



## *Serving Development in the Arab States Region*

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to and update you on the UNDP-RBAS Regional Centre in Cairo (RCC), now well on its way to becoming fully functional, in your service. It has taken a lot of hard work to get us to where we are now and there are many challenges still ahead, as we strive to secure our full range of capacities and operational set-up in order to fulfill our mandate of helping to strengthen UNDP's development and management results and UN Coordination results in the Arab States region.

The RCC combines policy advisory, technical, capacity development and knowledge management services in a single location, closer to your Country Offices, to ensure effective, timely and responsive organizational support tailored to your needs and priorities.

This initial short communication responds to the agreed action plan emanating from the April 2009 RBAS Cluster meeting held in Cairo. It is intended to provide you with an overview of RCC services and introduce our team. The Cluster action plan also enjoined you to provide the RCC, in turn, with the specific needs and potential demands of your country offices for RCC support and services, which we look forward to receiving.

As our work evolves and our team grows to full capacity, we will keep you abreast of key developments in or about the RCC.

I look forward to your feedback.

Mona Hammam  
RBAS Deputy Regional Director  
Director of the Regional Centre for Arab States in Cairo

### The Pillars of our work

**Development Results Pillar:** Based on the most relevant development knowledge and research as well as UNDP accumulated experience and good practices across the world, the RCC is increasingly equipped to provide you and your partners with knowledge, policy advice, advocacy, programme design, and technical support in all of focus areas of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011. This includes the **practice areas** of: poverty reduction, inclusive growth and the achievement of the MDGs—including HIV/AIDS; democratic governance; environment and sustainable development—including energy and climate change; and conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction, and transition and post-crisis recovery; as well as the **cross-cutting themes** of: gender equality and women's empowerment; capacity development; knowledge management; and monitoring and evaluation.

**Management Results Pillar:** The RCC has capacities to provide you with essential country programme management support services: procurement (including regional ACP) and ICT. Additionally, the RCC provides partnership support services – specifically, communications advisory services; CSOs; and South-South cooperation support which is embedded in all Practices. The RCC also provides support to ST for strengthening sub-regional security advisory services for clusters of RBAS COs (Maghreb, Mashreq, Gulf, and Arab States in East/Horn of Africa).

**UN Coordination Results Pillar:** With the aim of strengthening UN coordination and programme coherence among UN Development Group agencies in supporting nationally-led and nationally-owned development priorities, the RCC provides support to the Regional Directors' Team which oversees and guides the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in programme countries in implementing an evolving UN coherence agenda. A priority in this context is supporting UNCTs in the region in formulating Common Country assessments and UN Development Assistance Frameworks, of which 9 in the Arab States region are under preparation or due to be prepared over the remaining period of the Strategic Plan.

# RCC Policy Advisory & Programme Development Support

Through our team of Practice Leaders and advisors, the RCC offers support in several forms including:

**Strategic Policy Advice & Advocacy:** Helping you advocate for development priorities in line with UNDP’s comparative advantage and experience and providing you and your partners with timely and high-quality strategic advice on policies and programmes to address development challenges.

**Programme Development & Technical support:** Enhancing the quality of UNDP programming through strengthening capacities in your offices in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**Capacity Development:** Supporting the development of human and institutional capacities of your offices and your partners to respond effectively to major development challenges through the identification of global training material, tools and partners, and the development of custom made training

**Policy Research & Analysis:** Coordinating policy-oriented research, capturing and codifying lessons learnt, and producing reports, policy briefs and research papers to support development work at the country and regional levels

**Knowledge Services:** Collecting, distilling into usable products and disseminating development knowledge and experience from UNDP’s vast global network, providing expert referrals, fostering south-south cooperation and facilitating knowledge transfers and experience sharing between COs and with regional policy and research institutions.

## Areas of Service

### Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, promoting equality and inclusiveness and maximizing employment opportunities remain top priorities in the Arab States region. Support of the RCC focuses on scaling up assistance to accelerate MDG progress in all country typologies in the region, in a comprehensive and holistic manner beyond the designated sector-specific or practice-specific targets. Strengthening CO capacities for an integrated, MDG-based and poverty-focused response to HIV/AIDS is also a priority in the region, with special attention paid to the Arab countries in East Africa.



