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Final Evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2013 – 2017)

**Final Report
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1. Introduction

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2013-2017) sets out the overarching framework for the work of the United Nations (UN) in Sri Lanka. The current UNDAF Agreement was signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the UN in October 2012. The UNDAF was designed to align with government priorities as set out in the '*Mahinda Chinthana* – Vision for the Future', and the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UNDAF cycle began in 2013, and aimed to support the Sri Lankan government to achieve four outcomes: (1) equitable economic growth, (2) quality social services, (3) social inclusion and protection, and (4) environmental sustainability.

In 2015, Sri Lanka underwent a political transition that brought into power a new coalition government under President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The coalition government was elected based on its electoral campaign on good governance and anti-corruption. Due to this change, the UN in Sri Lanka encountered a transformed operating environment and a substantial reorientation of government priorities midway through the UNDAF's term. The current UNDAF will reach the end of its term by 2017.

Meanwhile, in September 2015, the UN's member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a fresh international development agenda containing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs provide for close integration of social, economic, and environmental elements of development in a holistic framework.

The UN Country Team commissioned Verité Research (VR) to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNDAF in light of new developments in the national and international context. The MTR found that enhancing the UN's effectiveness in Sri Lanka's dynamic context necessitated a more agile and flexible development framework. Accordingly, it recommended a reconceptualization of the UNDAF as a mechanism that ensured that UN agencies gravitated towards a common objective: achieving 'fitness for purpose'. It further recommended that 'fitness for purpose' in the Sri Lankan context be assessed in terms of: (i) responding to national priorities, and (ii) leveraging the UN's unique strengths in the country.

This report is the preliminary outcome of VR's ongoing Final Evaluation of the UNDAF. It is presented in three sections. The first section outlines VR's research design and methodology for this evaluation. The second presents initial findings on the performance of the UNDAF in terms of three broad areas: (1) relevance, (2) efficiency and effectiveness, and (3) impact and sustainability. The third section provides recommendations for improving the UN's future contribution in Sri Lanka. These recommendations also aim to support the UN Country Team (UNCT) in the ongoing

process of developing a new UN Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDf) for Sri Lanka.

2. Evaluation Design and Methodology

This evaluation comprises two parts: (i) an assessment of UNDAF's performance during its five-year term, and (ii) forward-looking recommendations to inform the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDf) for Sri Lanka. The evaluation builds on the findings of MTR of the UNDAF completed by Verité Research in February 2016. The MTR contained an analysis of Sri Lanka's national context, an assessment of the UNDAF's relevance, and recommendations on adjustments to the UNDAF for the remainder of its term.

The main research questions pertaining to each component of the current evaluation are further detailed below.

2.1 Evaluation of the UNDAF

In assessing the UNDAF's 'fitness for purpose',¹ VR sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent was UNDAF **relevant** to Sri Lanka's context and national development priorities?
2. What factors enabled or impeded the **effectiveness and efficiency** of the UN's programming during the UNDAF's term?
3. How successful was the UN at ensuring **impact** and **sustainability** of outcomes during the UNDAF's term?

VR relied on the following sources of information in this regard:

- Key informant interviews (KIIs) with heads of UN agencies and their technical staff;
- KIIs with key government counterparts; and
- Documentation supplied by the UNCT, including the UNDAF Agreement and Addendum, agencies' country programme documents, and results and evaluation documents.

¹ VR used the standard OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, in framing research questions and determining the nature and scope of 'fitness for purpose'. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* (Paris 1991).

2.2 Recommendations

This section drew on the findings of the evaluation to propose recommendations to inform the design of the UNSDF. VR focused on the following questions in this regard:

1. What features are required in the design and architecture of the UNSDF to ensure that the UN is 'fit for purpose' in Sri Lanka?
2. What priority areas should the UNSDF focus on in Sri Lanka?

3. Evaluation of the UNDAF

Strengthening the UN's 'fitness for purpose' entails ensuring its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability at the country-level. Furthermore, in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, 'fitness for purpose' requires the UN to deliver integrated support that is grounded in the SDG's normative framework. When applied to the UNDAF, 'fitness for purpose' further entails responding to the demands of Sri Lanka's unique development context. Maximising the UNDAF's 'fitness for purpose' accordingly comprises two main components:

1. **Responding to national priorities**, understood as comprising both government priorities and issues of public interest (which may include issues that are not necessarily reflected in the government priority areas).
2. **Leveraging the UN's unique strengths in Sri Lanka**, particularly relating to convening power, policy advocacy, delivering technical and policy advice, and capacity building for government.²

The figure below illustrates these criteria for assessing 'fitness for purpose'. Accordingly, programming that is 'fit for purpose' both responds to national priorities and leverages the UN's unique strengths (green quadrant below), while programming that fulfils only one of the two criteria are less 'fit for purpose' (yellow quadrants). Programming that neither responds to national priorities nor leverages the UN's strengths is not 'fit for purpose' (red quadrant).

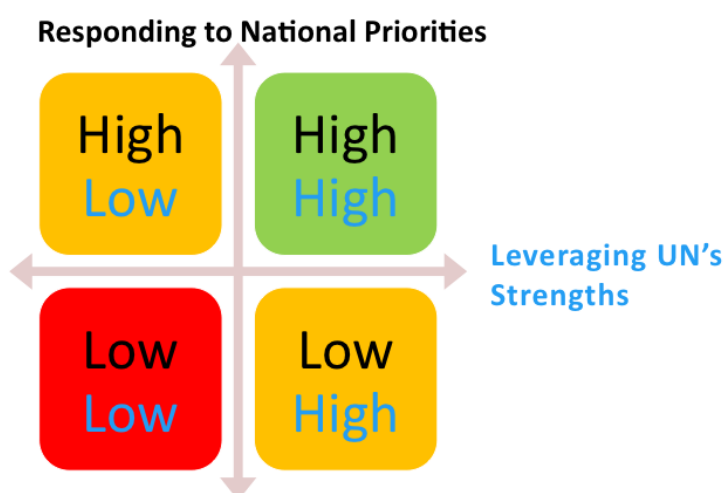


Figure 1

Based on the above criteria, three broad categories, against which the UNDAF's 'fitness for purpose' may be assessed, were identified:

² VR's MTR of the UNDAF further identifies specific challenges that the UN may face in terms of leveraging each of these unique strengths in the Sri Lankan context.

