator of project efficiency and effectiveness that benefited implementation. Examples included UN-Habitat's indirect contribution to the approval of significant government/multi-lateral funding for public works in Brunca (Costa Rica) and leveraging cost-sharing on a 1:1,6 ratio for *Consolidating Peace in Guatemala through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management*, and AECI's funding of water and sewer networks for the planned residential and commercial complex in the La Cruz slum of Santa Tecla municipality (San Salvador) under *Urban Integrated and Productive Sustainable Settlements*. The implementation of a large credit from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to fund the construction of urban infrastructure will be apply the integrated approach pioneered by UN-Habitat through this project.
82. **Administrative efficiency:** Financial and administrative performance are important indicators of efficiency—sometimes the most important—because they directly influence the delivery of products and services. Several project evaluations and interviewed partners referred to the UN-Habitat's administrative efficiency.¹⁵ This was attributed to comparatively flexible and user-friendly procedures for processing contracts and purchases; in some cases benefiting other UN agencies who processed local expenditures through UN-Habitat.
83. These attributes were determinants of UN-Habitat's performance in its projects, regardless of the

14 *Program for the Conservación and the Sustainable Management of Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Reserve Biósfera of Yasuni: Final Evaluation* (O. Huertas and H. Reyes, December 2011), pp. 24, 32

15 *Presumably there were administrative delays attributable to UN Habitat that affected the delivery of Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear in Costa Rica. The evaluator was unable to substantiate this given the unavailability of the Vice-Minister of Public Safety (despite requests for an interview).*

thematic areas. Because of their consistency across the joint programme, they are often perceived as a UN-Habitat 'trademark' that enhances ROLAC's credibility and positioning in the region. As noted earlier, the fact that this image was built largely through the work of non-core staff (typically recruited on consultancy contracts) speaks well of ROLAC's ability to assemble technically competent teams that understand the issues and challenges involved.

5.2.5 Challenges of joint programme implementation

84. Project performance was often undermined by recurrent constraints that lowered delivery and project achievement. Some were internal to the UN system or reflected the limitations of the project cycle. They are summarized below:

"The three-year implementation period may be insufficient for programmes that address complex issues...and propose changes in public policy and/or the values and attitudes of target populations and institutions."

- Final evaluation report for "Regional Competitiveness for the Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region" (translated from the Spanish text)

85. **Unrealistic project design and timeframes:** This issue is often encountered during project evaluations, and the joint programme is not an exception. A number of project evaluations mentioned the ambitious and at times unrealistic outputs and results that were planned. The three year implementation period allowed by the MDG-F was generally inadequate to trigger measurable advances in MDG achievement (a five to seven-year horizon would have been more viable) and less so when projects combined local demonstration activities, policy advice and capacity development as was often the case. An additional year of implementation with funding could have made the difference for projects such as *Integrated and Productive Urban Settlements in El Salvador* or others that did not achieve key results. One project did have an extension approved to compensate for start-up delays. The MDG-F was clear from the start regarding the three-year funding period; therefore the inability of projects to fully achieve their outputs or results was more a problem of design than insufficient time.

"The project met expectations and achieved what had been planned in general terms. What wasn't achieved had nothing to do with UN-Habitat or the other actors involved, and were attributable to the Vice Ministry [of Housing] and other factors external to the project."

- Representative of the ADESCO community organization for Apopa, San Salvador

86. **Slow and complex administrative procedures:** Administrative efficiency and financial delivery admittedly are not recognized strengths of the UN system, and participating agencies tended to apply their own procedures with resulting overlays that were inconsistent. This was detrimental to project coordination and delivery, as noted by the final evaluations of *Consolidating Peace in Guatemala through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management* and *Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador* among others. Delayed disbursement approvals and other administrative problems slowed implementation of technical support and capital investment in water and sanitation services and infrastructure. In Ecuador, contracts below USD 100,000 needed approval by a local contracting committee and the UN Resident Coordinator following a report by the Technical Evaluation Committee; contracts above that amount were evaluated and approved by the UN regional office in Panama. The overlapping of different administrative and reporting procedures did not encourage institutional convergence, and agencies tended to implement their project components separately.
87. **Absence of clear "exit strategies":** Practically all projects were unable to fully achieve or transfer all planned outputs and results by the project's end (although the means for assessing this are qualitative and subjective, since baselines or other measurable benchmarks were usually absent from project design). This was influenced by ambitious design, slow start-up and short timeframes, low partner capacities and delays from political elections and staff turnover. As often is the case, the offer of (sometimes significant) project funding for a limited time period, and the resulting delivery pressures, encouraged 'boom to bust' dynamics during which UN agencies devoted efforts and resources to implement activities, followed by an abrupt termination of staff, equipment and funding. This lowered perspectives for consolidating or transferring project results.

Because disbursements were terminated after June 30, *Urban Productive and Integrated Sustainable Settlements* was unable to make the initial USD 350,000 payment to launch the construction of a multi-family housing complex in Santa Tecla that was the project's main product, although the construction contract had already been awarded and AECI (the Spanish development agency) had invested over USD 1 million on water and sewer networks. The possible legal repercussions of the suspended contract were being discussed at the time of the evaluators visit.

88. This finding highlights two issues. The first issue is related to design: Most projects did not seriously consider 'exit strategies' that would have enabled a gradual withdrawal of external support and transfer of responsibilities to national or local partners. This is rather difficult to achieve within a three-year period, however. Little attention was given to the 'causal pathways' that link activities or outputs to results and outcomes; hence *Urban Productive and Integrated Sustainable Settlement* faced unnecessary setbacks due to extended delays in the production of a manual that wasn't essential to the design or construction of multi-family housing. The second issue is structural: The administrative and budgetary regulations that govern the UN project cycle do not facilitate gradual exits or transfers because full financial closure is mandated within months after the termination of the last project activity. There are administrative difficulties in leaving project budget lines open—for example, for post-project monitoring and evaluation—after the main support components have been delivered, as desirable as this may be for local appropriation and sustainability. UN agencies in general lack an *ex-post* evaluation culture; final project evaluations are usually scheduled before actual implementation has finished. This limits the insight into how things might fare 'on the ground' after the external consultants, partner institutions, equipment and operational support have left.¹⁶
89. The exit issue is relevant institutionally as well. The 'boom to bust' project dynamics that were conditioned by MDG-F financing also affected agency presence at the country level. Several have been unable to sustain the level of activity or institutional presence following the termination of MDG funds. UN-Habitat was obliged to shut down
- its office in Guatemala, while in other countries funding and projects are needed to pay remaining staff (already minimal in several countries, working on half-time contracts).
90. This raises the question of how ROLAC or the UN-Habitat Technical Branches might have assisted the joint programme—or could assist in the future—with project design, technical backstopping and representation—areas where help from above is needed. The role of the Technical Branches has been inconsistent with regards to the LAC joint programme, and very much influenced by availability of staff, overlapping work demands, funding and language proficiency. For the most part, Technical Branch inputs focused on quality assurance during the appraisal of project proposals by the Project Advisory Group in Nairobi. In-country involvement for design and implementation stages has been inconsistent (with exceptions such as the lead role assumed by the Urban Services branch in designing water and sanitation projects for Mexico and Ecuador) and very much conditioned by cost-recovery and funding 'ownership' concerns, which in some cases dissuaded collaboration with ROLAC. There is clearly a need to address this issue in greater depth to ensure greater synchronization and more consistent technical 'backstopping' support to the regional offices and country projects.
91. ***Political cycles and turnover of counterpart staff at the country level:*** This is another obstacle that was outside the joint programme's. Timing vis-à-vis political cycles can be a determinant of project performance that is difficult to influence and is usually overlooked. Several projects faced implementation delays and changes in partner institutions from national or municipal elections that were difficult to recoup during the three-year implementation period (although at least one project received an extension to compensate initial delays). Projects that coincided with the arrival of new government administrations were able to offer inputs that shaped new policies and legislation, and benefitted from high levels of government commitment as in El Salvador.

¹⁶ The present evaluation provides a notable exception to this rule, for which UN Habitat's Evaluation Office merits recognition.

5.2.6 Contribution of actual results to expected results at the output and outcome levels

92. A definitive assessment of the results achieved and their contribution to planned outcomes is difficult given the diversity of the project portfolio. A number of project results were not measured (or measurable) and were in process of consolidation at the time of its termination. There are also variations in UN-Habitat's role, level of responsibility and amount of funding across the project sample. Because a number of agencies participated in the joint programme, attribution issues need to be considered when evaluating performance.
93. Contributions towards expected results and outcomes were uneven across the evaluation sample. Many of the field initiatives implemented were of an experimental nature and intended for demonstration. They tested innovative solutions at a local scale that were subsequently validated and systematized to influence government policy and encourage replication on a wider scale. Although some of these approaches have influenced policy and legislation, these now need to be translated into concrete programmes and actions on a wider scale in order to have an effect on outcomes. The scale of intervention needed to generate a 'critical mass' of impact for achieving project outcomes will ultimately require political and budgetary commitments by national authorities that are outside the joint programme's responsibility. The final evaluation of *Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve* noted that although revised management arrangements had helped the project implement its activities as planned, there was limited space to focus on longer-term objectives or take actions that ensured the permanence of the results achieved.¹⁷
94. Nevertheless, both the desk review and evaluation findings indicate overall satisfactory UN-Habitat performance in terms of achieving outputs and results, and contributing towards outcomes that ultimately depend on national partners to be realized. There is no doubt that UN-Habitat-led initiatives achieved a number of planned outputs and results; however it is too early to measure their
- impact at the outcome level. Several projects have improved the enabling conditions for advancing MDGs at municipal levels, but haven't made a measurable difference in terms of national goals. This reality was reflected in the views of interviewed government authorities: They appreciate UN-Habitat's innovative approaches and support for shaping new regulations or improving institutional capacities, but are still waiting for the political commitment that is essential to allocate fresh resources and take project achievements to a higher level. This means moving from policymaking to policy implementation.
95. The contribution of actual results to planned outcomes was influenced by project design and implementation strategy. In this respect, UN-Habitat's contribution was greatest when it combined local demonstration processes with 'upstream' policy support. The approval of landmark legislation in El Salvador helps to legalize informal urban lots and regulates urban subdivisions (Ley de Loteamiento), simplifies procedures for construction permits (Ley de Simplificación de Trámites) and gives access to credit for building or improving social housing (Ley de Banca del Desarrollo). UN-Habitat influenced their design and approval through the Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements project. They provide enabling conditions for consolidating home ownership and triggering sustainable development activities in urban neighborhoods.¹⁸ Although the results achieved on the ground were often micro in scale — less than 10 housing units were legalized by one project — the approach used was documented and understood by local organizations. The results achieved in Apopa are highly visible and can be readily transferred and replicated.
96. Other results included the legal and regulatory changes achieved through the Water and Sanitation Governance projects in Ecuador and Mexico. In Ecuador, UNDP and UN-Habitat supported the national water authority SENAGUA and MIDUVI in developing:
- A national water policy that considers cultural diversity (*Política Nacional de Cultura del Agua*);

17 *Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve: Final Evaluation* (O. Huerta and H. Reyes, December 2011) pg. 8

18 *The Ley de Banca de Desarrollo transforms the government Multi-sectoral Investment Bank into the Development Bank of El Salvador (BANDESAL), and establishes the Fund for Economic Development and Salvadoran Fund for Guarantees.*

- A law governing community access to water resources (*Ley de Prestación*)
 - A national water plan (*Plan Nacional de Agua*) encompassing capital investments and institutional coordination, and
 - A national plan for water quality (*Plan Nacional de Vigilancia de la Calidad de Agua*) that targets rural areas.
97. In Mexico, UN-Habitat designed indicators to monitor the quality of water and sanitation services, and organized local stakeholder groups in pilot municipalities of the states of Tuxtla Gutierrez and Jalapa to monitor water quality. According to the final evaluation, it played a 'protagonic' role in the demonstration of 'Healthy Schools' (*Escuelas Saludables*) with WHO/PAHO.¹⁹ While measurable impacts or advances towards MDGs will depend on the wider application of such initiatives with policy and budgetary support, the contribution of UN-Habitat and the joint programme towards enhancing conditions for this to happen is recognized.
98. In Costa Rica's Brunca region, the dialogue conducted through the Federation of Municipal Authorities (FAM) helped build consensus on regional project priorities; it assisted the region in leveraging central government and multi-lateral funding for road improvements, a sanitary landfill, a new marketplace and an airport that will improve its tourism and agro-industrial potential. There is also modest increase in public-private collaboration through the Competitiveness Council, through the organization of trade fairs that report modest profits for small and medium-size area enterprises. Although the momentum of project-supported initiatives had clearly declined six months after the project's termination, there are opportunities for replication on a national scale: The public-private partnership approach developed by the Brunca project was adopted as national policy by government decree (37027-MEIC- PLAN) and is now being applied by the Ministry of Economy (MEIC) in the northern border region and Caribbean port of Limón.
99. UN-Habitat's work in the San José municipalities of Montes de Oca and Guararí under the *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear* project led to the recuperation of public spaces through the scheduling of social and cultural events that are proposed and managed by local residents with logistical support from the municipal government. This has improved local government relations with community-based organizations and youth groups, and lowered insecurity levels in vulnerable neighborhoods.
100. Progress towards project outcomes was undermined when related actions were not synchronized at different levels—for example, using the results of community demonstrations to influence policymakers—or coordinated between implementing agencies. Conversely, the high levels of participation and inclusiveness present in most UN-Habitat initiatives also led to setbacks. *Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements* faced unexpected problems in the community of La Cruz, where divergent beneficiary expectations towards a planned multi-family/commercial complex disrupted activities and brought the project to a halt. In this case, the Santa Tecla municipal government and UN-Habitat team were unable to mitigate the conflict, which prevented the attainment of the main project result.