- Key Results Areas**
- Promoting MDG achievement, poverty reduction, inclusive development, social equity and gender equality, and civil society empowerment
  - Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on human development

### Democratic Governance

The major deficits identified by the Arab Human Development Report in knowledge, freedoms and gender empowerment continue to exclude poor and disadvantaged groups from the benefits of development. The region also struggles with unstable conflict areas, failed states and fragile peace arrangements which affect national governance structures and institutions.. Corruption continues to be a major impediment to development. RCC support to country offices promotes a rights-based approach to development, stressing principles of inclusive participation, non-discrimination, equality, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law at all levels of society.



- Key Result Areas**
- Fostering inclusive participation
  - Supporting Public Administration Reform
  - Strengthening responsive governance institutions and anti-corruption mechanisms
  - Adoption of a Human Rights Based Approach to development

### Environment and Sustainable Development

Responding effectively to the pressing environmental challenges facing the region and disproportionately impacting on poor and vulnerable groups is a development imperative. Combating desertification, managing water resources, conserving and diversifying energy resources, preserving biodiversity and mitigating the impacts of climate change are all essential measures contributing to poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs. The RCC will support country offices to promote the adoption of sound and sustainable environmental and energy practices that are poverty and gender sensitive and to ensure the integration of environmental considerations into development policies and legislation.



- Key Result Areas**
- Mainstreaming environment and energy issues into national development policies and plans
  - Catalyzing access to environmental finance
  - Promoting Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
  - Expanding Access to environmental products and services for the poor

## Crisis Prevention and recovery

New, recurrent and chronic conflicts in the region periodically erase decades of economic and social development efforts, further entrenching poverty and inequality throughout the region. Natural disasters and threats while less common, present a similar risk. In order to assist countries in the region in strengthening their disaster preparedness, the RCC is building its capacity in the areas of conflict prevention; natural disaster reduction; post-crisis long-term recovery and early recovery interventions—including the deployment of surge capacity.



- Key Results Areas**
- Encouraging conflict prevention and peace building
  - Supporting natural disaster-risk reduction preparedness and management
  - Promoting early recovery—bridging the emergency relief – long-term development gap

## Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Progress on gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment in the Arab region remains insufficient and not commensurate with the development challenges faced in the region. Gender gaps persist in access to and control over economic assets and political decision making and in some cases to basic rights to education, health and protection from harm. RCC supports COs in gender mainstreaming at technical and policy levels; in the preparation and dissemination of knowledge products on gender mainstreaming across practices and in expanding regional partnerships and strengthening cooperation with partners.



- Key Results Areas**
- Developing a Regional Gender Equality Strategy, based on the corporate Gender Equality Strategy (GES)
  - Developing and supporting the implementation of a multi-country GES programme focused on the issues of climate change and trade, and underpinned with capacity development
  - Ensuring all produced knowledge products utilise a gender lens

## Capacity Development

Most Arab countries—especially those experiencing persistent conflict and crises— face similar challenges in planning and managing for sustainable development such as inadequate state and institutional capacities to implement reforms and deliver public services; outdated legal frameworks, highly centralized administrative systems and low levels of citizen’s engagement. In order to meet an increasing demand for capacity development services, the RCC is enlarging the pool of expertise for capacity assessments and capacity development responses, and on building such expert capacities at the country level.



- Key Results Areas**
- Developing a Capacity Development Strategy for the region, including by practice area
  - Documenting Capacity Development initiatives
  - Ensuring the availability of Capacity Development products in the Arabic language
  - Implementing Capacity Development activities targeting institutions (local, national & regional)

## Knowledge Management

Efficiently managing the organization’s intellectual assets and capacity is imperative for UNDP to maintain its edge and relevance in the global development arena. Knowledge management services at the RCC ensures the flow of relevant development knowledge back and forth between the country, regional and global levels, enabling the documentation of knowledge produced throughout the organization, and capturing the knowledge of its staff and partners. RCC focuses on mainstreaming good knowledge management practices in COs to facilitate day-to-day business and to enhance effectiveness.