1. **Relevance:** the extent to which the UNDAF was responsive to Sri Lanka's national context and development priorities.
2. **Effectiveness and efficiency:** the ability for the UN to deliver programmes that addressed Sri Lanka's current and emerging development priorities during the UNDAF's term.
3. **Impact and sustainability:** the capability of UN programming to result in durable outcomes during the UNDAF's term.

3.1 Relevance

The UNDAF emerged from an agreement reached between the former Sri Lankan government and the UNCT in late 2012. The UNDAF was thus designed in a context distinctly different to the current context. October 2012 marked over three years since the end of war in Sri Lanka, and approximately seven years into the Mahinda Rajapaksa presidency. Rajapaksa's second term in power was characterised by the consolidation of political power under the executive president, allegations of large-scale corruption, and the suppression of dissent. As such, the UN was faced with a shrinking – and often hostile – space to operate in Sri Lanka, particularly on areas of work that drew government resistance, such as civil and political rights and transitional justice.

Accordingly, the UNDAF was designed and agreed upon between the government and the UN in the context of a number of development challenges. While GDP growth rates reached approximately 7.5% in the post-war years, economic growth remained concentrated in a few sectors: construction, transport and import trade. The government's development initiatives centred largely on debt-funded infrastructure, thus failing to meet expectations of inclusive and sustainable post-war economic growth. Moreover, Sri Lanka had also experienced the phenomenon of 'jobless growth', where economic growth was not accompanied by job creation.³ Meanwhile, there was limited progress made with regard to post-war reconciliation. The immediate post-war years also witnessed religious tensions and violence against religious minorities. The UNDAF was thus formulated amidst a challenging development context, and the steady erosion of democratic governance and inter-communal peace.⁴

As the UNDAF reached the middle of its term in 2015, Sri Lanka underwent a major political transition that brought in a new coalition government and a realignment of power in the legislature. The new government may be characterized as an alliance

³ Verité Research, *'The economy is growing, but where are the jobs?'*, The Island, 30 June 2013, at: <http://bit.ly/2sWQaG1> [accessed on: 21 June 2017].

⁴ See Verité Research, *Mid-Term Review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017* (February 2016) for an analysis of the socio-economic and political context of the UNDAF's formulation.

between the two largest, and historically rival, political parties: the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) led by President Maithripala Sirisena and the United National Party (UNP) led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The coalition is supported by several smaller parties, including leftist and ethnic minority parties. The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) represents the formal opposition party in Parliament. Meanwhile, the 'Joint Opposition', comprising dissident members of the SLFP and other smaller parties loyal to the former president, has come to function as a *de facto* opposition party. Rajapaksa himself is currently a Member of Parliament.

The 2015 transition marked the first change in government since the end of the war. The Sirisena-Wickremesinghe coalition campaigned on a platform of good governance. It pledged to combat corruption, reintroduce checks on executive power, and deliver substantial economic reforms. The coalition's first two years in power witnessed the introduction of a number of governance reform initiatives. For example, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed in 2015, which restored independent commissions, and fettered executive presidential powers. The coalition also successfully enacted the Right to Information Act in August 2016. Furthermore, a constitutional reform process is currently underway. The primary goals of this process include reaching consensus with minority parties on power-sharing, and reforming the executive presidency and electoral system.

The change in government was also viewed as offering a major opportunity for progress towards post-war reconciliation and peacebuilding. In September 2015, the government co-sponsored Resolution 30/1 at the UN Human Right Council (UNHRC), which set out a broad agenda for transitional justice and accountability. However, the government has failed to meet expectations of progress in the fulfilment of its commitments in this regard. In August 2016, legislation establishing the Office on Missing Persons was passed by Parliament; however, the Act is yet to be operationalised. Meanwhile, there has been poor progress in establishing promised transitional justice mechanisms, as well as in demilitarisation, security sector reform, and rule of law reforms. For instance, the government has yet to repeal and replace the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) of 1979 or to review the Public Security Ordinance of 1947. There has also been little progress in prosecutions for past attacks on journalists, activists and religious minorities.

Space for civil society activity – including in relation to human rights, governance and inclusive development – increased following the political transition of 2015. Hence, the transition introduced greater alignment between the government's political outlook, and the UN's normative goals and priorities. In this context, the UNCT enjoyed a greatly improved operating environment in the latter half of the UNDAF's term.

Accordingly, the relevance of the UNDAF in Sri Lanka's dynamic political context varied over its years in operation, and will be assessed along two axes: (i) operational

relevance, and (ii) thematic relevance. Operational relevance in Sri Lanka's context relates to the UNDAF's ability to secure and maintain space for the UN's work. Thematic relevance deals with the thematic substance of UN programmes under the UNDAF and its alignment to Sri Lanka's national priorities.

3.1.1 Operational relevance

The operational relevance of the UNDAF may be analysed in terms of the time periods before and after the 2015 political transition. First, during the period between 2013 and 2015, the UNDAF presented a means of arriving at a negotiated agreement between the UN and the Rajapaksa government on the scope of the UN's programmes in Sri Lanka. The UNDAF was designed to align closely with government priority areas at the time. Thus it contained limited scope to work in areas at odds with government priorities, such as human rights and good governance. In this context, members of the UNCT identified the UNDAF as having the functional purpose of securing and maintaining space for the UN's work within a generally restrictive, and at times hostile, operating environment.

The former government's endorsement of the UNDAF document did not necessarily translate into enhanced government ownership of the same. However, as a negotiated document signed by the government, the UNDAF mitigated the risk of poor government cooperation in the implementation of UN programmes. This functional value of the UNDAF strengthened its operational relevance during the period 2013 to 2015. In this context, the relevance of the UNDAF drew primarily from its ability to secure and maintain operational space, rather than as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of the UN's work in Sri Lanka.

Second, following the change in government in 2015, the UNDAF became less relevant as a means of creating and maintaining operational space. The transition reoriented relations between the UN and the government – particularly at the level of the political leadership – from hostility and resistance to greater cooperation and dialogue. From 2015 onward, the UN enjoyed enhanced operational space as well as better working relationships with government counterparts. Therefore, post-transition, the UN no longer relied on the UNDAF to secure and maintain operational space and access to government. Consequently, during the latter half of its term, the operational relevance of the UNDAF diminished as Sri Lanka's political climate became more conducive to the UN's work.

Furthermore, the UNDAF remained strongly associated with the former government, and hence drew limited interest from new actors in government. This limited ownership of the UNDAF from the present government resulted in a further decline of its operational relevance post-2015.

