**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FOR CHINA (2021-2025)**

*Second annual session 2020*

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| **Comments by France** | **UNDP Response** |
| France would like to request the deletion of references to the belt and road initiative (§36 and 37), which is not meant to become a criteria determining UNDP’s actions. The purpose of the country-program for China should furthermore focus on advancing sustainable development within the country, rather than developing programs related to China’s cooperation with third countries. | The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The text of the CPD has been amended in consultation with the Government of China to reflect this focus more accurately. Former paragraphs 36 and 37, now consolidated into one paragraph 36, have been clarified along these lines, and the text has been streamlined, with multiple references to the BRI removed.  The CPD is derived from the UNSDCF for China, which identifies harnessing China’s potential for partnerships towards achievement of the SDGs as one of the three areas for the UN system’s cooperation in China.  UNDP will draw on its comparative advantage for policy engagement with key Chinese institutions to inform the quality of development results, including through South-South cooperation policies and funding for enhanced positive social and environmental impact to achieve the SDGs. |
| **Comments by Japan** | **UNDP Response** |
| Page 3: para 10, Page 8: para36, para37  We would like to request the deletion of the reference to the Belt and Road Initiative in these paragraphs. We believe these references are inappropriate, as the CPDs should focus on promoting UN agency’s efforts to advance development in each country, not promoting an individual Member State’s foreign policy initiative. | The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The text of the CPD has been amended in consultation with the Government of China to reflect this focus more accurately. Former paragraph 10 has been deleted. Former paragraphs 36 and 37, now consolidated into one paragraph 36, have been clarified along these lines, and the text has been streamlined, with multiple references to the BRI removed.  The CPD is derived from the UNSDCF for China, which identifies harnessing China’s potential for partnerships towards achievement of the SDGs as one of the three areas for the UN systems cooperation in China.  UNDP aims to draw on its comparative advantages for policy engagement with key Chinese institutions to inform the quality of development and South-South cooperation policies and funding for enhanced positive social and environmental results to achieve the SDGs. |
| **Comments by India** | **UNDP Response** |
| The investments under the Belt and Road Initiative are made outside the People’s Republic of China. Bearing in mind the paramount importance of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity set out therein, UNDP, as a member of the United Nations Development System subscribing to the UN Charter, has a responsibility to ensure that such investments under the Belt and Road Initiative are made with the concurrence of the member states, in whose territories such investments are being made, and are carried out without violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other member states.  Accordingly, India recommends the inclusion of the following text in para 37 of the CPD:  “**UNDP will ensure that the investments under the Initiative are made with the concurrence of the member states, in whose territories such investments are being made, and are carried out without violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other member states.**” | As an UN Organisation, the cornerstone of UNDP’s engagement is national sovereignty and ownership of the programme in any country, and therefore UNDP works on the basis of the full consent of and cooperation with the host government.  The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The UNDP will work with institutions within China to this end. Former paragraphs 36 and 37, now consolidated into one paragraph 36, have been clarified and amended. |
| **Comments by the UK** | **UNDP Response** |
| Pillar 1:  The UK queries whether this is sufficiently focussed. It currently captures a huge amount (for example, it includes both rural revitalization and urbanization, elderly care and youth entrepreneurship, as well as big data and social protection). | Development challenges in China as in other countries are multifaceted. A key learning for UNDP as a global development organisation, is that the complex nature of development challenges requires integrated development solutions. This has been recognized within the UN Sustainable Development System, with UNDP taking on the “integrator function” on the 2030 Agenda.  The overall focus of this pillar is to pilot solutions and best practices that can be scaled up with the aim to address inequalities and exclusion. This requires addressing interconnected issues ranging from aging to social protection. As articulated in the Theory of Change of the UNSDCF and CPD, UNDP will contribute to results in this pillar working together with other stakeholders including UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and UNFPA in China.  Furthermore, the CPD approaches big data, with a focus on guiding policy to bridge the digital divide and close technology driven income and gender gaps. |