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

5.3.1 Extent to which joint programming has been effective for achieving results planned by UN-Habitat

101. The joint programme has been instrumental in facilitating synergies between UN-Habitat, UN agencies and national partners. The scale of intervention supported by the joint programme made a significant difference by enabling UN-Habitat's participation in large project initiatives that offered partnership opportunities, thematic interventions and funding levels that wouldn't have been available in conventional 'stand alone' projects. At corporate level, the joint programme indirectly assisted the implementation of UN-Habitat's 2008-2013 Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) that prioritized the areas of advocacy, monitoring and partnership; urban planning, management and governance; and environmentally sound urban infrastructure and services.

¹⁹ *Strengthen the Handling Effective and Democrática of the Water and Sanitation in México to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: Final Evaluation* (M. Torregrosa, I. Ahumada and S. Makowski, July 2012) pg. 35

102. In terms of institutional growth, the joint programme offered UN-Habitat a vehicle for demonstrating its comparative advantages in countries where there was little if any presence. Its commendable performance in several projects has strengthened ROLAC's position in the region, leading to a country cooperation agreement in El Salvador and further project opportunities in Colombia and Mexico. The range of activity and collaboration facilitated by the joint programme clearly improved UN-Habitat's ability to achieve results. When project activities were synchronized, the products and services supported by a UN agency provided inputs to or complemented the products of others. UN-Habitat's outputs often fed into those of other agencies (and vice-versa). When this happened, the products of individual agencies contributed to a larger picture with greater cumulative impact potential. Synchronicity was especially important for the more complex projects that were multi-thematic and worked at various levels with different timelines, or in isolated, culturally challenging regions such as the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve in Ecuador's Amazon basin.

"The joint programme's multidimensional focus favors a more integral approach. The synergy encouraged by the programme among participating agencies is the most efficient way of approaching international cooperation in highly complex zones such as the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve."

- Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve: Final Evaluation (translated from the Spanish text)

103. The evaluators found several examples where UN-Habitat collaborated with partner UN agencies and built on their approaches:

- Supporting local development initiatives led by UNDP with territorial and land-use plans (El Salvador and Ecuador)
- Building on UNIDO's experience in enterprise development to partner municipal governments and private sector in southern Costa Rica
- Applying UNIDO's analysis of productive chains to the construction sector; demonstrating ecologically-sound schools in Mexico with WHO/PAHO; and
- Demonstrating urban improvement approaches in low-income municipalities of San Salvador while working at national policy and legislative levels.

5.3.2 Products and services provided to beneficiaries through joint programming

104. According to the MDG-F website, the entire LAC joint programme (including initiatives in which UN-Habitat did not participate) provided a number of services that supported more than 1.247 million citizens of the region, as distributed in Figures 3 and 4. Among these individuals, MDG-F programmes reached a total of 678,901 women, youth female and girls (58 per cent of the overall total). Likewise, joint programme initiatives in the region involved 178,595 youth and more than 300,000 children, boys, girls and students. More than 24,000 civil servants were part of capacity building activities. The LAC joint programme reportedly also engaged 12,732 health workers, 4,165 teachers and trainers, 11,438 farmers and food producers and 29,980 entrepreneurs and culture professionals.²⁰

²⁰ These figures were obtained from the Latin America regional factsheet available from the MDG-F joint programme website, and does not represent evaluation findings.

FIGURE 3: Breakdown of Beneficiaries by Thematic Area

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN - BENEFICIARIES BREAKDOWN	
Total agents and rightholders, per thematic area	1,247,559
Culture & Development (C&D)	61,892
Children, Food Security & Nutrition (CFSN)	453,118
Conflict Prevention and Peace Building (CPPB)	238,070
Democratic Economic Governance (DEG)	111,050
Development and Private Sector (DPS)	25,319
Environment and Climate Change (ECC)	75,993
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)	220,699
Youth, Employment and Migration (YEM)	61,418

Source: Latin America regional factsheet (MDG-F website)

FIGURE 4: Services Provided by the MDG-F Joint Programme for LAC and their Coverage

TYPE OF SUPPORT PROVIDED	Total
Creation/expansion of economic opportunities	89,967
Supporting cultural events, exhibits, cultural manifestations	52
Capacity building for policy and law implementation	161,880
Capacity to collect, analyze data and/ or produce analysis	19,593
Capacity building on climate change and mgt natural resources	24,383
Trainings, capacity building and education	48,894
Children & mother nutrition	278,523
Food production & agriculture	125,891
Provision of infrastructure and services (including water)	129,241
Services for migrant workers	3,384
Access to justice, conflict resolution and protection of rights	208,580
Developing intercultural dialogue mechanisms	17,669
Gender Based Violence (GBV), and gender specific services	2,928
Health services, including reproductive health	138,118
Political participation	16,560
Awareness raising and access to culture	195,556
Total coverage	1,461,219

Source: Latin America regional factsheet (MDG-F website)

105. In terms of products and services provided by UN-Habitat through the joint programme, the evaluation findings highlight the following contributions:
106. **Innovative concepts and approaches:** This was consistently recognized as UN-Habitat's most outstanding contribution. The concept of habitat as a dynamic system that articulates housing, access to basic services, livelihoods and social cohesion departed considerably from the conventional (and static) view of housing as a "sector" or marketable commodity that is independent of the broader urban context. The conceptual framework that imbued UN-Habitat's work under the joint programme offered a fresh perspective to national partners – from policymakers and government authorities to community-based organizations – that in several cases influenced their outlook and practices.
107. With new concepts came a new way of working that was based on consensus and collaboration among diverse partners. Partnership has been fundamental to UN-Habitat's work under the joint programme: Public, private and academic institutions collaborated towards common development goals, sometimes for the first time (i.e. *Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador; Regional Competitiveness for Tourism and Agro-industrial Sectors in the Brunca Region*). Community

organizations were empowered to manage project funds and activities in cooperation with local government (*Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador; Strengthening Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation; Governance of the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador*). Some of these approaches departed from conventional practice. For example, *Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear* strengthened community cohesiveness and lowered insecurity levels by recuperating neglected public spaces for artistic and cultural activities; the project's emphasis on social communication and citizen initiative owed much to the popular education techniques developed earlier in the region. Some of the concepts and methods have been adopted by national partners and continue to be applied, i.e. the analysis of productive chains for the construction sector; the urban improvement strategy used in San Salvador; and working with local organizations and youth gangs to recuperate public spaces for the community.

"UN-Habitat's main contribution was the design of a novel project that has become a model for the country."

- Maria Morales, Executive Director for Santa Tecla municipality

108. **Capacity development:** Several projects led to the construction or improvement of social and physical infrastructure, transferring the knowledge and skills required for its use and maintenance. More than contributing to tangible improvements in people's well being, these interventions triggered 'soft' impacts in capacity development through the acquisition of skills (and experience) to manage human settlements and deliver community services.

"I am grateful for having been exposed to new practices for decision-making. We have learned a lot and are applying this learning to our municipality."

- The Mayor of Coto Brus, Costa Rica

"For an NGO with more than 45 years of experience, UN-Habitat has been a significant source of knowledge and actualization."

- Claudia Blanco, Vice-Executive Director of FUNDASAL

109. Local governments and community-based organizations in particular benefited from their participation in UN-Habitat-led initiatives for urban improvement, participatory planning and community management of basic services. Technical capacities were built by analyzing productive chains, and international expertise was invited to evaluate social housing and infrastructure proposals designed by university students. Project experiences were fed into the academic curricula of the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador. Organizational capacities were strengthened through public-private partnerships and by assigning project/budget management responsibilities to community organizations (i.e. *Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador*). The final evaluation of Mexico's *Strengthening Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation* noted that such approaches inculcated a sense of co-responsibility among community residents with regards to the management, monitoring and vigilance of water and sanitation services.²¹

110. UN-Habitat's implementation strategies often had a didactic aspect that was refreshing to national partners and beneficiaries because it

relied on dialogue and facilitation rather than prescription. New approaches to solving old problems were validated on the basis of the results achieved; experiences and methodologies were systematized with beneficiary participation. This *modus operandi* raised the learning curve for local stakeholders while ensuring institutional memory through the documentation of implementation processes and 'best practices.'

"[The project] has been a pioneer in El Salvador due to its normative production that is without precedent for the sector... There had not been any new public policies, laws or norms formulated for the construction sector since the 1960's."

- Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador: Final Evaluation

111. **Opportunities for local participation:** Although this does not fall readily into the categories of product or service, UN-Habitat's permanent disposition towards local participation and partnership enhanced the capacity building effects of its projects and improved effectiveness. Beneficiary inputs at different stages of the project cycle provided a 'reality check' that strengthened adaptive management capabilities and responsiveness. The benefits were mutual: Pre-implementation consultations and the design of community participation mechanisms have helped UN-Habitat to articulate realistic and achievable goals; whereas assigning management and oversight responsibilities to community-based organizations raised the learning curve for local stakeholders. The effects of capacity building and awareness-raising activities, combined with multi-stakeholder partnership arrangements and the learning derived from project experiences, have clearly improved leadership capabilities in a number of communities. This was also reflected in the level of beneficiary commitment, as noted for the *Water and Sanitation Governance* projects in Mexico and Ecuador, where local residents contributed labor and cash for the realization of urban improvements.

112. **High levels of national ownership were recorded in most project interventions.** Local governance mechanisms were supported, contributing decisively to project relevance and effectiveness. In El Salvador, the Vice Minister of Housing acted as the national project director while at the municipal level, ADESCOs were in

²¹ *Strengthening Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation: Final Evaluation* (M. Torregrosa, I. Ahumada and S. Makowski, July 2012), pg. 46

charge of mobilizing residents. Shortcomings in ownership or participation depended on the complexities of the situations faced and were usually influenced by external factors: Communities had to cope with internal divisions, and municipal partners were sometimes unable to respond effectively when conflicts arose (despite efforts towards their resolution). Ironically, there were occasional trade-offs to the high levels of inclusion and participation offered to beneficiaries: In San Salvador's Santa Tecla municipality, changes in political leadership and internal conflicts between resident associations of the La Cruz slum brought project implementation to a standstill and had prevented the construction of a multi-family housing and commercial complex. This undermined the achievement of key results and weakened the project's demonstration value.

113. **Enhanced policy and regulatory environments:**

This contribution is likely to have effect beyond the project term. UN-Habitat displayed very effective performance when supporting the formulation and approval of new laws or regulations with national partners — advising legislators, scheduling working breakfasts between legislative sessions, and organizing study tours to countries with 'best practice' legal and regulatory frameworks. Through such actions, UN-Habitat directly influenced the design and approval of landmark legislation in El Salvador, Ecuador and Mexico. The model developed for urban improvement in El Salvador has influenced government policies and will be replicated on a broader scale to relocate squatter settlements that infringe on the national railway network (this will depend in part on the outcome of national elections in 2014). Likewise, the public-private cooperation model piloted in Costa Rica's Brunca region was also adopted as national policy by government decree and is reportedly being applied in the northern border area and Caribbean port of Limón. As described earlier, UN-Habitat played a substantive role in modifying the legal/regulatory frameworks for Mexico and Ecuador's water and sanitation sectors; new legislation broaden community access to these services and enable local management and oversight.