- Key Results Areas**
- Fostering a culture of Knowledge Management
  - Mainstreaming the use of corporate KM systems in programme management and operations
  - Harvesting lessons learned and best practices from the region and disseminating them globally
  - Sharing relevant knowledge products through a variety of corporate knowledge platforms
  - Availing knowledge products in Arabic to maximize benefit across the region

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) capacities and systems that yield the needed evidence-based results continue to be weak in the RBAS region. There is a need to strengthen capacities in the identification and formulation of indicators to establish a baseline at the project design and UNDAF finalization stage, against which to measure progress.

- Key Results Areas**
- Guidance, quality assurance and oversight over the planning and implementation of decentralized evaluations commissioned at sub-regional and country levels
  - Supporting COs in the identification and formulation of indicators, baselines and targets and their integration into CCA/UNDAF development, and programme and project design
  - Strengthening CO capacities in M&E methodologies and systems

## Our team

### Recruited and currently on board/joining in September 2009

<b>Poverty</b>	Practice Leader, Poverty Macroeconomics Advisor	<b>Mohammad Pournik</b> <b>Khalid Abu-Ismaïl</b>
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Practice Leader	<b>Khadija Moalla</b>
<b>Governance</b>	Practice Leader Governance Specialist	<b>Noha El-Mikawy</b> <b>Shaimaa Hussein</b>
<b>Crisis Prevention &amp; Recovery</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction Management Advisor	<b>Zubeir Murshed</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Practice Leader	<b>Hannan Rabbani</b>
<b>Capacity Development</b>	Capacity Development Team Leader	<b>Abla Amawi</b>
<b>Knowledge Management</b>	Knowledge Management Team Leader	<b>Iyad Abu-Moghli</b>
<b>Information Technology</b>	Regional Information & Communication Technology Advisor	<b>Taher El-Sonni</b>
<b>Communications</b>	Regional Communications Advisor	<b>Noeman AlSayyad</b>
<b>Procurement</b>	Chief	<b>Nahed Khan</b>
<b>UN Coordination</b>	UN Coordination Advisor	<b>Susanne Dam-Hansen</b>
<b>Internal RCC Operations</b>	Administrative Assistant	<b>Ibtihal El-Serety</b>

### Under recruitment

<b>MDGs/Poverty</b>	MDG/Social Policy/CSO Advisor
<b>Governance</b>	Governance Specialist
<b>Crisis Prevention &amp; Recovery</b>	Team Leader Transition/Recovery Advisor
	Programme Advisor
<b>Environment &amp; Energy</b>	Practice Leader Policy Advisor
<b>Gender</b>	Policy Advisor
<b>Capacity Development</b>	Capacity Assessment Advisor
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor
<b>UN Coordination</b>	Coordination Assistant
<b>RCC Internal Operations</b>	Operations Manager Research, Web/IT/Communications Assistants Senior Administrative Assistant

## Help us serve you better

For the Regional Centre in Cairo to be able to serve all 18 country offices in the region well it needs to be able to effectively manage demand for its services. Forward planning of your support needs will help us in efficiently handling competing priorities and in ensuring synergies and coherence among the various practices in the provision of support to the same CO or cluster of COs. Giving sufficient advance notice on your support requests to the Practice Leaders and advisors allows for necessary planning, research and preparation on their side to provide the quality of service you need.

The RCC has developed a system to track your requests and the advisory services it provides, modeled on the tracking systems of the Bangkok and Bratislava centers, but with a number of refinements and additional functionalities so that the system can serve as an effective management tool. You log on to the system and use its easy and self-explanatory interface to make your request, whether it is for a support mission, remote consultation, or request for a referral, policy paper/brief or a summary of comparative experiences.



The tracking system not only allows us to better manage demand for services but as well enables us to more reliably gauge client satisfaction.

The tracking system can be accessed through the following link: [rcc.tracker@undp.org](mailto:rcc.tracker@undp.org)