However, the UN and the government agreed on a memorandum of understanding (referred to as the Addendum), that outlined the areas which the UN would focus on during the remainder of the UNDAF in 2016 and 2017. These included thematic areas that are strategic and relevant for the UN, that will bring agencies together for joint programmes, technical assistance and policy advocacy under the existing Outcome areas until the end of 2017.

3.1.2 Thematic relevance

The thematic relevance of UN agencies' work, in terms of its alignment to national priorities and the UN's unique strengths varied during the UNDAF's term. Given the constraints of the political context at the UNDAF's formulation, the thematic scope of the UN's work under the framework was limited to a reflection of the previous government's priority areas. However, following the more conducive operating environment post-2015 transition, the UN sought to broaden its thematic areas of intervention, both within and outside the UNDAF. The UNDAF's thematic relevance may be discussed under three categories.

First, there were programme areas that remained relevant throughout the period of the UNDAF. The 2015 transition had negligible effect on the alignment of these areas to both national priorities and the UN's unique strengths. These areas included livelihoods, labour and the environment, in Pillars 1 and 4 of the UNDAF, which enjoyed both government and public prioritisation, and related to the UN's unique strengths. For instance, UN agencies were able to leverage their strengths in technical and policy support in these areas: UNDP provided technical support in the formulation of a Comprehensive Disaster Management Policy (CDMP) in 2014, while ILO supported the development of the National Human Resources and Employment Policy (NHREP). The relevance of UN programming in these areas can be attributed to it coinciding with government priority areas from 2013 to 2017. For instance, the UNDAF envisaged support for achievement of government priorities in food security, promotion of decent work, strengthening livelihoods in the agriculture sector, and better health, education and sanitation services. The changes in Sri Lanka's political context had a limited impact on programming in these areas. Some relatively manageable challenges were, however, faced due to bureaucratic shifts and re-organisation of Cabinet portfolios as a result of the government change. Key Informants stated that both the presidential and parliamentary elections were followed by the reshuffling of government agencies. Such reshuffling led to confusion among development partners over which actors in government to engage in relation to specific areas of work. However, overall, the work of UN agencies in these areas continued to enjoy government interest and cooperation.

Second, there were programme areas that encountered some changes in relevance during the UNDAF's period. These areas included justice sector reform, gender and children, which fell under Pillar 3 of the UNDAF. The UNDAF granted UN agencies

limited space for programming in these areas, as they aligned to government priorities to a certain extent. UN contributions in these areas under the UNDAF included supporting government efforts to combat gender-based violence (GBV), strengthening the juvenile justice system and enhancing social protection of vulnerable groups. The political transition of 2015 did not drastically alter government priorities in relation to these broad thematic areas. However, the scope of work that the UN could pursue in the context of reforms relating to the justice sector, gender, and children increased in comparison to the pre-2015 period. UN agencies accordingly sought to maximise the breadth of their programming in these areas, while essentially remaining within the limits of the UNDAF. Programming on key national priority areas such as rule of law reforms could now be contemplated under Pillar 3 of the UNDAF, which dealt with governance, human rights, gender, and social inclusion and protection. For instance, the UNDAF's cross-cutting gender theme group was able to prioritise work relating to female-headed households (FHHs) in Sri Lanka, including commissioning a study on the socio-economic support services available to FHHs in the Northern Province. Meanwhile, UNICEF began supporting efforts to review of the National Policy on Education for Social Cohesion and Peace.

Third, some programme areas such as governance, human rights and reconciliation demonstrate considerable variation in relevance over the UNDAF's term. The change in government opened up space to pursue programming on these issues. Such space did not exist at the time of the UNDAF's formulation. Yet UN agencies with mandates relating to human rights and reconciliation moved to capitalise on the more conducive political environment for reforms during the post-2015 period. Meanwhile, the 2015 transition, followed by the adoption of Resolution 30/1 at the UNHRC in October 2015 prompted Sri Lanka's eligibility for the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) under the UN Peacebuilding Fund. Sri Lanka's Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) was accordingly finalised in late 2016.

The PPP provides a framework for coordination of government, UN, and donor contributions to peacebuilding under four areas: (i) transitional justice, (ii) reconciliation, (iii) governance, and (iv) resettlement and durable solutions. Several UN interventions contemplated under the PPP were formulated outside of the UNDAF. For instance, the PPP seeks to provide technical support for the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM), support memorialisation, and enhance psycho-social support for victims of the conflict. None of these interventions are contemplated in the UNDAF.

Furthermore, the UN was also able to support new governance reform initiatives undertaken in 2015. For example, UNDP facilitated technical support in the drafting of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. The relevance of the UN's contributions on the issues of human rights, governance, reconciliation and transitional justice thus increased post-2015. While UN agencies were responsive to new national priority areas,

these interventions were undertaken outside the existing UNDAF, which had excluded programmes on reconciliation and transitional justice by design. The Addendum provided the space to include these areas, thus providing the UN a framework within which to deliver these programmes.

3.2 Effectiveness and efficiency

3.2.1 Drivers of success

Three key drivers of effective programming during the UNDAF's term (particularly in the aftermath of January 2015) can be identified in Sri Lanka's context. They are as follows:

1. Political will
2. Technical support
3. Public demand

The extent to which the UNDAF was effective and efficient was dependent on these three drivers.

a. Political will

Active government support and cooperation has often determined the effectiveness of a given programme. From 2013 to 2015, the constraints of the political landscape resulted in the UN's work being designed primarily to support government priority areas. This predicament meant that some UN agencies only had limited room to intervene in public interest issues that did not align with government priorities. Meanwhile, those agencies whose work corresponded to government priority areas enjoyed relatively greater operational space. However, from 2015 onwards, the UN sought to capitalise on renewed political space in order to strengthen its programming interventions. As such, throughout the UNDAF's term, government assent and cooperation proved to be important determinants of the UN's ability to leverage its strengths in support of national priorities.

Political will for the UN's work can be further delineated into: (i) political endorsement, and (ii) bureaucratic support. Political endorsement relates to the support of the national and local political leadership that influences the broad thematic prioritisation of the UN's development work in Sri Lanka. Securing political endorsement for particular interventions was seen as instrumental to their operationalisation in the current context. For instance, UN interventions on livelihoods and environment under UNDAF Pillars 1 and 4 that corresponded to national priority areas enjoyed political endorsement e.g. FAO's work on sustainable agriculture and forestry development. This endorsement was perceived as instrumental to programme implementation. Moreover,

interventions on reconciliation and transitional justice benefitted from explicit government endorsement, the absence of which had severely undermined the UN's contributions on such issues prior to 2015.