| Pillar 3:  The focus of this section on working with China on global development seems exclusively on BRI. We think it should, instead, be about working with China to increase the effectiveness of its broader international development cooperation, to enhance its development impact and ensure that it meets international standards (on environment, social aspects, transparency and debt sustainability).  We refer UNDP to the UN’s own 2019 independent evaluation of UNDP-China.  This states: “Expectations around the global development engagement funded by China should be clarified”; we would like to see such clarification.  With respect to the BRI, the evaluation emphasises *effectiveness*: “UNDP is seeking to improve the effectiveness of BRI investment as a vehicle for pursuing the SDGs”; if there need to be specific references to BRI we would like to see these reflect this emphasis on improving its effectiveness, including its development impact and meeting international standards. | The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The text of the CPD has been amended in consultation with the Government of China to reflect this focus more accurately. Former paragraphs 36 and 37, now consolidated into one paragraph 36, have been clarified along these lines, and the text has been streamlined.  The CPD is derived from the UNSDCF for China, which identifies harnessing China’s potential for partnerships towards achievement of the SDGs as one of the three areas for the UN systems cooperation in China.  UNDP aims to draw on its comparative advantages for policy engagement with key Chinese institutions to inform the quality of development and South-South cooperation policies and funding for enhanced positive social and environmental results to achieve the SDGs  UNDP furthermore intends to work with counterparts towards long-term sustainability, reduced environmental and carbon footprints, and in line with international best practices with regards to financial, social and environmental standards. |
| **Comments by Australia** | **UNDP Response** |
| The scale of the challenge to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is significant – and exacerbated by COVID-19. Australia acknowledges the contribution infrastructure and development initiatives can make to regional development.  In supporting progress toward the SDGs, the UNDP has a role to play in promoting best practice in development assistance, including by ensuring assistance adheres to international standards, is transparent and open, meets genuine need and avoids unsustainable debt burdens. Australia encourages the UNDP to work inclusively with all development partners to support developing member nations achieve the SDGs.  Australia has demonstrated its willingness to work in partnership with the UN system for the benefit of developing nations, including through trilateral and multilateral partnerships, and we will continue to do so.  Australia notes that Country Program Documents (CPDs) are usually confined to activities in the partner country, rather than activities in third party countries. CPDs are also factual, and avoid promoting or endorsing specific programs or signature foreign policy initiatives of any country, donor or recipient.  Australia is keen to work with the UN system to further increase transparency, coordination and accountability of efforts toward SDGs attainment.  In this context, Australia encourages the UN to continue to outline to Member States details of activities they undertake and how the UN intends to enhance coordination with, and regular reporting to, interested Member States/development partners. | As indicated in the CPD, UNDP will continue sharing lessons and best practices on development cooperation and support enhanced information flow and communication among Chinese actors and development partners based in Beijing. UNDP will further strengthen its communication platforms with international development partners in Beijing for dialogues and consultations.  The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The text of the CPD has been amended in consultation with the Government of China to reflect this focus more accurately. Former paragraphs 36 and 37 have been amended along these lines, and the text has been streamlined.  UNDP aims to draw on its comparative advantages for policy engagement with key Chinese institutions to inform the quality of development and South-South cooperation policies and funding for enhanced positive social and environmental results to achieve the SDGs. |
| **Comments by Germany** | **UNDP Response** |
| We commend the plan to strengthen Chinese aid actors’ capacities to deliver development assistance as foreseen in the draft CPD and we urge UNDP to consult closely with other UN and bilateral development partners working with China in this area to achieve a better division of labour and harmonisation wherever possible. | UNDP will further enhance the information flow and partnership among the Chinese actors, international development partners as well as the UN system in China through our existing mechanisms and platforms in Beijing. |
| We commend UNDP’s ambition to increase the opportunities of partner countries to engage with China on South-South cooperation and we urge UNDP to consult closely with other UN and bilateral development partners working with China in this area to achieve a better division of labour and harmonisation wherever possible. |
| Page 3, para 10  Suggest the following changes (Green=Additions, Red=Deletions): “Its cooperation with other developing countries including through the Belt and Road Initiative CAN BE is of great potential value, particularly as support from traditional sources shrinks IF IT . The key is to alignED this cooperation with the Sustainable Development Goals.” | With a view to further improving the text in the light of all comments received, this sentence has been deleted in consultation with the Government of China. |
| **Comments by the USA** | **UNDP Response** |