"We are very satisfied and grateful because this is real."

- ADESCO member from Apopa Municipality, in reference to the activities of Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Networks

114. **Improved urban infrastructure and services:**

UN-Habitat's work under the joint programme included innovative approaches for upgrading infrastructure and services, sometimes in tandem with local development initiatives managed by UNDP. This has led to physical improvements in peri-urban municipalities such as Apopa in San Salvador, where a community center was built, streets paved, agricultural storage facilities improved, and outdoor recreational facilities built on a reclaimed garbage dumping site in partnership with the local ADESCO development association. By charging residents for agricultural marketing services and visitors to use the recreational facilities, the ADESCO could generate a substantial share of the funds needed to sustain these improvements.

115. The creation of the Forum of Municipal Authorities (FAM) in Costa Rica's Brunca region helped build consensus around priority projects. Through the FAM, UN-Habitat indirectly helped the region leverage central government and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funds for capital investments that include a new landfill, road improvements, an upgraded marketplace and new airport. In San Salvador's Santa Tecla municipality, UN-Habitat's lead role in the design and construction of a multi-family housing and commercial complex on a slum site, motivated AECI to invest over USD 1 million in water and sewer systems. However, the project was paralyzed by internal disagreements between local residents, and the joint programme finalized its administrative services before the first disbursement to the contractor could be made.

116. Support was also provided to democratize the management of the water and sanitation sectors, improving community access to clean water. UN-Habitat played a lead role in designing and supervising the construction of water and sewer installations in approximately 20 rural cantons of Ecuador. In Mexico, it supported the design of demonstration water systems and filtration equipment, and trained local committees in pilot municipalities to manage the systems and monitor water quality.

117. **Improved citizen security through the recuperation of public spaces:**

UN-Habitat worked with municipal government in Costa Rica and Brazil to reclaim public spaces that were degraded and insecure by engaging local

residents, community organizations and youth groups in their physical and social revitalization. These projects applied methods from UN-Habitat's *Safe Cities* global programme, including local demonstration initiatives and training for conflict prevention. Local residents organize musical concerts, artistic events and social gatherings that have strengthened neighbourhood cohesion and reduced the incidence of crime in targeted neighbourhoods. The success achieved in municipalities such as Montes de Oca and Guarafí in San José's metropolitan area is reflected in the continuing demand for such activities and their appropriation by municipal governments as internal programmes; in Montes de Oca funds were allocated from the municipal budget for the first time in support of a cultural programme.

118. In addition, UN-Habitat's contributions to the design of water quality indicators (in Ecuador and Mexico); the analysis of urban climatic vulnerability (Mexico); and the incorporation of gender topics in municipal and state programmes (Brazil and Ecuador) are also recognized in the respective project evaluations.

5.4 IMPACT

119. The final project evaluations do not report measurable effects towards the attainment of national MDGs, and several recognize the difficulties of doing this. The project design and monitoring systems did not correlate final outputs or results to MDG advancement. This is somewhat surprising considering that the MDGs were the main justification for MDG-F support and the joint programme's creation. However, the attempt to link aggregate performance and impact to MDGs would have been challenging yet impractical. Part of the problem is scale: Project impacts were often local, small-scale and probably impossible to track in MDG terms given their size and absence of sub-national or municipal MDG targets.²² While several have contributed to new or revised policies and legislation that strengthen the enabling conditions for MDG progress, the effects are not measurable. As noted in section 5.1.2 a number

of project results were not measurable or were incipient by the time the project finished. Many on-the-ground initiatives were experimental and intended to demonstrate new approaches. This was done in several locations, and in some cases systematized and documented to influence policy and encourage replication. To influence the outcomes and affect MDG progress they need to be translated into concrete programmes and supported on a broader scale.

"Because of the inter-agency programme's transitory nature, it is not possible to adequately estimate the extent to which development results are attributable to programme initiative... the challenge is to determine up to what point the programme's research and advocacy activities and products have been determinants..."

- Final Evaluation of Inter-agency Programme for Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality (translated from the Portuguese text)

120. The expectations surrounding the joint programme seem unrealistic in retrospect considering time and resource allocations. The MDG-F financed 54 joint programmes across Latin American and Caribbean countries for a global amount of USD 301.2 million, out of which USD 6.794 million was allocated to UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat project budgets ranged from under USD 127,394 to USD 2.7 million. In most cases, this was insufficient to have MDG impact. As noted by the final evaluation of *Security with Citizenship in Brazilian Communities*, the project's USD 5.2 million budget was a "very small sum" to affect the levels of violence—as was the limited sample of participating municipalities—when compared to real need and the funds that are already earmarked by the Brazilian government for this purpose (national programmes such as *Escola Aberta* or 'Open School' received up to USD 50 million according to the final evaluation report). In most countries the scale of intervention needed to generate a 'critical mass' of impact and influence MDG progress will require a medium-term political and budgetary commitment by national authorities that is outside the scope of the project's or UN-Habitat's responsibility.

22 *F092 Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador was the only project in the sample that developed a pre-implementation baseline and actually measured changes to selected indicators that were attributable to the project.*

5.4.1 Improved Livelihoods in Pilot Communities

121. Nevertheless, development results and local impacts were achieved by projects in the evaluation sample. These included livelihood improvements in municipalities of Ecuador, San Salvador and Mexico, where residents now have access to safe water and sanitation services. In El Salvador, locally driven urban improvement activities have upgraded physical infrastructure (roads, drainage, agricultural storage facilities), built a community center and created recreational opportunities that did not exist before (and have income-generating potential). Local residents who farm are benefitting from lower storage and market transport costs. Tenure security was enhanced through the legalization of informal housing; although few families actually benefitted, the local community development associations (ADESCOs) now understand the process involved and are in a position to carry it forward. Citizen security in selected municipalities of Brazil, Guatemala and Costa Rica has perceptibly improved with the recuperation of public spaces for cultural and recreational use. The approval of important capital investments for Costa Rica's Brunca region will improve local livelihoods and environmental conditions through road improvements, a sanitary landfill, a new marketplace and an airport to serve six municipalities; the investments are expected to improve conditions for tourism and agro-industrial development. However, many project-supported initiatives are rapidly losing momentum and require greater commitment from national and regional partners in order to be sustained.

5.4.2 Enhanced National Policy and Legal/Regulatory Frameworks

122. The UN-Habitat initiatives that had the greatest impact potential on a national scale were those that assisted national institutions in drafting or modifying national laws and regulations. As noted earlier, UN-Habitat demonstrated capacity and 'know-how' to work at

policy and legislative levels in El Salvador, Ecuador and Mexico among other countries.

123. While it's still early to expect impacts from recently approved or amended laws that have yet to be enforced, the potential for long-term impact is clearly there. Legal provisions are now in place to advance with the legalization of approximately 300,000 housing units and urban lots in El Salvador that lack title (almost 30 per cent of the national housing stock); and to channel private banking credit to low-income residents for housing titles and improvements under the *Ley de Loteamiento* and *Ley de Banca de Desarrollo*. Likewise, the *Ley de Reducción de Trámites* streamlines administrative approval procedures for construction and urban improvements, reducing the time and steps involved. The implementation of the 'one stop window' foreseen in this legislation would place El Salvador below the Latin American median in terms of the average approval and processing time. This could provide a stimulus for urban investment and development.

124. In Ecuador, the approval of comprehensive water and sanitation legislation is expected to broaden community access to water services (*Ley de Prestación de Servicios de Agua y Saneamiento*) and ensure better water quality through community oversight (*Plan Nacional de Vigilancia de la Calidad de Agua*). The new framework also addresses the cultural dimension in water service design and provision (*Política Nacional de Cultura del Agua*) and aims to improve institutional coordination under a National Water Plan. Taken together, they could have far-reaching effects in coming years if the political will, budget resources and institutional capacities are in place. In the Mexican states of Tabasco and Chiapas, local organizations such as the IMCA citizen associations and traditional *patronatos* are now better positioned to influence the management of water services in their communities—and can now access external funding—following the revision of the *Ley de Aguas* and *Ley de Agua y de Sustentabilidad*.

"...one of the relevant impacts generated by the joint programme was the incorporation of community and municipal actors within legislation on water management...This aspect is fundamental for the strengthening of the social forms that are emerging from the programme, and their recognition and access to funding by law."

- Final evaluation of Mexico's Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation (translated from the Spanish text)

5.4.3 Stakeholder Attitudes and Commitment to Local Development

125. Possibly the most important impacts that are attributable to the joint programme and UN-Habitat in particular, are the changes in collective attitude and behavior that were induced through local stakeholder participation. UN-Habitat played an important role in influencing changes in the attitude and commitment by community organizations towards local development, and in strengthening organizational and management skills that were lacking. In several cases, advances in these areas have altered the relationship of community organizations with municipal government in substantive ways.
126. The above point underscores an important learning process. By participating in UN-Habitat-led initiatives that nurtured local participation and ownership, communities were faced with new challenges. They needed to make the transition from beneficiary to partner, and in doing so, learn how to administer budgets, plan actions more strategically and in some countries, co-manage public services with local government. This required higher levels of protagonism and responsibility than is offered by most projects, and served to raise the capacity and expectations of local residents and organizations—both in the awareness of their own potential, and in demanding better performance and responsiveness from local government. In many cases this departed significantly from the traditional and more passive spaces of participation that had been offered in the past. Municipal governments have responded in different ways to the stronger role of community organizations, depending on their political inclination and level of commitment, yet acknowledge the changes that were stimulated by UN-Habitat's implementation approach.
127. The resulting impact is a change in the configuration of local power relations between municipal governments and community-based organizations. A new threshold was reached and the bar set at a higher level in municipalities such as Apopa, San Salvador where the ADESCOs have managed the construction of community infrastructure and services, and presently collect user fees. Indeed, this is what 'empowerment' is all about. In Costa Rica and Brazil, there are perceived improvements in social cohesion and citizen security in neighborhoods where
- UN-Habitat supported the recuperation of public spaces for community activities.
128. However, developing participatory processes can also fall outside the project's control, with unpredictable effect. This happened in the neighborhood of La Cruz, where the high level of local participation and ownership enabled a faction of the slum residents' association to bring the planned construction of a multi-family residential/commercial complex to a halt; thus far the municipal government has been unable to mediate the conflict.
129. The level of participation and responsibility offered to local stakeholders often had the effect of raising the level of commitment. This was observed in the contribution of in-kind and financial support by low-income residents to assist water and sanitation improvements in Mexico and Ecuador; and in the use of community oversight to monitor the supply and quality of water services. Such examples were indicative of local 'buy-in' to the joint programme and UN-Habitat-managed components in particular.

5.5 SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION

130. Despite the *ex post* timing of this evaluation, it is still early for a full-fledged assessment of the sustainability of joint programme results. Project activities had terminated 6-12 months before the evaluation, which was sufficient to gauge the continuity (and in some cases replication) of activities, yet premature to reliably assess the extent to which they had been appropriated and sustained by national or local partners. Development results were often incipient or in process of consolidation at the time of the evaluation. Among the most important are the approval of new policies/legislation and strengthened local capacities; yet these require gestation periods before their effects are felt. Likewise, policies must move from formulation to implementation if they are to contribute to planned outcomes or sustain results.
131. Sustainability depends on a combination of factors that vary according to the particular context. At the local level, sustainability is very much affected by political junctures. Inconsistencies in political or leadership commitment—due to elections or changes of partner staff, as happened with Ecuador's MIDUVI or FEDEMSUR

in Costa Rica's Brunca region—are a significant obstacle to the continuity of actions. The final evaluation of *Consolidating Peace in Guatemala* took note of partner concerns regarding the political transition that would follow national elections; for this reason, efforts were made to finalize project activities in advance. At the time of the evaluation visits, several Central American countries were on the verge of national elections, the outcomes of which will largely determine the political and budgetary commitment available to sustain and build on project results. Even when political circumstances are favourable, housing issues and the public institutions that support the sector are often under-funded and have limited political clout.