On the one hand, political endorsement has reflected dynamics of cooperation and competition within the coalition government. The SLFP and the UNP have typically competed with each other in elections, and continue to represent ideologically divergent public support bases. Hence, while policy-making and coalition survival have necessitated a degree of cooperation, both parties are nevertheless incentivised to compete with one another for popular support. As such, the coalition government has failed to maintain policy consensus on key issues, including fiscal policy and post-war accountability. By contrast, programmes relating to national priorities that enjoyed the support of both the SLFP and UNP stood a greater chance of success. For instance, the successful passage of both the 19th Amendment in 2015 and the RTI Act in 2016 relied on cross-party support in the legislature; in both cases, the UN was able to effectively support reforms.

National priorities that lack political support of both parties, or engender intra-coalition competition faced challenges in their fulfilment. For instance, while the 2015 transition was viewed as providing opportunities for progress on reconciliation and transitional justice, both parties have demonstrated limited interest in pursuing post-war accountability mechanisms or security sector reforms. The SLFP and UNP have also come to adopt divergent positions on constitutional reform, with the SLFP seeking to limit reforms to those that would not require a referendum. As such, UN interventions in areas such as constitutional reform and transitional justice faced challenges due to inconsistent political will, thus undermining the effectiveness of their interventions. For example, OHCHR supported national consultations on transitional justice through training and documentation. UNICEF, UN Women and IOM provided the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM) and Working Groups on transitional justice with technical support in the areas of youth, gender and reparations. However, these interventions have had limited impact in light of weak political will for the effective operationalization of transitional justice mechanisms.

On the other hand, bureaucratic support relates to cooperation from government agencies in programme implementation and roll-out. Bureaucratic support is often reinforced by political endorsement at the national and local levels. Successful interventions often benefitted from active support from key government officials. For instance, support of then Secretary of the Ministry of Resettlement was identified as a key ingredient in the formulation of the National Policy on Durable Solutions for Conflict-Affected Displacement with UNHCR support. A high level of interest from senior officials in the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs aided the ministry's uptake of the Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV), drafted with UN agencies' support. UN agencies sought to build

government ownership through programme management structures, such as through Project Boards comprising ministry secretaries, as well as donor representatives, to oversee project implementation. For instance, UNOPS reported that the project board structure often aided relationship-building between the agency and the Ministry of Education in its work to strengthen schools' infrastructure. Meanwhile, the lack of bureaucratic support served as a major impediment to success in other UN interventions. For example, UNDP's Strengthening Enforcement of Law, Access to Justice and Social Integration (SELAJSI) programme under Pillar 3 of the UNDAF faced a high degree of active resistance from senior officials within the Ministry of Justice – the programme's implementation partner ministry. This resistance impeded the programme's effectiveness, which eventually resulted in its termination. Moreover, a number of agencies noted that post-2015, the constant reshuffling of ministry secretaries weakened bureaucratic support and ownership for UN programmes.

UN agencies' ability to secure and maintain political will was most effective when they leveraged their own spheres of influence within government. Over time, UN agencies cultivated working relationships with government agencies that facilitated political endorsement and bureaucratic cooperation. For instance, the IOM's work in Pillars 1 and 3 benefitted from its institutional relationships with local government bodies built over time. UNHCR ensured technical cooperation through its relationships with local-level Grama Niladhari offices and district-level administration. UNOPS maintained informal relationships with local government partners that outlasted projects' implementation period. Meanwhile, agencies working at the national level were able to leverage their access to government at the Cabinet-level to secure political buy-in for their work; for example, UNFPA and WHO worked closely with the Ministry of Health, as did the ILO with the Ministry of Labour and Trade Union Relations. UNHCR maintained technical partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support return of refugees, and with the Ministry of Resettlement on resettlement of IDPs and returnees.

b. Technical support

Effective programmes have drawn on the UN's technical resources and expertise, including its comparative experiences. In light of Sri Lanka's transition to a lower-middle income country, there was a broad consensus in the UNCT that the UN's contribution to development in the country would increasingly draw on its 'upstream' programming rather than 'downstream' service delivery. This strategic shift was evident within the UNDAF cycle, with several agencies orienting their programmes towards the provision of technical support, or supplementing service delivery programmes with technical and policy support.

A number of UN agencies have effectively deployed technical expertise in support of national priority areas, both within and outside the UNDAF. High government demand for technical support and the UN's contribution in this regard can serve to strengthen

political will for programming interventions both at the political and bureaucratic levels. This is attributed to the fact that increased technical support increases the likelihood of the reform's success. Government agencies have readily welcomed technical support in areas such as food security, decent work and employment, environmental protection, and constitutional reform. For instance, WHO has had success working closely with government to provide technical support for the introduction of nutrient profiling and national health accounting. WFP and FAO engaged in a joint programme on Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach: WFP provided technical support to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture on food fortification, while FAO worked with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs to enhance nutrition promotion in pre-schools. UNICEF provided technical support for legislative reforms dealing with children's rights frameworks and in the drafting of the state party report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child. UNV supported the former Ministry of Social Services to establish the first National Volunteering Secretariat (NVS) and run the first national survey on volunteerism. UNV and UNDP supported the Public Representations Committee (PRC) on constitutional reform by reviewing and classifying submissions through a team of volunteers. ILO worked on increasing the efficiency of the labour inspection process, by supporting a digitised system for information gathering and collation on a centralised database. UNDP supported the establishment of early warning systems for disasters, in addition to facilitating technical support in the drafting of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution and to a number of government institutions. Such institutions included the Human Rights Commission and the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR). UNV also provided short-term technical assistance to the Secretariat for Coordinating Reconciliation Mechanisms (SCRM) through its pool of volunteers. Though technically outside the UNDAF but within the Addendum, the PPP also envisaged UN technical support in a number of areas, such as in the design of reparations policy, and the operationalisation of the Office on Missing Persons. These experiences confirm that technical expertise and policy advice are among the UN's unique strengths as a development partner, and are best deployed when they complement UN agencies' core thematic areas of competence.

The UN's provision of technical support and policy advice was most effective when it was matched by political will or government demand. In the absence of government demand, technical support often failed to deliver its desired impact due to lack of uptake by government. For instance, UNDP supported the drafting of a Code of Ethics for Parliamentarians, which was a key pledge of the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe campaign. However, the effectiveness of this intervention was undermined by the relative lack of political will to fulfil this commitment. Meanwhile, efforts to provide technical support by UNICEF for reforms in the juvenile justice system also did not achieve its desired impact due to its poor uptake by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Ministry of Justice.

c. Public demand

Effective programmes have leveraged public demand in a manner that influences national priority issues. Strategies to this effect included policy advocacy, coalition building, and increased public awareness. While public demand is often an important determinant of government priorities, the UN's 'fitness for purpose' also entails responding to public interest issues that may not necessarily be reflected in government priorities.