| • The United States strongly opposes UNDP’s promotion of individual member State’s signature foreign policy program and platform, including the People’s Republic of China’s Belt and Road Initiative.  • Fundamentally, the CPD instrument should be focused on UNDP’s work in a country to assist with that country’s development. CPDs should not include discussion of work that country may be doing outside of its own borders as part of the conduct of its foreign policy. Thus we have objections to the Belt and Road Initiative references in China’s CPD.  • More broadly, this promotion is inconsistent with the role of UNDP, and the UN more broadly, as an international organization that serves the interests of all member states. We are deeply concerned by the conflation of the Belt and Road Initiative with the Sustainable Development Goals.  • Doing so ignores the numerous debt, labor, and environmental challenges that numerous BRI projects bring to host countries – challenges that actively undermine the SDGs. UNDP promotion of the BRI in this CPD is thus highly inappropriate and misleading.  The BRI references in the China CPD are largely for promotional purposes. There is no discussion of the need to practice good donorship principles or adherence to best international aid standards, such as transparency, accountability, and debt sustainability.  As such, the United States urges UNDP to remove any discussion of the BRI or China’s external development work from the CPD, including the bulk of Pillar 3.  A UNDP CPD should not include endorsements of the host country’s global foreign policy platform, the BRI, but instead reference international best practices supported by the UNDP. UNDP development activities in China should adhere to international standards, not the other way around. | The third component of the CPD is focused on South-South cooperation as the broad principle of engagement, taking into account various mechanisms, including the BRI, to strengthen development results towards the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind principles.  The text of the CPD has been amended in consultation with the Government of China to reflect this focus more accurately. Paragraphs 35 and 36 have been clarified along these lines. We have taken this opportunity to improve the text and remove the multiple references to the BRI.  The CPD is derived from the UNSDCF for China, which identifies harnessing China’s potential for partnerships towards achievement of the SDGs as one of the three areas for the UN systems cooperation in China.  UNDP aims to draw on its comparative advantages for policy engagement with key Chinese institutions to inform the quality of development and South-South cooperation policies and funding for enhanced positive social and environmental impact in support of the SDGs. |
| UNDP partnerships with China’s development banks should be outlined in more detail. What activities and results does UNDP envision in this partnership? This partnership should also adhere to international standards and best practices that UNDP upholds and supports and explicitly state as much | This section of the document has been revised.  UNDP has been working with the China Development Bank to improve the quality of investments in line with the goals and principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An example is the joint report published in 2019 on harmonizing investment and financing standards towards sustainable development along the BRI with i) policy research and capacity development; and ii) technical advice to enhance alignment to SDGs (including risk analysis; financial and debt sustainability). |
| Paragraph 40  What is meant by “strengthening the global governance system and capacities?” How does this relate to a central component of UNDP’s mandate to build democratic governance and rule of law. | This refers to China’s engagement in the multilateral development system, including in global humanitarian responses and resilient recovery, such as the Cyclone Idai response in 2019. The text of the CPD has been edited to clarify. |
| The PRC government has stated its signature policy achievement in 2020 will be “eliminating poverty”. The CPD makes no reference to the PRC’s own stated goals. | Under the current CPD, UNDP has worked closely with the Government to support the realization of the target to eliminate extremely rural poverty by 2020. UNDP recognizes that the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic might impact this target and UNDP will make a concerted effort to support the Government to ensure this target is realized so that no one is left behind.  The forthcoming CPD builds on this work and focused on further reducing poverty and increasing people’s wellbeing aligned to the 14th FYP (para 4). This entails moving beyond extreme poverty to better address inequalities and deprivations by focusing on multidimensional poverty, which is a key element of this CPD. |
| This CPD states that the “programme targets groups most at risk of being left behind” but makes no reference to ethnic and religious minorities which are disproportionately represented in the provinces with the lowest human development. | The CPD has a clear focus on leaving no one behind (LNOB), which includes all minorities including ethnic minorities. |
| Paragraph 43  Does this imply that UNDP will shift away from supporting high-standards for growth, including inclusivity, ESG considerations, etc. in favor of accelerating growth? | All policy pronouncements by the Government in preparations of the 14th FYP place emphasis on high quality growth and the shift to green development. The referred paragraph under the risk management section of the CPD assesses one of the possible scenarios, which could involve a shift by the Government to an emphasis on growth at the expense of sustainability considerations. Should this policy shift materialize, UNDP will undertake mitigation strategies in project and programmes to address this situation. |
| **Comments by the Netherlands** | UNDP Response |
| The Netherlands would like to request UNDP to retain its focus within its draft country programme document for China on sustainable development in China and urge UNDP to ensure alignment of the China CPD with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. | UNDP’s engagement with China on South-South cooperation entails working with relevant entities *within* China with the aim to strengthen SDG attainment and bring to bear social and environmental standards and international best practices. |