132. If the three-year implementation period allowed by the MDG-F was barely adequate to implement project activities, it was clearly insufficient for enabling the transfer and appropriation of results by national partners. As mentioned earlier, the combination of time constraints and general absence of exit strategies limited opportunities for consolidating results. This was to be expected, and the mid-term evaluation for the Brunca project had recommended that a sustainability strategy be designed and implemented during the second half of the project term.
133. There are methodological limitations that undermine the assessment of sustainability. The evaluators interviewed participants from four projects that had been implemented in three countries (El Salvador, Costa Rica and Ecuador), yet were unable to make contact with a representative sample of stakeholders from the remaining projects or countries in the evaluation sample (excepting Guatemala). Moreover, all final evaluations were conducted during the implementation process and therefore have little to say on post-project sustainability. Hence the analysis is largely based on inference and an assessment of the *likelihood* of sustainability, based on the presence of enabling conditions, continued momentum and other factors.
134. These enabling conditions are most evident in the approval or revision of national policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks that improve sustainability perspectives over time—assuming they are adequately budgeted for and implemented. Three out of nine projects in the evaluation sample—*Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador*; *Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Ecuador*; and *Effective and Democratic Governance in the Water and Sanitation Sector (Mexico)*—have influenced the legal and regulatory environments at national or sub-national levels with UN-Habitat involvement. Two of these projects supported the water and sanitation sectors (Mexico and Ecuador), created legal competencies for community organizations in the management and oversight of these services, and established inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms that could improve future access to safe drinking water, with associated livelihood and health benefits (that are also indicators of sustainability). The other legislation ensures credit access for low-income residents to process titles and upgrade housing conditions in El Salvador, and reduces the time required to process construction permits. Both are expected to have impact over time by accelerating the legalization of home ownership and encouraging investments and other improvements in marginal urban neighbourhoods.
135. The transfer and replication of best practices at policy levels provide additional indicators of sustainability. This was observed in El Salvador, where the urban improvement approach applied by UN-Habitat has influenced national policies for social housing; and is being replicated in part under an IDB-financed urban infrastructure programme and through the planned relocation of squatter communities situated on sections of the national railway system that are scheduled for reactivation. UN-Habitat's performance in El Salvador has led to the approval of a medium-term country cooperation programme with the Vice-Ministry of Housing that incorporates conceptual and methodological elements that were piloted under the joint programme. UN-Habitat's approach to slum upgrading is being applied in 20 municipalities across San Salvador by FUNDASAL, a renowned national NGO and project partner. The analysis of production chains, as applied to the housing sector, continues to be used by national partners that include the University of Central America and HOLCIM. In Brazil, ISER and the UPP Programme replicated the methodology applied for the Women's Audit under the *Interagency Programme for the Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality* in four *favelas*.

136. Conditions for replication were also found in Costa Rica where, despite a rapid decline in the continuity of initiatives supported by the Brunca project, the Ministry of Economy recently issued executive decree N° 37027-MEIC- PLAN which adopts the approach pioneered by the project in supporting small and medium-size enterprises, strengthening regional competitiveness and promoting public-private partnership as national policy. Elements of the approach are now being replicated in the northern border region with Nicaragua, and the Caribbean port of Limón that is slated for major re-development as a free-port hub.
137. Due to lowered crime and improved social cohesion in neighbourhoods that were previously insecure, the municipal governments of Montes de Oca and Guararí have adopted the recuperation of public spaces for communal activities by local residents, as core activities that build municipal government relations with community organizations and youth groups. In Montes de Oca, municipal funds were allocated after the project's finish to extend the initiative. This was the first time the local government had provided funding for such activities. The officer in charge expressed hope that the municipal council would vote to adopt the initiative as a permanent programme and budget item at its next meeting.
138. The agricultural storage facility and recreational park built by the local ADESCO in Apopa, San Salvador (with guidance by UN-Habitat) have a strong sustainability potential given the income that is expected from user fees. There is also evidence of continuity in the responsibilities assumed by community-based organizations for the management and oversight of water services and infrastructure. However, sustainability in this context remains very much dependent on political junctures. Electoral turnovers can undermine the growing profile of community organizations by restricting their participation in municipal projects or access to funding. El Salvador's municipal code does not include provisions concerning the role or level of participation of ADESCOs, and the spaces offered for their continued involvement are largely discretionary and depend on the attitude of local government authorities.
139. There is an internal, institutional dimension to sustainability as well. UN-Habitat and the smaller UN agencies have used MDG-F funding as an entry point to strengthen their institutional profile at the country level. This has led to a medium-term cooperation agreement in El Salvador and new project opportunities elsewhere that are key to ROLAC's presence in the region. The joint programme has clearly helped ROLAC broaden its project portfolio and partnership network, as well as expand institutionally as technical staff were contracted to implement project activities funded under the joint programme. This leads to the issue of ROLAC's ability to manage and sustain institutional growth at the country level, in a competitive environment where presence is largely dependent on external funding
140. El Salvador has already been mentioned as a success story in this regard. In other countries—particularly those that do not allow cost sharing with government funds or have limited donor presence—UN-Habitat has been unable to sustain momentum following the termination of its two projects and activity levels have dropped considerably. The country office in Guatemala was closed, and in other countries a reduced pool of part-time technical staff are trying to develop project proposals and funding opportunities to remain in business. This downturn has weakened UN-Habitat's image and credibility in some cases.
141. The support role of ROLAC and UN-Habitat headquarters in helping country operations under these circumstances is not clear. Neither appears to play a very active role in this regard. Although government requests and project funding are the 'bottom line' for justifying organizational presence, it is also clear that UN-Habitat's comparative advantages include knowledge products that are innovative and highly relevant for an urbanized region—yet do not necessarily fit into the project slot. Alternative arrangements that are more cost-effective need to be considered, as sub-regionalizing projects or using retainer contracts for national experts who are familiar with UN-Habitat's technical and conceptual approaches. Interviewed country staff expressed the need for back-up support to formulate quality projects, approach donors and national authorities, and provide high-level technical advice on occasion. This may require internal investment by UN-Habitat in the short run, until country operations acquire their own momentum and are able to attract external funding. In most LAC countries, the organization's ability to provide these kinds of support will be essential to sustain—and project—the positive corporate image that emerged from the joint programme.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

142. *The MDG-F joint programme for Latin America and the Caribbean has been a key driver of inter-agency collaboration. It has contributed to One UN and Delivering as One policies, having led to a better understanding of the joint programme modality's strengths and weaknesses as currently practiced.* The joint programme and availability of funding for a three-year term was an important stimulus for agency coordination and thematic convergence. This was most evident at the design stage when interactive dynamics were used (not always the case), and when agencies shared common office premises during implementation. The joint programme benefitted the smaller non-resident UN programmes and agencies in particular by democratizing funding access, overriding in-country agency hierarchies (although not always), and creating new partnership opportunities that enhanced ROLACs strategic positioning in the region. In this respect, the participating UN agencies were the main beneficiaries of the joint programme.
143. *The joint programme provided UN-Habitat with the vehicle to advocate new concepts that were supported with technical expertise and project implementation capabilities.* Participation in the joint programme provided a number of opportunities for ROLAC to further UN-Habitat's mandate, develop and implement innovative activities and improve collaboration and communication with other UN agencies, implementing partners and civil society. Their combined effect of these actions was instrumental in assuring project relevance to national and local priorities. ROLAC understood the joint programme's strategic value as an 'entry point' to expand institutional presence in countries where earlier activities were few. This was helped by project implementation performance that was generally satisfactory and in some cases outstanding. A broader concept of habitat was advocated, linking human settlements with livelihoods, social interaction, productive activities and access to basic services. More important, these concepts were demonstrated 'on the ground' through the various joint programme initiatives.

Efficiency

144. *Project performance was constrained by overambitious design and complex institutional arrangements.* As mentioned earlier, projects were designed with high expectations that were influenced by the competitive nature of MDG-F approval. Likewise, the multi-agency implementation dynamics raised coordination demands considerably. Coordination requires time and resources, and more so when a number of agencies are given different project activities to implement. Most projects involved complex institutional frameworks that encompassed different levels, and each UN agency tended to pull its own partners. There were pro's and con's to this arrangement, with more than one evaluation noting that performance was hindered by the excessive number of project results and participating agencies. In retrospect it appears that agency access to joint programme and MDG-F funding was often perceived more as an entitlement rather than based on merit, and it was difficult to exclude interested agencies at the country level. As a result, project design was often a composite of different agency contributions, rather than an integrated programmatic vision.

Effectiveness

145. *UN-Habitat has demonstrated comparative advantages in its approach to project design and implementation, and in conveying concepts and methods that were often new for national partners.* UN-Habitat's overall performance in the projects that were studied was generally satisfactory and in some cases outstanding. It contributed positively to all projects and was effective for involving local stakeholders and external partners in urban improvement initiatives.
146. *Well-informed and effective technical support was provided at different levels, generating a cumulative effect that linked national policy and legal frameworks with local development processes. This enhanced UN-Habitat's positioning by generating partnership opportunities at various levels.* Project implementation strategies were based on dialogue and facilitation, rather than

prescription. New approaches for resolving old problems were validated through the results achieved; experiences and methods were systematized and documented. This raised the learning curve for local stakeholders while strengthening institutional memory. In the case of one project, municipal mayors were initially reluctant to participate and 'weary' of the prescriptive attitudes of earlier project partners, but were won over by UN-Habitat's low-key supportive role. Several national partners have come to perceive this overall approach as a UN-Habitat trademark that enhances the institutional image.

147. *UN-Habitat's effectiveness built upon the experience of prior work in the project countries, and the familiarity of national consultants with country contexts and development policies.* Effectiveness was gained by hiring qualified teams of national consultants who understood UN-Habitat's conceptual and methodological orientation, and had a background of country experience. The international expertise that was recruited also appears to have been well selected and effective. The prominent role played by national institutions ensured that project design and planned development results were in line with national priorities.
148. *UN-Habitat's most important comparative advantages are knowledge-based and have been demonstrated through the joint programme at both policy and local levels.* ROLAC was able to assemble competent teams of national consultants for most projects. These teams developed work relations with government ministries, municipalities, professional associations, private enterprises and university faculties that were often mutually beneficial. *This offers the possibility to build, over time, teams of national expertise that are independent yet imbued with UN-Habitat's conceptual-methodological framework. This could in turn grow into a network of resource persons secured through retainer contracts, access to new knowledge products and global experiences, or other incentives.* Such an arrangement would provide the benefits of ensuring a pool of

technical knowledge that is familiar with national and regional issues, while ensuring a degree of country presence with possibilities for mobilizing new support. This is particularly important in regions such as LAC where an increasing number of countries have entered the middle-income category with subsequent reductions of non-reimbursable development aid; in such cases, national governments are likely to become UN-Habitat's main client.

Impact

149. *UN-Habitat played a substantive role and added value to its projects under the joint programme.* UN-Habitat's ability to articulate stakeholders and encourage fruitful partnerships benefitted the projects in their entirety. It has influenced national policy and legal/regulatory frameworks, with a high likelihood for impact if new legislation is enforced. There was localized impact in demonstrating new approaches to urban improvement, access to basic services and citizen security that were documented and can be replicated on a broader scale. The innovative concepts and approaches piloted by UN-Habitat have influenced the way some national partner institutions now work in these areas. The changes to local attitudes and organizational capacity will last beyond the project and are likely to sustain the momentum of initiatives in several communities.
150. *Despite evidence of development results, the joint programme's contribution to MDG achievement is indirect and cannot be measured.* The final project evaluations did not report measurable effects towards the attainment of national MDGs, nor were the evaluators able to obtain this information during country visits. Project design and monitoring did not correlate outputs or results to MDG advancement; and there are understandable difficulties in making a reliable connection. Pre-implementation baseline data or measurable progress indicators were lacking in the design of most projects. In retrospect, the joint programme might have served as an 'entry point' to develop or improve country MDG tracking system, with sub-national feed in.

Sustainability

151. *There are encouraging examples of sustainable practices and impact in the project components managed by UN-Habitat. The potential for sustainability was most evident when UN-Habitat was able to influence national legal/regulatory frameworks, and in local urban improvements encompassing water and sanitation services and community infrastructure among others. Post-*

project sustainability potential is most evident in the approval or revision of legislation for urban development and water and sanitation services, and in the extension of improved water services and quality to pilot municipalities. Some of the community infrastructures developed with UN-Habitat support have income-generating potential, i.e. agricultural storage facility and recreational park with attractions.