The UNDAF's pillars included a number of areas where government and public priorities coincided; for example, the promotion of decent work and employment, strengthening health care services, and enhancing food security and nutrition. In such areas, UN agencies were able to effectively support government to respond to these public interest issues. For instance, the FAO and WFP joint programme on 'Scaling up Nutrition through a Multi-Sector Approach' provided nutrition support to children and other vulnerable groups, and supported the government in carrying out nutrition surveys and reviewing national nutrition policy. ILO's Local Empowerment through Economic Development (LEED) Project also leveraged both government buy-in and public demand, facilitated through ILO's tripartite constituency structure. The project focused on supporting SMEs in former conflict-affected areas by creating market linkages with exporters and traders outside the Northern Province. The LEED project supplemented capacity building among SMEs with institutional strengthening in local government to facilitate business activity and local economic development.

The UN has also sought to leverage public support in policy advocacy and governance reforms initiatives. The post-2015 political landscape has been marked by a relatively high level of political interest in reforms, coupled with instability within the governing coalition. In Sri Lanka, weak governments have historically been strongly incentivised to deliver on reforms as a means of demonstrating policy success to their constituencies. The fragility of the current governing coalition has made both its major constituent parties, the UNP and SLFP, highly sensitive to public opinion. In this context, reforms that garner active public support are likely to secure political will, particularly at the political leadership level. This phenomenon is reflected in the effectiveness of the UNDAF during the period 2013-2017.

Since its election in 2015, the government has initiated a number of reform efforts, in line with its campaign of good governance and anti-corruption. UN agencies' interventions aiming to leverage public support in the government's reform agenda included the facilitation of public consultations on legislative reform. For instance, UNDP facilitated consultations on the RTI Bill. When the government-appointed Public Representations Committee (PRC) began public consultations on constitutional reform, UN Women responded by facilitating women's submissions before the committee during its sittings. Moreover, UNDP supported the Committee in the analysis of its

findings. However, the agencies such as UN Women also observed that the government's commitment to the constitutional reform process had become uncertain, which served to jeopardise the impact of its interventions.

The effectiveness of UN interventions in reforms and policy advocacy can be undermined by the absence of public support. For instance, active public demand for the introduction of the code of conduct for Parliamentarians was limited. As such, there was little public pressure for the government's fulfilment of this pledge, in turn limiting the effectiveness of UNDP's intervention to strengthen the accountability of Parliamentarians. Furthermore, efforts by the UNCT and the UN Communications Group (UNCG) to enhance visibility and understanding of the SDGs through translation into local languages has had limited impact, particularly in government; for instance, government representatives demonstrated limited understanding of the SDG agenda and its implications for policy-making. Meanwhile, UN agencies have sought to use the media to enhance the visibility of their interventions, and in turn influence public demand. The live telecast of the UNV-organised annual Volunteer Awards attracted an audience of over 5 million views, alongside an extensive social media campaign.

UN agencies have had limited success in interventions that respond to public interest issues but lack government prioritisation. For example, there has been limited success in enhancing female representation in politics or reforming the juvenile justice system. On such issues, UN agencies have been unable to convert the public interest value of interventions to political will. Nevertheless, certain agencies have attempted to engage in evidence-based policy advocacy on public interest issues through investing in data analysis. UNFPA has worked with the Department of Census and Statistics to identify public interest issues through analysis of existing census data, and advocate for policy reforms in this regard – for example, education policy. However, this approach has had limited traction across the UNCT. Moreover, certain UN agencies have used technology solutions to enhance public demand, particularly in the context of youth engagement. For example, a UNFPA initiative sought to enhance youth engagement in social change through an online 'Social Changemakers Lab'.

3.2.2 Integrated approaches

The effectiveness of UN interventions has relied on all three drivers of success: political will, technical support and public demand. These drivers are mutually reinforcing and often have complementary relationships to one another. Political will is conditioned by both public demand and technical support. Effective technical and policy advice has the potential to positively impact the reform's delivery and adoption. The prospect of the reform's success in turn can increase the political will associated with its implementation, as it serves to enhance the credibility of the government in the public domain.

The programming experience of UNDAF points to certain critical lessons in terms of the mutually reinforcing relationship between drivers of success. The government is likely to remain highly sensitive to public opinion on the performance of the current coalition and its major constituent parties. In this context, public demand serves as an important enabler of political will, while the absence of public support can impede the same. In the event government priorities and public interest issues are not aligned or there is an absence of public support for reform, technical and policy advice can be deployed to civil society organisations (CSOs) to enable such organisations to generate public demand. Applying the three drivers in an *integrated* manner can thus aid the UN to maximise its ‘fitness for purpose’ in Sri Lanka in terms of both responding to national priorities and leveraging the UN’s unique strengths.

3.2.3 UNDAF design and coordination

Efficient delivery mechanisms are central to the effectiveness of the UN’s programmes, as they enable the UNCT to leverage its collective strengths to deliver on national priorities. The efficiency of the UNDAF as a mechanism to ensure coherent UNCT contribution to development relates to: (i) the effectiveness of its architecture, and (ii) its mechanisms for inter-agency collaboration and coordination.

UNDAF architecture

The UNDAF was implemented primarily through agency-specific country programmes, with each agency contributing to achievement of UNDAF outcomes under its four pillars: (1) equitable economic growth, (2) quality social services, (3) social inclusion and protection, and (4) environmental sustainability. The four pillar groups were expected to function as the UNDAF’s coordination architecture for planning, monitoring and delivering UN support to national development outcomes. However, agencies found the pillars’ thematic focus to be too broad, which eventually led to the adoption of ‘flagships’ under each pillar. The pillar coordination structure, and later the flagships, did enable opportunities for joint programmes – for instance, the flagship on nutrition aided the development of a joint programme by FAO, WFP and UNICEF.

The UNDAF structure also featured cross-cutting groups on gender, youth, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The gender and youth groups remained active throughout the UNDAF’s term, and enabled agencies to contribute to joint results. The M&E group, however, had very limited success, as detailed in section 3.3 below. As the UNCT gradually moved away from the broad pillar-level coordination, additional *ad hoc* programmatic groups emerged comprising agencies that shared a common interest in specific thematic areas. Table 1 below outlines the four pillars and the sub-groups that emerged under them. These groups aimed to harmonize joint programmes, technical advice and policy advocacy in their respective thematic areas.

UN agencies were able to successfully coordinate joint programmes and policy advocacy through the certain programmatic groups. For instance, agencies used regular meetings by the human rights group to draft submissions to treaty bodies on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT). UNICEF and UNHCR also coordinated support for IDP resettlement in former high security zones through the group on resettlement, return and durable solutions. The Youth Mechanism, chaired by UNV and co-chaired by UNICEF and UNFPA, spearheaded a number of joint activities to promote youth engagement and empowerment. Through the Youth Mechanism, the UNCT supported the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development to plan and organize the 2014 World Conference on Youth in 2014.

Table 1: UNDAF Pillars and groups

Pillar	Flagships	Programmatic groups
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nutrition ▪ Youth employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nutrition ▪ Youth employment ▪ Resettlement, return & durable solutions ▪ Social protection
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education ▪ Social protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery of services at sub-national/local levels ▪ Demographic Issues ▪ Non-Communicable Diseases
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parliament/constitutional reforms ▪ Human rights ▪ Reconciliation & transitional justice ▪ Gender issues & sexual and gender-based violence ▪ Peace education ▪ Local governance
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate change ▪ Disaster risk reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water ▪ Waste ▪ Disaster risk reduction ▪ Resilient infrastructure

Following the MTR of the UNDAF carried out in 2015, the UNCT sought to move towards 'delivering as one' (DaO) for the final year of the UNDAF's operation. The UNCT accordingly identified certain thematic areas for inter-agency collaboration, technical support and policy advocacy under the four existing outcomes areas, including reconciliation, the SDGs and 'big data' in Sri Lanka. As part of its DaO approach, the UNCT prioritised the development of a Common Budgetary Framework (CBF), and joint operations, planning, resource mobilisation and advocacy. The UNCT has also

commissioned an assessment of the UN's engagement with the private sector as part of its resource mobilisation strategy. Furthermore, the UNCT has sought to harmonise its business practices through a Business Operating Strategy (BOS) Analysis. The new UNSDF is expected to incorporate all aspects of the DaO approach and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to complete the transition to DaO.

Coordination

During its term, the UNDAF provided limited basis for the UN agencies to effectively work in collaboration or deliver as one UN at the country level. UN agencies noted that the initial formulation of the UNDAF involved consultation across the UNCT, contributing to a broad UNDAF that housed all UN agencies' work under a single umbrella. While UNDAF structures (such as the flagships) facilitated joint programming and collaboration in some instances, UN agencies were of the view that the UNDAF was unable to address existing barriers to the UN 'delivering as one'. Agency representatives pointed to perceived overlaps in mandates of UN agencies, which could lead to duplication of work and undermine the UN coherence at the country-level. Competition for funding was also identified as a major impediment to inter-agency collaboration, particularly in the context of declining donor funding for Sri Lanka following its transition to lower-middle income status. Certain agencies further pointed out that the incentives for collaboration varied between agencies, whereby larger, better-resourced agencies were viewed as having limited interest in pursuing joint programmes. Agencies also noted that coordination of joint programmes often proved administratively challenging. These barriers were further exacerbated by the overbroad UNDAF pillars, which were found to offer a limited basis for coherent operations, programming and communication as one UN.

With limited investment in overcoming these barriers, the UNDAF provided few incentives for UN agencies to deliver joint programmes. Furthermore, UN agencies had come to rely on their own agency-specific instruments for program delivery and government access. For instance, ILO maintains a tripartite governance structure that includes government and trade union representation. Agencies working at the local level such as IOM and UNICEF often benefited from their own relationships with local government and other stakeholders on the ground. Hence the UNDAF was seen to provide limited added value to certain UN agencies' work. For instance, some agencies perceived no added value in contributing within the UNDAF beyond compliance with donor requirements.

As such, while there was broad consensus that collaboration and joint programming could enhance the UN's effectiveness and efficiency, a number of agencies were sceptical that the UNDAF drove more coherent delivery. Where agencies developed and implemented joint programmes, the initiatives did not necessarily rely on the UNDAF as a facilitating mechanism. For example, the UN's response to the 2016 floods disaster

involved a number of UN agencies, but was organised and coordinated with minimal reference to the UNDAF. The absence of a purposive mechanism to enhance collaboration, and DaO more broadly, meant that joint programmes remained *ad hoc* and responsive to circumstance, rather than the outcome of a concerted effort to ‘deliver as one’.

3.3 Impact and sustainability

3.3.1 Measuring impact

The UNDAF structure established a cross-cutting M&E group tasked with monitoring and reporting on identified targets and indicators. However, as noted in the MTR, the group proved unable to carry out functional and efficient M&E of UNDAF results.

The weakness of the UNDAF’s M&E may be attributed to two challenges. The first related to the UNDAF’s overbroad indicators. UN agencies found that the poor formulation of indicators made attribution of the UN’s contributions to results difficult. For instance, several UNDAF indicators related to national-level socio-economic achievements, such as a reduction in national unemployment rates or percentage reduction in under-nutrition, to which attribution of UN efforts proved difficult. Furthermore, the broad framing of UNDAF indicators were perceived to have sidelined contributions of specialised agencies. In response to the weaknesses, the M&E group devised ‘shadow indicators’ against which results were reported. However, some agencies found that the shadow indicators also replicated the weaknesses of the original M&E framework, and remained ineffective in measuring their performance.

The second challenge was the lack of focal agency to coordinate reporting and communication of M&E results. UNOPS was initially assigned responsibility for coordinating the M&E group. Due to resource constraints, this role was later transferred to the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office. However, this transition had limited impact on the efficiency of M&E, as the M&E group did not meet regularly to report on UNDAF results. As part of the Addendum, the UN and the government agreed to carry out programmatic activities focused on a few strategic areas under the four existing outcomes. These programming activities carried out in 2016 and 2017 would be collated in the form of a results report and assessed jointly by the UN and government.

Meanwhile, a number of UN agencies, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, and UN Habitat, continued to rely on their own programme-specific or project-specific M&E frameworks to measure and report results. In the absence of a functional UNDAF M&E framework, agencies attached little value to the perceived additional M&E burden to measure results under the UNDAF outcome areas. Efforts following the MTR to revisit the UNDAF’s M&E framework saw limited progress beyond the discussion stage because the agreement on the Addendum meant that there was no need for use of the existing M&E framework..