7. LESSONS LEARNED

Relevance

152. *The thematic diversity of the joint programme modality encouraged synergies and a broader conceptual vision beyond the traditional agency mandates.* As a result, core areas of agency expertise were enriched and expanded. This was most evident when project components were co-implemented by two or more agencies, and not separately by individual agencies as was the prevailing trend. Cross cutting issues were streamlined into the design of most projects, and the transversal linkages between activities have been highlighted by more than one evaluation. Gender issues moved across project components and thematic areas, and were an effective catalyst for agency convergence. UN-Habitat's ability to integrate gender within project activities was recognized by national partners in several countries. Capacity development is another area that offers broad possibilities for joint implementation among agencies.

153. *The institutional image of ROLAC was strengthened in the LAC region as a result of its participation in the joint programme.* Partnership and agency collaboration enabled ROLAC to influence more (and larger) results than would have been possible through 'stand alone' projects. The intelligent positioning of ROLAC with respect to government authorities and UN agencies, combined with satisfactory project performance, has led to new project opportunities in Mexico and Colombia (according to interviewed UN-Habitat staff) and a country cooperation agreement in the case of El Salvador. In other countries, the political commitment and funding needed to sustain operations and develop new projects are lacking, and UN-Habitat has faced difficulties in maintaining institutional presence in Guatemala (where its office was eventually closed down) and Costa Rica among others.

Efficiency

154. *The evaluation findings point to structural and systemic weaknesses that need to be addressed in order to improve the performance and viability of the joint programme modality.* These include an

acute dependency on external funding as the key driver for agency 'buy in' to joint programming (as reflected in the rapid decline in collaboration among agencies following the joint programme's termination); the persistence of institutional 'silos' as noted in the tendency towards the parallel implementation of project components by single agencies; and the different (at times incompatible) administrative, financial and reporting systems used by UN agencies, which were also inconsistent with those of national partners. These findings are critical yet have a potential learning curve: The experiences of the joint programme have provided a 'reality check' of the modality by highlighting strengths, weaknesses and areas needing improvement. The lessons derived from joint programming experiences can provide inputs to improve the modality in advance of future initiatives. The evaluators agree that joint programming promises much to the UN system—in terms of harmonizing institutional efforts and offering integrated, more cost-effective approaches to the project cycle—but is still in process of evolution

155. *The fundamental obstacle to joint implementation lies in the different financial, administrative and reporting systems used by UN agencies.* This is the issue that needs to be considered for future joint programming. The administrative systems used by UN-Habitat and some of the smaller UN agencies may offer examples of better practice for replication on a wider scale. They are considered more agile by national partners than those of the larger agencies, whose systems are designed with greater emphasis on control mechanisms (and hence are often slower and more cumbersome). Organizing inter-agency procurement committees in future joint programmes could help to streamline and synchronize expenditures, promote joint budgeting and encourage the pooling of equipment and funds for common use.

156. *As the number of participating agencies increases, so does the need to synchronize activities and outputs that lead to key results and outcomes.* The high number of UN agencies, project components and results in most initiatives often led to coordination problems, particularly when activities

implemented by different agencies (or placed in different project components) were inter-linked and depended on each other to move forward. Some projects lost valuable implementation time when demonstration activities were held up by extended assessments or delayed publications that were not essential to the achievement of a given result. The success of joint implementation depends very much on the synchronization of outputs that are connected along the 'causal pathways' that lead to higher results and outcomes. These need to be mapped out at the design stage and scheduled in a manner that ensures linkages and raises cumulative impact.²³

157. *Working under the same roof can make a difference.* When project staff from the different UN agencies were removed from their respective country offices and shared common work premises, the likelihood of inter-agency collaboration increased noticeably. More project activities were co-implemented, resources were pooled for recurrent expenditures, and agencies were better disposed to assist each other when needed. When these conditions occurred, the various agency participants were able to build a collective project identity that overrode the habitual agency agendas and contributed to group efficiency.

Effectiveness

158. *UN-Habitat's most important comparative advantages are knowledge-based and have been demonstrated through the joint programme at both policy and local levels.* ROLAC was able to assemble competent teams of national consultants for most projects. These teams developed work relations with government ministries, municipalities, professional associations, private enterprises and university faculties that were often mutually beneficial. *This offers the possibility to build, over time, teams of national expertise that are independent yet imbued with UN-Habitat's conceptual-methodological framework. This could in turn grow into a network of resource persons secured through retainer contracts, access to new knowledge products and global experiences, or*

other incentives. Such an arrangement would provide the benefits of ensuring a pool of technical knowledge that is familiar with national and regional issues, while ensuring a degree of country presence with possibilities for mobilizing new support. This is particularly important in regions such as LAC where an increasing number of countries have entered the middle-income category with subsequent reductions of non-reimbursable development aid; in such cases, national governments are likely to become UN-Habitat's main client.

159. *UN-Habitat's commitment to partnership and participation raised the effectiveness of project implementation.* UN-Habitat's consistent emphasis on participation and ownership encouraged responsibility and motivated community organizations to participate in local initiatives that in some cases continue. Beneficiary input at different stages of the project cycle provided a 'reality check' that improved the project team's adaptive responsiveness and adaptive management capabilities. As noted, the benefits were mutual: Periodic consultations and participation have helped UN-Habitat articulate realistic and achievable goals; while assigning management and oversight responsibilities to community-based organizations raised the learning curve for local stakeholders. The capacities of local partner organizations were often strengthened from their participation in the project. Likewise, the documented systematization of project experiences and methods (by UN-Habitat project staff) enhances the institutional memory of municipal governments and community organizations, and offering guidelines for their replication.
160. *UN-Habitat was most effective in influencing the enabling national policy and legal environments, especially when this was accompanied by local demonstration initiatives.* UN-Habitat's comparative advantages were most apparent when project implementation combined local initiatives with support to national policymaking. Work was done at different levels and often in a complementary manner. Local demonstration projects were implemented through community organizations and successful approaches documented to inform government partners. UN-Habitat supported advocacy efforts, gave technical advice, held discussion events and organized study tours for legislators, as a strategy to improve the national legal/regulatory frameworks

23 *The Review of Outcomes to Impacts (RoTI) methodology developed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) includes a Theory of Change approach that analyzes these linkages at the design stage. While intended for environmental projects, it can be applied to other sectors or thematic areas as well.*

in areas as diverse as social housing, water and sanitation, and gender and race. This was done very effectively with legislators in El Salvador, and there were also successful experiences in Ecuador and Mexico. Interviewed respondents in the countries visited often considered UN-Habitat to be one of the more responsive and user-friendly UN agencies that participated in the joint programme.

161. When projects stalled this was usually from factors that were external to UN-Habitat, such as election processes or changes in the leadership of partner institutions. Project implementation was rushed in most cases to compensate for start-up delays. As a result, exit strategies or a gradual transfer of project initiatives was lacking and most came to a grinding halt. The unexpected economic crisis in Spain cancelled any consideration of additional time or money, although a project extension was granted in at least one case.
162. *The combined package of technical assistance and knowledge products, upstream/downstream linkages, the ability to catalyze partnerships and an inclusive approach to project implementation offer the foundations of corporate model that can be successfully replicated in other countries.* In all countries visited, national partners praised the fresh, innovative concepts and methods that UN-Habitat brought to the joint programme, and its ability to deliver quality support. This has enhanced ROLACs positioning in the region, with successful case studies such as El Salvador where a country cooperation agreement was approved with the government. The salient elements of this way of doing business need to be systematized and applied to other countries and regions as part of UN-Habitat's corporate strategy.

Impact

163. *For most projects, the scale of intervention needed to generate a 'critical mass' of impact and influence MDG progress would have required a medium-term policy and resource commitment by national authorities.* This was outside the scope of the joint programme or UN-Habitat's responsibility. Neither did the scale of intervention or three-year funding periods encourage more lasting partner commitments. Project interventions were often local, small-scale and unfeasible to track in MDG terms (more so with the absence of sub-national

or municipal MDG targets and monitoring systems). While several UN-Habitat initiatives have contributed to new or revised policies, laws and regulations—in some cases improving the enabling conditions for MDG progress—their effects are not measurable yet. Likewise, policy formulation must be followed by policy implementation, which in turn requires a medium-term political and budgetary commitment by government authorities.

164. *The contribution of the projects to the common goal of MDG achievement should also be measured in their capacity to enhance participation and mobilize local stakeholders and resources.* This is related to the configuration of local partnerships and the synergies between the individual contributions of partners. The joint programme in general and UN-Habitat in particular have contributed to changing attitudes and raising local confidence and commitment with regard to different development issues. Both UN-Habitat and the joint programme as a modality were effective in aligning interventions, and creating its own identity through a unique interface with national counterparts. However, achievements need be assessed in the medium to long-term, i.e. the effects attributable to changes of behavior among beneficiaries, the approval of new laws or sustained partnership, rather than from the immediate project results.

Sustainability

165. *Local participation and ownership are good for sustainability* As a whole, the positive disposition of UN-Habitat and other agencies to assign key project roles to beneficiaries has encouraged higher levels of local ownership and established conditions for the appropriation and continuity of results. Of course, there are sustainability barriers that are external to the joint programme or UN-Habitat's role: Funds are lacking and local government mechanisms remain weak in many cases; in El Salvador, the absence of property taxes severely restrict the ability of municipal governments to invest in urban improvements. New government authorities are being elected at national/municipal levels and institutional memory is faltering. While the management of urban services and infrastructure by community organizations does not offer a panacea against such risks, it has (in some cases) raised the level of responsibility and commitment, while

strengthening local management and oversight capacities. Taken together, these factors do improve the likelihood of post-project sustainability.

166. *The three-year funding and implementation period provided by the MDG-F was often too short to consolidate and transfer results, or to create conditions for their sustainability.* Three years was particularly insufficient for the more complex projects that worked at systemic levels, for example advocating and influencing the national policy and legal/regulatory frameworks, while supporting locally-based demonstration projects for urban improvement, gender rights, peace-building and access to water services. Unrealistic project design or delays caused by electoral processes or turnovers of staff in partner institutions were additional contributing factors.
167. As a result, project coordinators were driven to focus on immediate delivery with little space for sustainability planning or exit strategies. The MDG-F was clear from the beginning concerning the joint programme's three-year horizon. Although one project was extended to compensate for start-up delays, the onset of Spain's economic crisis in 2012 precluded discussions of additional time or money. An often abrupt ending of project activities and an overall

lack of transfer or exit strategies have contributed to the present juncture, in which many initiatives have lost momentum or have been discontinued since project termination.

168. *The sub-regionalization of UN-Habitat initiatives may offer a more cost-effective option for delivering technical support and strengthening organizational presence on a wider scale.* As country presence is strengthened, opportunities for projects and funding are also likely to increase. However, the scale or type of support needed may not justify full-fledged national projects; nor might this be a viable option in terms of the servicing costs and fundraising efforts they require. The programming of sub-regional initiatives that encompass targeted activities in several countries could offer a more cost-effective option to strengthen ROLAC's position and project portfolio in the region. This would also help to streamline support from the Technical Branches, enabling a technical expert to cover several countries under one mission.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Relevance

169. *Projects need to be designed on the basis of achievable results with verifiable indicators, benchmarks for measuring progress, and exit strategies. External factors that are potentially disruptive, i.e. national or municipal election processes, need to be considered in scheduling implementation.* Such omissions are common in project design, yet can weaken efficiency, effectiveness and overall impact. The joint programme was not an exception. Several project documents contained over-dimensioned results and outcomes that were unlikely to be achieved over a three-year period. In some cases this raised local expectations that were not met, undermining community motivation and the credibility of the national partners who remain. When projects were delayed by national elections or slow start-up processes, agencies and implementing partners were obligated to focus on immediate delivery needs and had little opportunity to consider sustainability issues or plan gradual 'exit strategies.' Several projects were eventually terminated without delivering key products or results; insufficient time was often cited as the cause. The most vulnerable projects in this respect were those that worked simultaneously at different levels (for example, combining community demonstration with policy advice) or in isolated regions, were set back by election processes, or had to cope with frequent turnovers of partner staff. It is also likely that inter-agency competition for MDG-F funds may have encouraged ambitious, larger-than-life design that was not detected during the appraisal stage. These findings offer insight into the strengths and weaknesses of UN-Habitat's interventions, and should be incorporated to broader in-house discussions (for example, during organizational retreats) towards improving the relevance and effectiveness of its programmes.

Efficiency

170. *The main challenge facing joint programming in the future is to move from parallel to joint implementation.* This requires harmonizing agency procurement, administrative and reporting systems that were often incompatible. Although extremely

difficult, the unification of these procedures is essential to move the joint programme modality forward and to improve its viability (and user-friendliness). As noted, project design was often a composite of UN agency contributions rather than the outcome of an integrated exercise. This was partly due to the organization of the joint programme and manner in which it was made open to all agencies. The availability of significant funding was very important in enabling institutional activity in countries where there was little if any. This in turn reinforced the tendency to compartmentalize project components and budgets among separate agencies.

171. *Most projects would have benefitted from a pre-implementation inception phase. This should be considered as a recommendation for future joint programming initiatives.* Complex project design and institutional arrangements, combined with heterogeneous administrative and reporting systems, led to coordination problems during implementation. Some of these problems might have been mitigated had an initial preparatory period (i.e. three to six months) been earmarked to harmonize institutional arrangements, work plans and administrative procedures between implementing partners, without the clock running against them. An inception period should be considered for future joint programming initiatives because it offers potential benefits for project efficiency and coordination.

172. *The support role of UN-Habitat's Technical Branches to regional offices and country initiatives needs to be strengthened in a manner that is cost-effective and focuses on mutual priorities.* Technical Branches can play an important role in channelling technical support to regional offices and country-based initiatives at different stages of the project cycle. Their input to the joint programme was mainly channelled through the Programme Appraisal Group during the review of project proposals in Nairobi. Involvement has been inconsistent among Technical Branches and influenced by availability of staff-time, competing work demands, language proficiency and cost-recovery. Sometimes Branches assumed a lead role in designing projects and supporting their implementation (as was the case of Urban Basic

Services Branch in Mexico), but more often had little awareness of joint programme initiatives that addressed the thematic focus of their mandates. The out-posting of Technical Branch staff to ROLAC was a determining factor for the level of interaction and benefited some Branches over others.

173. Staffing and budgetary realities rule out systematic support by UN-Habitat headquarters to all initiatives that are implemented at the country level. Likewise, representation of Technical Branch focal points within the regional offices is uneven as well. It is therefore likely that support will continue to revolve around in-house project appraisals (or annual regional office 'retreats'). Yet even these levels can be strengthened by introducing more structured quality assurance standards/benchmarks according to the thematic focus, and better pre-appraisal preparation to enable Technical Branches to identify in advance proposals that can benefit from their guidance in advance, and identify opportunities for technical assistance, knowledge products or other contributions to their implementation. Likewise, funding issues with regards to the possible role of Technical Branches in project implementation also need to be considered at the appraisal stage—to explore options for funding or cost recovery, and to downplay potential susceptibilities by regional offices regarding the opportunity costs of earmarking (often limited) project funds for international missions by Technical Branch staff.

Sustainability

174. *The transfer and sustainability of project achievements need to be built into project design and work plans—particularly for the second half of implementation.* The pressure to generate results and spend budgets (that were sometimes substantial in quantity and scale) over a three-year period tended to focus project attention on immediate delivery. There was little time to discuss sustainability or exit strategies, particularly when trying to recoup on start-up delays and other obstacles that slowed implementation. Nevertheless, sustainability planning might have been discussed in a group setting, for example through a regional workshop organized by the MDG-F to get agencies and key partners to begin thinking about the issue. More than one mid-term evaluation underscored the need to program gradual disengagement and transfer processes for the purpose of sustainability. To UN-Habitat's credit, project experiences and approaches in several countries were systematized and documented; this contribution was very much appreciated by national partners in municipal governments, NGOs and universities, and clearly enhances institutional memory and opportunities for replication.
175. Sustainability and—time and resources permitting—a strategy for transferring project results and responsibilities should be built into project design or at least explicitly considered for the second half, based on the findings of a mid-term review. Activities need to be planned and budgeted for in order to encourage a gradual reduction in support levels. This would in turn require a new threshold in inter-agency coordination, and underscores the need for greater compatibility in agency monitoring, administrative and reporting systems.
176. While prevailing financial and budgetary management practices do not make it easy to schedule a gradual scaling-down of project support, the joint programme offers a suitable vehicle for innovation in this direction (provided that more realistic project timelines, i.e. five years, are used in the future). If the joint programme is to be a window of opportunity for future UN implementation, there should be room for experimentation within a modality that is still evolving. The UN Development Group and One UN policymakers should use the joint programming mechanism to challenge established rules and expand project parameters in a way that makes inter-agency planning, budgeting and implementation not only possible but attractive as well. In preparation for the upcoming UN country cooperation cycle, UNDAF processes at the country level can be used to nurture joint programming and build on prior partnership and inter-agency collaboration; however, there need to be incentives that are not only money-driven for this to happen.
177. *The sub-regionalization of UN-Habitat initiatives may offer a more cost-effective option for delivering technical support and strengthening organizational presence on a wider scale.* As country presence is strengthened, opportunities for projects and funding are also likely to increase. However, the scale or type of support needed may not justify full-fledged national projects; nor might this be a viable option in terms of the servicing

costs and fundraising efforts they require. The programming of sub-regional initiatives that encompass targeted activities in several countries could offer a more cost-effective option to strengthen ROLAC's position and project portfolio in the region. This would also help to streamline support from the Technical Branches, enabling a technical expert to cover several countries under one mission.

178. *An issue for consideration is how to replicate the advances in institutional presence and positioning that were achieved by UN-Habitat and ROLAC through the LAC joint programme.* Interviews held with national partners and government authorities suggest that UN-Habitat is generally perceived as an innovative and user-friendly UN agency, with comparative advantages over others (especially the larger agencies) that participated in the joint programme. This perception represents valuable institutional capital that needs to be nurtured and should not be allowed to decline over time, as now happens in several countries.

179. *The replication of UN-Habitat's achievements under the joint programme needs to build on the following attributes and comparative advantages that enhance efficiency and effectiveness:*

- *Adequate initial funding that enables UN-Habitat to demonstrate its comparative advantages.* In the case of El Salvador, the UN-Habitat budget was above USD 1 million; this enabled the integration of actions targeting national policy and legal frameworks with local development processes, a combination that appears to be particularly conducive towards mutually reinforcing results at different levels.
- Although UN-Habitat's entry point at the country level was project and funding-driven (as is usually the case), it is important to recognize that the organization's primary strengths are knowledge-based and methodological, and therefore can be delivered through alternative, non-project mechanisms. These could include:
 - Advisory support and systematizations of 'best practices' from the region for national authorities and policymakers, particularly during the start of new government cycles. Technical advice might also be used to guide the implementation approaches of government or multi-lateral programmes

that support urban development. This is already happening to an extent in El Salvador, through an IDB-funded credit for urban infrastructure construction.

- Advisory services for private and public enterprises that are engaged in urban development, encompassing productive chain analysis, new trends in urban planning, participatory urban improvement approaches and related methodologies.
- The development and dissemination of knowledge products, including project case studies and validated good practices, to national university faculties and regional university networks such as the University of Central America or University of West Indies. This form of collaboration can be expanded to include graduate-level university extension support for UN-Habitat initiatives, as occurred in El Salvador.
- The provision of well-informed and effective technical support at different levels, generating a cumulative effect that links local development processes to national policy and legal frameworks. This enhanced UN-Habitat's positioning by generating partnership opportunities at various levels. Project implementation strategies were based on dialogue and facilitation, rather than prescription. New approaches for resolving old problems were validated through the results achieved; experiences and methods were systematized and documented. This raised the learning curve for local stakeholders while strengthening institutional memory. In the case of one project, municipal mayors were initially reluctant to participate and 'weary' of the prescriptive attitudes of earlier project partners, but were won over by UN-Habitat's low-key supportive role. Several national partners have come to perceive this overall approach as a UN-Habitat trademark that enhances the institutional image.
- *The combination of 'upstream-downstream' initiatives created synergies and broader opportunities for continued partnerships and projects.* In addition to contributing towards improved urban conditions and access to basic services, local demonstration projects

- informed policymakers and supported the policy/legal changes advocated through the joint programme. They were also useful in demonstrating UN-Habitat's inclusive approach to project implementation. By working simultaneously at different levels, UN-Habitat expanded its sphere of influence and contacts, enhancing conditions for further programme development.
- *UN-Habitat's consistent emphasis on participation and ownership is essential to encourage stakeholder commitment and 'buy-in' to project activities.* In El Salvador, UN-Habitat was perceived as a technically competent and responsive ally by government authorities, private companies, community organizations, NGOs, professional associations and university faculties. Many interviewed stakeholders considered that UN-Habitat's support had helped in fulfilling their organizations' mandates while broadening institutional cooperation. The early diversification of partners and contacts was an intelligent form of networking by UN-Habitat that widened cooperation opportunities in several countries.
180. *Taken together, UN-Habitat's the above-mentioned attributes and comparative advantages offer the elements of a working model that can—and should—be replicated in other countries and regions.* UN-Habitat's experiences in El Salvador and other countries provide valuable case study material that can be systematized and disseminated as corporate programming practice. There are entry points and pathways to institutional growth that can be derived from ROLAC's strategic positioning in El Salvador. This is important in regions such as LAC, where the increasing number of middle-income countries is accompanied by significant reductions in non-reimbursable development cooperation.
181. *UN-Habitat should build on the capacities and alliances achieved thus far to further support countries in the LAC region towards achieving the MDGs and post 2015 SDGs.* In this respect, UN-Habitat reforms, the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and Work Programme 2014-2015 should be geared towards fostering an operational and programming environment that facilitates future initiatives in support of MDG and SDG achievement under the joint programme modality.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the lead United Nations agency for Cities and Human Settlements. The agency was established as the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), through the General Assembly Resolution 32/162 of December 1977, following the first global Conference of United Nations on Human Settlements that was held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976.

For nearly two decades of its existence (1978-1996), UNCHS remained a small technical agency. Faced with rapid urbanization, accelerating slum formation and growing evidence of urban poverty, the second United Nations Conference on the Human Settlements (Habitat II) was held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. The main outcome of the conference was the adoption of Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. This gave UNCHS an explicit normative mandate of assisting Members States to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and to report on global human Settlements conditions and trends.

The Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC), was established in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1996, as part of an initiative to decentralize UN-Habitat activities to the Latin American and Caribbean Region. The main objective of this decentralization was to improve operational activities by optimizing backstopping costs and time, and improving the capacity to provide advisory services and generate new projects through its greater closeness to the partners in the region. It was also expected that the location of ROLAC in the region would improve the overall presence and coverage of UN-Habitat activities in Latin America and the Caribbean and provide better support for the implementation of UN-Habitat's normative and operational initiatives.

At the United Nations Millennium Summit, in September 2000, world leaders put development at the heart of the global agenda with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), setting clear targets for reducing extreme poverty and hunger, illiteracy and achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women empowerment, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental

sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development by 2015.

The Istanbul+5, a special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Habitat Agenda held in 2001, resulted in the UN General Assembly passing resolution 56/206 that elevated the UNCHS from a centre for human settlements (Habitat) to a fully-fledged "Programme" known as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The adoption of resolution 56/206 also acknowledged the commitment of Member States to the implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

In 2002, governments attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) further mandated UN-Habitat to monitor and report on progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets on access to safe drinking water and halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015.

The elevation of UN-Habitat to its programme status helped the agency to be better positioned in the overall UN inter-agency machinery and enhance its participation in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), leading to more collaboration with United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, and country teams in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related MDGs targets.

Following the 2005 World Summit, a High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence recommended the Delivering as One approach to the Secretary-General, when addressing the key UN mandates of development, humanitarian assistance and environment. In response, UN Country Teams (UNCT) were established between the agencies with expectation of a strengthened and aligned UN system which would improve collaboration with member states in the joint effort of making real progress towards the achievement of the MDGs. The One UN approach also builds on the Paris Declaration adopted in 2005 calling for greater harmonization and simplification of development aid and increased effectiveness.