However, UN agencies reported that learning from the UNDAF's M&E experience has informed the design of the upcoming UNSDF cycle. For instance, the weakness of baseline data that undermined the UNDAF's M&E process encouraged the introduction of a UNSDF pillar dedicated to information management.

3.3.2 Sustainability

UN agencies recognised that shifting from downstream to upstream interventions could enhance the sustainability of their work. Technical and policy advice was understood as more effectively supporting the government in fulfilling national development priorities than service delivery interventions. In addition to executive agencies, UN agencies have also supported parastatal institutions, such as the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission and the Legal Aid Commission.

A number of UN agencies relied on capacity building efforts as part of their strategies to phase out of direct involvement in projects or move towards upstream engagement. An effective transition towards upstream interventions would necessitate that capacity gaps at the downstream level are not left unaddressed when UN agencies exit. The UN's ability to build capacity as part of programmes' exit strategies is thus an important driver of sustainability. Certain agencies accordingly sought to build capacity and ownership among constituencies as part of their programme exit strategies. UNDP supported a waste management initiative at the local government level, and invested in building capacity for its operation among local government actors. As a result, the government was able to successfully adopt and scale up the facility upon UNDP's exit. FAO identified training of teachers and nutrition education as a means of building sustainability in its nutrition programme for schoolchildren. UNHCR meanwhile prioritised capacity building at the Ministry of Resettlement and other government bodies to operationalise the National Policy on Durable Solutions for IDPs, which was drafted with UN technical support. UNHCR also worked with UNDP in this regard to support implementation of the policy as UNHCR phased out of providing direct IDP support in 2016.

There were some instances, however, where policy advice failed to translate into sustainable outcomes. UN agencies supported the development of a disaster management policy and a policy on gender-based violence. However, in the absence of sufficient advocacy efforts to ensure government adoption of these policies, UN agencies were unable to translate policy outputs into structural reform - thus limiting the sustainability of these interventions.

UN agencies' integration of CSOs into programming as an investment in sustainability was limited throughout the UNDAF period. It is noted that capacity building for civil society and other organisations could aid UN agencies' efforts to shift upstream, by ensuring that capacity gaps at the service delivery level (i.e. gaps created as a result of the exit of UN agencies) are met by local civil society counterparts. By supporting the

UN's transition from downstream to upstream interventions, capacity building for CSOs could therefore serve as a process by which the UN's programmatic sustainability is enhanced over time. CSO integration could further aid UN agencies' ability to generate and shape public demand, thus mitigating the risks of uncertain political will. Moreover, the SDG framework envisages capacity building beyond government, to include civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The UN's leveraging of technical support alongside capacity development for CSOs can thus further advance the global sustainable development agenda at the country level.

4. Recommendations

This section draws on the main lessons emerging from the UNDAF experience, and presents proposed recommendations to inform the design of the UNSDF. The recommendations focus on ensuring that UN agencies share the central goal of being 'fit for purpose'. Accordingly, this section suggests interventions to strengthen UNSDF's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability during its term.

4.1 Ensuring the UNSDF's relevance

The UNSDF's overall relevance in the current context relies on its ability to demonstrate both operational and thematic relevance.

Post-2015, the operational relevance of the UNDAF was limited due to: (i) the reduced reliance on UNDAF as a tool to access government and secure programming space; (ii) limited government ownership for UNDAF outcome areas, due to the perception that it contained commitments made by the previous government; and (iii) the agreement between the UN and the government to focus on strategic areas of focus under the four outcomes that was put in place through the Addendum to the UNDAF.

In the aftermath of the 2015 transition, the thematic relevance of the UNDAF varied. First, the UNDAF demonstrated strong and sustained relevance to programming on livelihoods, labour and the environment. Second, it demonstrated moderate relevance to programming on justice sector reform and gender. Third, the UNDAF demonstrated weak relevance to programming on democratic governance, human rights and reconciliation. Programming interventions in the latter took place through the Addendum that was in place for 2016-2017.

In ensuring increased relevance, the UNSDF should aim to secure government commitment to reform; identify and influence national priorities; and align to emerging priorities.

1. **Secure operating space:** The UNSDF risks facing declining political will to implement reforms, particularly in a context where the alignment between government priorities and public interest issues has weakened. These areas include democratic governance and transitional justice.

Therefore, the UNSDF should capitalise on the favourable operating environment at present to secure government commitment on key national priority areas. This negotiated framework will maintain programmatic operating space in the event the political climate becomes less conducive to the UN's work. The following table sets out key programming areas and their corresponding SDGs. The list below is not prescriptive; it is merely intended to be illustrative of possible programme areas that can be captured under the UNSDF.

Priority Area	Corresponding SDGs
Democratic Governance	5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16
Labour	5, 8, 9, 10
Livelihoods and Education	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11
Access to Justice and Non-Discrimination	5, 8, 10, 16
Transitional Justice and Reconciliation	10, 16
Climate change & DRR	7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17

2. **Identify and influence national priorities:** In order to ensure the UNSDF's ability to remain relevant to national priorities, it will need to be aligned to both issues of public interest and government priorities. In the context of ensuring UNSDF's relevance to public interest issues, it is recommended that interventions be designed to ensure that UN agencies are in a position to identify such issues. Such interventions could include data-collection tools, and regular consultations with both national and local level CSOs. The UNSDF should also aim to sustain government ownership on outcome areas. This ownership can be facilitated by regular government consultations to report on progress, identify roadblocks, and map strategies for implementation. Consultations with government should also be used to create a stronger nexus between government priorities and public interest issues.
3. **Dynamic alignment to emerging priorities:** The current political context is characterised by increased dynamism and flux. Therefore, in order to ensure sustained thematic relevance to national priorities, the UNSDF ought to be

regularly reviewed, revised and adjusted on a frequent basis. It is recommended that the revision of outcome areas occur on an annual basis, and be supplemented by a strong M&E process.

4.2 Strengthening the UNSDF's effectiveness and efficiency

In the current country context, there are three drivers of effective programmes. They are: (i) political will, (ii) technical support, and (ii) public demand. UN programmes within the UNSDF are most likely to succeed when they pursue an integrated approach that aims to combine all three drivers to differing degrees. Political will for reforms can be animated and sustained by augmenting technical capacity and generating public demand. Moreover, informed by international best practices, the UNCT could strengthen efficiency of programme delivery by transition to the DaO model.

In this regard, the UNSDF ought to create a platform for action; and ensure viable technical capacity within the UNCT; and institute a strategy for engagement. Moreover, the UNSDF can also provide a framework for DaO.