UN-Habitat has participated in the joint programming through the Delivering as One Initiative in six of the eight pilot countries in Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Vietnam. The extent of UN-Habitat's participation in delivering as one was assessed in an evaluation conducted by UN-Habitat in 2011 (Review of UN-Habitat's Participation in the Delivering as One Initiative, Evaluation Report 5/2011).

Through the Millennium Development Fund (MDG-F), UN-Habitat has engaged in joint programming in the Latin American and Caribbean Region in Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. The participation in the Joint Programmes (JPs) has provided a number of opportunities for the UN-Habitat Regional Office (ROLAC), in furthering UN-Habitat's mandate, developing and implementing innovative operational activities and improving collaboration and communication with other UN agencies, implementing partners and the civil society. Other experiences of joint programming such as in Haiti have included aid and post disaster perspectives.

The UN system has continuously reinforced the importance of programme strengthening and encourages the One UN approach globally. The UN Development Group in LAC has repeatedly confirmed its intention in promoting UN joint implementation of programmes in the region. The MDG Fund is committed to observing the Paris Declaration and promoting the One UN approach, which was decisive for the innovative implementation. The MDG projects provide valuable source of lessons, in particular related to issues such as transparency, programme documentation and participation of partners at all levels in project implementation that could be replicated by other programmes and projects managed by UN-Habitat Regional Offices and Units at its headquarters.

1.1 The Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund

In December 2006, UNDP and the Government of Spain signed an agreement to establish a new fund to accelerate efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and to support UN reform efforts at the country level. The Government of Spain committed €528 million to the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) for programming between 2007 and 2010.

The intent of the Fund is to accelerate progress on the MDGs in participating countries through programmes that apply innovative development practices. The Fund's vision and the basis for its programme of work areas centered on three key principles:

- i. To accelerate progress towards attainment of the MDGs by supporting policies and programmes that promise significant and measurable impact;
- ii. To reinforce the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, with a particular emphasis on national ownership;
- iii. To contribute to United Nations (UN) System-wide Coherence by advancing its efforts in coordination.

The MDG-F supports innovative actions with the potential for wide replication and high-impact in 59 countries, within the framework of the Millennium Declaration's global partnership for development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The MDG-F's decisions and approach are guided by the imperatives of ensuring national and local ownership, alignment with national policies and procedures, coordination with other donors, results-orientation and mutual accountability.

The MDG-F operates through the UN development system and finance, collaborative UN activities that leverage the value-added of the UN, particularly where the UN's collective strength could be harnessed in order to address multi-dimensional development challenges. The MDG-F supports eight thematic areas: children, food security and nutrition, democratic economic governance, gender equality and women's empowerment, youth, employment and migration, development and the private sector, environment and climate change, culture and development, and conflict prevention and peace building.

The MDG-F Steering Committee Secretariat is located in UNDP. UNDP's Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPT-F Office) provides the Administrative Agent functions of the Fund.

UN-Habitat's share of the global MDG-F is USD 10,5 million. It is ranked fourteenth in funds size out of 27 UN Agencies that have received MDG-F funds. UN-Habitat's global delivery rate as of February 2013 was 59.8 per cent (fifth lowest out of the 27 UN Agencies).

1.2 UN-Habitat's project portfolio of the MDG's joint programmes in ROLAC

UN-Habitat's project portfolio of MDG's joint programme contains nine projects, and covering six countries of Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico. List of projects:

- Conservation and Sustainable Management of the Yasuni Biosphere Reserve Natural and Cultural Heritage (F071)
- Strengthening the Effective and Democratic Management of Water and Sanitation to support the Achievement of the MDGs in periurban contexts (F074)
- Inter-agency Programme for Promotion of Gender and Racial/Ethnic Equality (F079)
- Governance in the water and sanitation sector in Ecuador within the Framework of the Millennium Development Goals (F080)
- Convivial Networks, Communities without Fear (F082)
- Consolidating Peace in Guatemala Through Violence Prevention and Conflict Management (F084)
- Contribution to the UN Joint Programme Security with Citizenship in Brazilian Communities (F085)
- Regional Competiveness for the Tourism and Agroindustrial Sectors in the Brunca Region with emphasis on the creation of green and decent jobs (F090)
- Urban and Productive Integrated Sustainable Settlements in El Salvador (F092)

The projects cover five of the eight MDG-F's thematic areas; democratic economic governance, gender equality and women's empowerment, development and the private sector, environment and climate change, and conflict prevention and peace building. The nine projects fall in three focus areas of the UN-Habitat Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) 2008-2013. These are Focus Area 1: Effective advocacy, monitoring, and partnership, Focus Area 2: Urban planning, management, and governance, and Focus Area 4: Environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure and services (See Annex Table 4).

The total value of the UN-Habitat LAC MDG-F portfolio is USD 6,794,015. Project budgets range from as little as USD 529,960 (F084) up to USD 1,157,740 (F092). The first project began implementation in July 2008. All projects were implemented by June 2013.

Mid-term evaluations were carried out of all the projects through the Regional Office and/or country offices and the reports are available.

1.3 Institutional arrangements

The MDG-F Steering Committee provides MDG-F with overall leadership. The Steering Committee sets the strategic direction of the Fund, decides on financial allocations to joint programmes, monitors strategic allocations and delivery amongst priorities and countries, and tracks Fund-wide progress.

The MDG-F Secretariat, located in the Partnerships Bureau of UNDP headquarters, services the Steering Committee. It ensures policies and strategies decided by the Steering Committee are implemented and adhered to. The Secretariat also manages the proposal review process and manages the Fund's overall monitoring and evaluation strategy.

The UN Resident Coordinator provides ongoing oversight to the joint programme(s) at the national level, and that the participating UN organizations are meeting their obligations. The Resident Coordinator is entrusted with leadership of the overall programme design, ongoing programmatic oversight of the MDG-F activities and co-chairing regular National Steering Committee meetings. He/she also facilitates ongoing monitoring and evaluation of MDG-F activities in conformity with UN standards.

A National Steering Committee (NSC) is established in each country to provide oversight and strategic guidance to the programme(s) as well as approving Joint Programme Document(s) before submission to the MDG-F Steering Committee, the annual workplans and budgets. The NSC membership consists of non-implementing parties to allow for independence and includes a representative of the Government, a representative from Government of Spain and the RC. The RC and the Government representative co-chair the NSC. Other representatives, such as civil society or other donors, and observers may be invited by the co-chairs. Depending on the country specific context other formal members may be included in the NSC. The NSC normally meets semi-annually and makes decisions by consensus. The NSC agrees upon its Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure.

A Project Management Committee (PMC) is established at the national level for each individual joint programme. The PMC's role is to provide operational coordination to the Joint Programme. Membership consists of implementing Participating UN Organizations and relevant Government counterparts. The RC or his/her designate chairs the PMC. The PMC meets quarterly, but meet more frequently as necessary. The NSC and PMC seek to integrate its work under the UNDAF thematic structures in place at the country level. The UNDP

MPTF Office serves as the Administrative Agent (AA) and is responsible for concluding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Participating UN Organizations. It receives, administers and manages funds approved by the MDG-F Steering Committee for country-level joint programmes. It disburses these funds to the Participating UN Organizations in accordance with the decisions of the NSCs. The AA also consolidates financial and narrative progress reports.

1.3.1 Institutional arrangements in UN-Habitat/ROLAC for develop of MDG project and implementation

The Regional Office (through the Senior Human Settlements Officers (SHSO), the Programme Management Officer and Programme Assistants, guided by the Regional Director) has supported the Country Offices (Habitat Programme Managers) in all phases of the programming cycle. From the selection and development of proposals (including defining expected outcomes and relevance to UN-Habitat mandate and the thematic priorities of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP), project approval (MDG-F and UN-Habitat), as well as monitoring and reporting during implementation and closure of projects. The Habitat Programme Manager (HPM) is also supported by country staff and/ consultants.

In the case of Brazil (where the Regional Office is located), the SHSO and staff responsible for Brazil have implemented the project. In Guatemala, a consultant was hired and was guided by the HPM of Costa Rica, with support from the SHSO responsible for Central America.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation will provide UN-Habitat management, its entities responsible for project development and implementation in UN-Habitat Regional Offices and at headquarters, its governing bodies, donors and key stakeholders in MDG-F joint programming with a forward-looking objective assessment of the value-added, achievements, lessons, challenges and opportunities for UN-Habitat's contribution in Joint programming, adherence to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and One UN Approach to attain development results related to achievements of MDGs targets.

What is learned from the evaluation findings is expected to play an instrumental role in shaping strategies and

exploiting opportunities as well as enhancing effective collaboration of UN-Habitat with other UN agencies and international organizations and development partners in joint programming; developing and replicating innovative project implementation approaches, and in generating credible value for targeted beneficiaries and national priorities as well as accelerating the attainment of MDGs.

2.1 Specific objectives

- a. To assess the relevance of UN-Habitat's involvement in LAC Joint programming to attain development results and achieving MDGs targets and overall MDG-F objectives (MDGs, Paris Declaration, UN reform) and UN-Habitat MTSIP priorities;
- b. To assess the extent to which the modality of joint programmes as well as funding processes and coordination mechanisms were enabling for UN-Habitat to define the results to be achieved, effectively deliver the projects/programmes or services developed, and to report on performance of UN-Habitat;
- c. To assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN-Habitat projects in Joint programming in achieving expected results. This will entail analysis of actual versus expected outcomes achieved by UN-Habitat in terms of delivery of outputs and expected outcomes and long-term effects in the six countries (Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico), in which joint programming operated;
- d. To assess the prospects for continuation of the activities and the extent of ownership of beneficiaries;
- e. To assess the extent to which UN-Habitat incorporated cross-cutting issues of gender, climate change, youth, human rights, advocacy in the design, implementation, and performance reporting of its joint programmes;
- f. To identify why and how successful approaches and strategies worked—and which didn't not—drawing out key findings, lessons from UN-Habitat's joint programming experience;
- g. Taking into account the intended users of the evaluation, make recommendations on what needs to be done for effective participation of UN-Habitat in Joint programming aiming at accelerating attainment of MDG targets in ROLAC.

3. SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation is expected to assess achievements, challenges and opportunities since 2006 from the planning to implementation of MDG-F projects. In December 2006, the Government of Spain committed to support national governments, local authorities and NGOs in their efforts to tackle poverty and inequality. The inter-agency mechanism resulting from Spanish commitment, the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) sought to accelerate progress on the MDGs in participating countries through programmes that apply innovative development practices.

The Spanish funding put a heavy emphasis on development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, which resulted in a large representation of the region in portfolio of countries that were eligible for MDG-F financing. Overall Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 42 per cent of the total joint programme Portfolio, while Africa represented 18 per cent, Asia and the Pacific 15 per cent, Europe 13 per cent and Arab States, 12 per cent.

Specific geographic area to be covered will include the countries in LAC where UN-Habitat was involved in joint programming. Thematic areas in which UN-Habitat was involved in Joint programming will be assessed focusing on design and appraisal issues of programmes, innovation, and institutional framework of joint programming, performance issues, challenges and opportunities.

4. KEY ISSUES AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Relevance

- What is the relevance and value added of UN-Habitat in joint programming for development objectives and achieving MDGs targets in ROLAC?
 - To what extent were UN-Habitat projects/programmes in line with and respond to national needs, priorities and contribute to achieving the MDGs?
 - To what extent has the identification, design and implementation process involved local and national stakeholders as appropriate?
- To what extent cross-cutting issues of youth, gender equality, environmental capacity development and human rights been addressed by UN-Habitat in joint programming?

- To what extent and in what ways have UN-Habitat programmes promoted partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement in the UN-Habitat's priority areas of work?

Efficiency

- To what extent did ROLAC and national partners have the capacity to design and implement programmes through joint programming? What have been the most efficient types of project/programmes?
 - To what extent were institutional arrangements for MDG-F financing adequate for UN-Habitat programmes in ROLAC? What type of (administrative, financial and managerial) obstacles did the projects face and to what extent has this affected its efficiency?
 - What progress and efficiency gains of the UN-Habitat working through joint programmes with respect to design, management, implementation, reporting, and resource mobilization?
 - To what extent did actual results contribute to the expected results at output and outcome level?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has joint programming been effective in achieving desired results planned by UN-Habitat?
 - What types of products and services did UN-Habitat provide to beneficiaries through joint programming? What kind of positive changes to beneficiaries have resulted from products and services?

- What programmes/projects have proven to be most successful in terms of ownership in relation to the local context and the needs of beneficiaries? To what extent and in what ways has ownership, or lack of it, impacted the effectiveness of the projects?

Impact

- To what extent the projects have (or are expected to attain) attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.?

Sustainability

- To what extent did UN-Habitat programmes engage the participation of beneficiaries in design, implementation, monitoring and reporting?
- To what extent did UN-Habitat programmes in various thematic areas were aligned with National Development Strategies and/or the UNDAF and contributed to increased national investments to accelerate the achievement of related MDGs targets?
- To what extent will the projects be replicable or scaled up at national or local levels?
 - Among UN-Habitat joint programmes in various thematic areas, which of them fostered innovative partnerships with national institutions, private sector, and other development partners?

5. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

One of the key determinants of evaluation utilization is the extent to which clients and stakeholders are meaningfully involved in the evaluation process. It is expected that that this evaluation will be participatory, involving key stakeholders: the United Nations agencies involved in joint programming, beneficiaries of the projects/programmes, UN-Habitat management and project developing and implementing entities at headquarters, regional and national levels, Committee of Permanent Representative (CPR), donors and other interested parties (See Annex, Table 7 for key project stakeholders).

Stakeholders will be kept informed of the evaluation processes including design, information collection, and evaluation reporting and results dissemination to create a positive attitude for the evaluation and enhance utilization.

Some key stakeholders, including those stakeholders involved in the implementation and users/recipients/beneficiaries will participate through interviews, a questionnaires or group discussions.

6. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this evaluation will explore mixed methods approach, combining desk reviews, meta-evaluation and data collection (including interviews, meetings, focus groups and surveys) and data

analysis. The evaluation will be conducted in line with the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system.

The evaluation team will review the assignment outlined in the TOR and undertake an initial desk review, identify information gaps, redefine the methodology to be used in the evaluation and develop an evaluation work plan that will feed into the draft inception report. The inception report will identify what is expected to be accomplished, what process and approach to be followed, who is to do what and when tasks are to be completed.

The inception report will address the evaluation questions of the TOR, including limitations to addressing and answering the questions. It should also identify criteria and provide reasons for selection of projects and thematic areas for in-depth review and field visits.

Supported by the Evaluation Unit, the evaluation team will conduct a scoping mission to the UN-Habitat Regional Office (ROLAC) in Rio de Janeiro to finalize the inception report. Once the inception report is approved by the Evaluation Unit, UN-Habitat, it will become the management document for guiding delivery of the evaluation in accordance with UN-Habitat expectations.

The implementation phase of the evaluation will involve the overall data collection and analysis of the evaluation. The evaluation team will be expected to undertake field visits in selected countries. Country visits will include consultations with beneficiaries of projects as well as visits to programme/project visits.

The draft evaluation report, prepared by the evaluation team, will be shared with the Evaluation Unit. The draft report must meet minimum requirements for draft reports (as assessed by the Evaluation) before the Evaluation Unit will share of the draft evaluation report with relevant stakeholders for comments. Base on the comments, the evaluation team will then revise the draft report and submit the final draft report to the Evaluation Unit. Presentation of the evaluation report should follow the standard format of UN-Habitat Evaluation reports, putting forward the purpose, focus, scope, evaluation methodology, evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations.

A variety of methodology will be applied to collect information during evaluation including:

- a. **Review of relevant documents** to be provided by ROLAC. Documentation to be reviewed will include: (1) Joint programme documents and concept notes; (2) UN-Habitat documents for

joint programming ; (3) MDG-F annual reports; (4) Programme and project documents and monitoring reports; (5) Joint programme evaluation reports; (6) MDG-F documentation (including website); (7) UN-Habitat strategic plans and work programmes; (8) any other relevant documentation.

- b. **Key informant interviews and consultations with key stakeholders**, including UN agencies in joint programming, beneficiaries, donors, etc. The informant interviews will be conducted to obtain qualitative information on the evaluation issues to allow the evaluation team address the programme relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.
- c. **Surveys** implemented through the application of questionnaires of target stakeholders. Different questionnaires should be used for different stakeholder groups.
- d. **Field visits** to assess selected projects of UN-Habitat in ROLAC.

7. EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation shall be carried out by a core evaluation team consisting of two international consultants supported by national consultants (number to be determined).

The two international consultants will constitute the core evaluation team. The core team will be supported by national consultants. The core evaluation team is responsible for the work plan of national consultants, quality of work and preparation of the evaluation report.

The international consultants are expected to have:

- Knowledge and understanding of UN and UN-Habitat's role in promoting sustainable urbanization, human settlement issues in general and interlink ages to other areas, especially normative work, research and advocacy.
- Extensive experience in conducting evaluations and delivering professional results, presenting credible findings derived from evidence and putting conclusions and recommendations supported by the findings.
- Experience in implementation of projects, fully acquainted with the MDGs. And having experience of LAC and its countries. The international consultants must be fluent in English and Spanish, working knowledge of Portuguese is an advantage.

- Advanced academic degree in urban development, environment, gender, housing, infrastructure, governance, or related fields.
- It is envisaged that the team members would have a useful mix of experience and academic training relevant to the project evaluated and be gender-balanced.

The national consultants should have good local working knowledge, be proficient in English and Spanish (and working knowledge of Portuguese is an advantage), and have experience in implementation and management of donor-funded programmes and projects.

The national consultants will be selected by the Evaluation Unit through a consultative process with the Regional Office. The national consultants will be contracted through the Regional Office.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES AND EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

The evaluation is commissioned by UN-Habitat, and managed by the Evaluation Unit. A joint advisory group with members from the Evaluation Unit and the Regional Office will be established for the purpose of this evaluation and responsible for comments on work plan and draft reports.

The Evaluation Unit will lead the evaluation by guiding and ensuring the evaluation is contracted to suitable candidates; providing advice on code of conduct of evaluation; providing technical support as required; ensuring that contractual requirements are met; and approving all deliverables (evaluation work plan, draft and final evaluation reports).

The ROLAC will provide logistical support to the evaluation team.

The core evaluation team comprising of two international consultants, are responsible for meeting professional and ethical standards in conducting the evaluation, and producing the expected deliverables.

9. Work Schedule

The evaluation will be conducted over three paid months spread over a period of five months, August to December 2013. The consultants (Core Evaluation Team) are expected to prepare an inception report containing a detailed work plan that will operationalize the evaluation. The provisional time table is as follows.

Task	June 2013	July 2013	August 2013	September 2013	October 2013	November 2013	December 2013	January 2014
Preparation and finalization of the TOR	x							
Call for consultancy and recruitment of evaluation team		x						
Development of work plan and inception report			x					
Country visits, data collection and analysis			x	x				
Drafting of the evaluation report					x			
Review and revision of the draft evaluation report						x		
Writing and finalizing the final report						x	x	
Translation, publication and report dissemination								x

10. Deliverables

The three primary deliverables for this evaluation are expected from consultants:

- a. Inception report with evaluation work plan. The consultants will prepare an evaluation work plan to operationalize and direct the evaluation. The work plan will describe how the evaluation will be carried out. The evaluation work plan will explain expectations for evaluation; details of methods to be used; roles and responsibilities; evaluation framework, reporting and work scheduling. Once approved, it will become the key management document for the evaluation, guiding evaluation delivery in accordance with UN-Habitat's expectations throughout the performance of contract.
- b. Draft evaluation reports. The evaluation team will prepare a draft evaluation report to be reviewed by the UN-Habitat. The draft should follow UN-Habitat's standard format for evaluation reports. The drafts may be more than one, until a draft is

approved to have met the basic requirements of UN-Habitat reports.

- c. Final evaluation report (including Executive Summary and Annexes) prepared in English and following the UN-Habitat's standard format of evaluation report. The report should not exceed 50 pages (excluding Executive Summary). In general, the report should be technically easy to comprehend for non-specialists. The final published report will also contain figures, tables and boxes and be illustrated to some extent. The final report will be translated in Spanish by a professional translator and proofread by a member (or members of the Evaluation Team).

11. Resources

The consultants will be paid an evaluation fee. DSA will be paid only when travelling on mission outside official duty stations of consultants. The international consultants to conduct this evaluation should be of equivalent to P-5 to D-1. The level and national consultants will be determined after consultations.

ANNEX 2: PERSONS INTERVIEWED

ROLAC

- Elkin Velasquez, Regional Director (by skype)
- Carolina Chiappara, Programme Management Officer (by e-mail)
- Alberto Paranhos, ex Human Settlements Officer (retired)

UN-HABITAT HEADQUARTERS

(by skype)

- André Dzikus, Urban Basic Services Branch
- Robert Lewis Lettington, Land Tenure and Security Branch
- Gulelat Kebede, Urban Economy Branch
- Cecilia Anderson, Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Branch
- Juma Assiago, Urban Legislation, Land and Governance Branch

EL SALVADOR

- Eduardo Rodriguez – CTA (Chief Technical Advisor – UN-Habitat)
- Josué Gastelbondo, ex - Project Coordinator UNDP
- Roberto Gochez, Vice Minister of Housing
- Roberto Chinchilla, National Director Territorial Planning
- Oscar Hernandez, ex – National Housing Director
- Maria Morales, Executive Director Santa Tecla municipal government
- Miguel Escobar, Campo de Oro community in Apopa, El Salvador
- Members of the Community Development Association (ADESCO) of Apopa, San Salvador
- Mario Avelar Pineda, HOLCIM El Salvador
- Claudia Blanco Vice-Executive Director FUNDADSAL
- Carlos Ferrufino, University of Central America (UCA) – El Salvador campus
- David Henriquez, Institute for Legalization of Property (ILP)
- Ignacio Nicolau, Coordinator AECI
- Luis Ortiz, Campo de Oro neighborhood, Apopa

- Antonio Osegueda, Union Representative, Municipality of Apopa
- Jimena Palacios, Manager of Corporate Responsibility, TIGO
- Stefano Pettinato, Deputy Resident Representative PNUD
- Beatriz Reales, Santa Carlota II community
- Margarita Rodríguez, Commission for Public Works, Transport and Housing, Legislative Assembly of El Salvador
- Aracelly Solorzano, El Sitio community, Apopa
- Roberto Valent, UN Resident Coordinator for El Salvador
- Ricardo Vega, Development Bank of El Salvador (BANDESAL)

COSTA RICA

- Patricia Jimenez, (CTA UN-Habitat)
- Flor Seas, ex FO90 Inter-agency Coordinator
- Kryssia Brade, ex F082 UNDP Joint Programme Coordinator (currently Assistant Resident Representative)
- Gerardo Madrigal, Social Programme Coordinator, Montes de Oca municipal government
- Olga Solis, Regent for Heredia Municipality
- Daniel Ruiz, ex Executive Director FEDEMSUR
- Rafael Navarro, Mayor Coto Brus Canton
- Andres Solano, Chief Development Dept., JUDESUR (by telephone)
- Yira Ramirez, FO90 focal point Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC)
- Jonathan Sequeira, Regional Coordinator Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce (MEIC) (by telephone)

ECUADOR

- Mónica Quintana, UN-Habitat HPM
- Laura Cedres, UN-Habitat
- Mónica Merino, UNDP Resident Representative a.i.
- Marcelo Encalada, UN-Habitat technical officer supporting F80

- Juan Carlos Oleas, Programme Assistant
- Pablo Galarza, ex Joint Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, UNDP
- Hernando Subia, Under-Secretary for Potable Water and Sanitation, SENAGUA
- Patricia Aguilar, Under-Secretariat of Potable Water
- Jordi Sanchez, ex Coordinator Water and Sanitation Joint Programme
- Sigfriedo Ruales, Director of Potable Water Regulations
- Rodrigo Guevara, President of Administrative Committee of Potable Water, Plaza Roja SAP
- Piedad Ortiz, Coordinator PROTOS
- Luis Palomino, President Administrative Committee for Potable Water, Zapallo y Zapallito SAP
- Aide Suarez, President Administrative Committee for Potable Water, Sabanetillas SAP
- Ines Vásconsez, Mayor of Echeandía municipality

GUATEMALA

(by skype)

- José Orellana, President COMUPRE for Chiquimula
- Amilcar Salvador, Council member and President COMUPRE for Coban Alta Verapaz

ANNEX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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