4. **Platform for action:** the coalition government is responsive to public demand, as it seeks to reinforce its credibility. The UNSDF should ensure that it is able to generate and sustain public demand on programme areas. First, the UNSDF can create a thematic group on policy communication and advocacy. This will provide opportunities for UN agencies working on specific reforms to engage in inter-agency advocacy and coalition building. For example, UN agencies that are currently working on the constitutional reform process should be encouraged to work together to (i) share information on specific interventions, (ii) collaborate on policy communication and advocacy, and (iii) track the uptake of reform proposals. This approach will strengthen the UNCT's cohesion when advocating for specific reforms, and create public awareness among a diverse group of stakeholders.

Second, the UNSDF should place emphasis on supporting and partnering with local and national CSOs to generate public demand in relation to specific reform initiatives. The UNCT should utilise its convening power to ensure that this public demand is used to advocate for and motivate reform among government stakeholders.

5. **Augment capacity to deliver:** The weak technical capacity in government and CSOs remains a significant impediment to the implementation of reforms. In view of this challenge, UN agencies should prioritise the technical capacity of staff with respect to legislative drafting, policy formulation and implementation.

Accordingly, UN agencies should aim to recruit, train and retain national staff that have an in-depth understanding of government structures and policy-making, and are able to build strong relationships with government actors.

Moreover, UN agencies should facilitate the operation of local technical consultants in key government reform efforts, and within ministries.

6. **Strategy for engagement:** The UNSDF can facilitate the design of a common strategic approach to ensure that relevant programming areas gain traction in the country context. The strategic approach should aim to identify (i) the status of political will, technical capacity and public demand, and (ii) the proposed nature of UNCT engagement.

Agencies within the UNCT should be encouraged to leverage their unique strengths, and streamline their interventions to align to the identified strategic approach. The strategic approach should be subject to annual review and adjustment. Table 2 below maps the status of the programme areas identified above by driver and by approach. The classification of the status of political will, technical capacity and public demand in relation to these areas were formulated through KIIs with the UNCT and government.

Table 2

Area	Political will*	Technical capacity**	Public demand*	Notes	Strategic approach
Democratic Governance	Medium	Medium-Low	High	Public demand for progress on governance issues is high, and can thus serve as an important enabler of political will. Public demand can be sustained through advocacy support to CSOs. The incentive to demonstrate progress can promote uptake of technical support.	Sustain public demand Augment technical capacity
Labour	Medium	Medium-Low	Medium	There is significant public demand in this area, which in turn can drive political will. Hence interventions should aim to: (i) sustain public demand, and (ii) leverage technical support.	Sustain and enhance political will Augment technical capacity Sustain and enhance public demand
Livelihoods	High	Medium -	High		Augment

		Low		High public demand can help sustain political will for interventions in this area, and in turn promote uptake of technical support. The following areas can be considered for leverage of technical support: data collection and analytics; nutrition; food security; access to markets; waste management.	technical capacity Sustain public demand
Access to Justice and Non-Discrimination	Low	Low	Low	Public demand for reforms in this area is currently limited, which is reflected in the relative weakness in political will. However, political will can be animated through: (i) enhanced public demand for reform through CSO advocacy, and (ii) the prospect of demonstrating progress.	Generate public demand Augment technical capacity Animate political will
Transitional Justice and Reconciliation	Low	Low	Low	At present, political will is conditioned by external pressure rather than domestic public demand. UN interventions should thus seek to generate broad-based public demand within Sri Lanka, which can in turn animate political will for progress on transitional justice and reconciliation. Furthermore, technical support on areas such as legislative drafting and facilitating consultations can incentivise political will by enhancing the credibility of reforms and their likelihood of success.	Generate public demand Animate political will Augment technical capacity
Climate change & DRR (disaster risk reduction)	Medium	Low	High	There is significant public demand on this issue, particularly in relation to DRR. Political will is thus conditioned by the risk of the government losing credibility in the event it fails to meet public demand. Interventions should thus prioritise technical support, which will likely invite both political will and public support.	Augment technical capacity Sustain and enhance political will Strengthen public demand

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* Political will and public demand are considered to be high in the event of active support and interest in advancing reforms, medium in the event of satisfaction with the existing status quo, and low in the event of resistance to reform.

** Technical capacity is considered to be high where the government is able to deliver effectively without UN support, medium where ability to deliver is limited and/or would benefit from further support, and low where the ability to deliver is minimal and progress necessitates further support.

7. **Deliver as One:** At present, there are limited incentives for the UNCT to 'deliver as one' within the UNDAF structure. Moreover, UN agencies are sceptical of DaO, in terms of its ability to drive more collaborative and coherent delivery. Accordingly, the UNSDF can institute a dedicated working group to: (i) actively identify opportunities for joint programming with demonstrable financial benefit, (ii) devise a business operations strategy that enables the UNCT to maximise its economies of scale and process efficiency, such as through harmonised financial systems, and shared IT and logistics infrastructure, and (iii) devise a joint resource mobilisation strategy.

4.3 Guaranteeing sustainable impact within the UNSDF

There was broad agreement among key informants that the monitoring and evaluation structure of UNDAF was weak. This weakness was attributed to the lack of baseline data, inappropriate or poorly formulated indicators, and the absence of a focal agency to drive and support the cross-cutting M&E Group. Moreover, building 'downstream capacity', both within government and in civil society, was perceived as integral to ensuring the sustainability of UNCT interventions once programming had come to a close. Due to increased resource shortages, the UNSDF ought to assist the UNCT to explore alternative sources of funding.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Adopt a realistic and manageable results framework, with facility for regular review of indicators. Moreover, the M&E Group should ensure that progress in relation to UNSDF is regularly communicated both internally within the UN and externally to key stakeholders. This regular communication will ensure UNSDF's increased relevance and visibility in the country context; and annual adjustments to the UNSDF based on new data and the evolving political context.
9. **Exit Strategies:** As the UNCT aims to deliver 'upstream programming' it is essential that the migration from downstream to upstream programming does not result in capacity gaps that could jeopardise programme outcomes. As such, UN agencies should be required to stipulate a clear plan for disengagement that involves building competence at lower levels of programme delivery.

Moreover, where relevant, UN agencies should be encouraged to partner with local CSOs in the delivery of programmes. These partnerships will increase the likelihood that project activity will not cease post-UN exit.

10. **Alternative Funding:** UN agencies noted that donor funding for Sri Lanka has been declining over recent years. The UNSDF can strengthen the UNCT's ability to raise funding from alternate sources. For example, interventions can include facilitating private sector and government funding.

