



Resident Coordinator Annual Report

2012-2013



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Major development or political events

In primarily economic terms, 2012 was a prosperous year for Costa Rica (4% growth, monetary stability, inflation under 5%, and stable exchange rate, according to Central Bank data). However, these advances have not necessarily involved substantive improvements in social, environmental and political arenas.

At the social level, growing economic and social inequality persists. Recent years have seen an accelerated loss of income equality, with the consequent rise in national inequality. Measured as economic opportunities or expansion of public social services and support for production, regional disparities can be observed, determined by gender or age relations, migratory status or condition as refugee. Asymmetries in the map of country social and human development show the coasts and border strips at a disadvantage (primarily, although also in the center of the country), with concentrations of particularly excluded population groups: Indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants, and migrant and refugee populations. The situation of differentiated social groups, as well as full satisfaction of their rights, is mediated by a cultural relation of social exclusion, inequality and discrimination, a state of affairs that will not disappear unless directly acted upon.

Public social investment was affected by the elevated fiscal deficit experienced since 2011, putting an end to the expansion taking place since 2006. Opportunities for economic growth were thus distributed unequally, causing the situation of vulnerable groups to deteriorate, as indicated earlier.

With respect to environmental management, unsustainable patterns of natural resource use deepened. Not only did the ecological footprint of

economic activities fail to decline, but environmental management is at a hiatus. As example, an important roadway project along the Nicaraguan border was approved without environmental studies. The country is still dragging its feet in the development of nonpolluting technologies, technical education for “green” production, and sustainable solid waste management to curtail and reduce high levels of contamination, especially in watersheds. During this period the lack of progress in land planning and ordering, combined with urban growth, heightened risk from natural threats.

In the political sphere, citizen disagreement with the political class was reflected in recent surveys showing that 42% of the population does not identify with any of the political parties.

The Legislative Assembly and national political spectrum are fragmented, with few points of encounter and few areas of political agreement. The effectiveness of the party system, electoral participation and support for the strengthening of Costa Rican democracy are affected by this discredit of politics and the political class. The country has moved from a center-right, two-party political system to a plural-party spectrum of diverse ideologies and interests, which does not facilitate the construction of political or social agreements in a landscape where there is no leadership.

Such a scenario makes it urgent to invest in the efforts required for reaching national agreement on the course of Costa Rican society. For this to happen, it is necessary to start by generating spaces of encounter and discussion allowing different sectors—not just political and social, but economic—to organize a national project that resolves and addresses both the existing impasse and sectoral demands.

Highlights on progress towards UNDAF outcomes

UNS performance managing for UNDAF outcomes has contributed to national development and capacity-building actions in the country as well as strengthening inter-agency coordination capacities, fostering synergies and concerted efforts toward compliance with outcomes.

Important results relate to:

- Municipal capacities for local human development planning were strengthened in recent years through the joint programmes and direct initiatives of several agencies.
- Contributions in the promotion of social protection actions on health as a human right for improvement of the population's living conditions
- Promotion of the MDGs and informing and publicizing their status through reports and specific actions, along with political negotiations at the highest level of Government
- Implementation of research, assessment and public and interinstitutional publicizing of specialized documentation as knowledge generation strategy and for decision-making, providing information aimed at strengthening social investment strategies to plug inequality gaps
- A strategy designed for tackling and comprehensive conceptualization of citizen security
- Design supported for the implementation of specific public policies, plans (national or sectoral) and laws to facilitate strategic, interinstitutional and far-reaching State action (i.e. immigration, counter- trafficking, others)
- Support for the design and development supported of internal institutional policies toward strengthening equality between women and men, as well as actions aimed at protection for victims of intra-family sexual abuse
- Strategic actions carried out for the generation of information disaggregated by territory, age and ethnicity to feed public policy
- Formation of multisectoral and decentralized networks supported with different social actors and in different spheres of social development and prevention of violence (including counter-trafficking)
- An Observatory of the Job Market developed to investigate employment behavior, trends in the job market and training and regulatory requirements, including labor migrations and others.
- Actions carried out in environmental conservation, climate change, biodiversity, water resources, energy efficiency, protection of the ozone layer and water and sanitation, in the frame of strengthening country capacity to comply with the international environmental agreements signed
- Support for defining rules and regulations on protection of the ozone layer, energy efficiency and the financial sustainability of the protected

areas system, as well as total phase-out of consumption of ozone-depleting substances in the frame of compliance with the Montreal Protocol

- National Climate Change Strategy formulated, and country objective on carbon neutrality supported
- Risk management approach incorporated through joint work with local emergency committees and the National Emergency Committee, and of the environmental approach in local-level planning, infrastructure and services
- Improved capacities and resource investment in response, rehabilitation and reconstruction in order to deal with crisis situations from natural disasters (such as the 2009 earthquake in Cinchona)
- Models of attention and prevention of violence developed

In common programming, in 2012 the UNCT signed the UNDAF, with this exercise consolidating its commitment to aligning and linking United Nations work with the priorities of the Costa Rican State. In addition, a highly aggressive resource mobilization strategy was initiated to support implementation of new, 2013-2017 common programming.

Progress in UN Reform

In 2012, the UNCT continued to support the MDG Acceleration Framework in employment for disabled youth, with the support of ILO and in partnership with the Ministry of Labor. After an active process of participatory construction, the National Plan for Labor Insertion of the Disabled Population was launched. Work commissions were formed and plans and follow-up indicators constructed for the Labor Intermediation, Inclusive Employers, Follow-up and Monitoring and Training commissions. In addition, the first training event on disability and employment was given to secondary schools and centers of attention for disabled adults defined as the target population in the Plan. The tendering process for training in soft skills for disability employability and selection of young people to participate in these courses were initiated. On the financial plane, 350,000 dollars were secured to promote the plan's execution through the United Nations Fund to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These steps will make it possible to

move forward in reaching the goal of access to employment and help overcome the lag in this area.

In the frame of consultation on the post 2015 development agenda, meetings were organized with the Government to define scope, objectives, themes and the populations to be consulted. Based on these agreements a national consultation plan was established and should be implemented as strategy in 2013, along with a concept note to support and orient the process.

In common programming, implementation continued of joint programmes funded by the Spanish MDG Achievement Fund (MDGF). In 2012, three joint programmes finalized and results were evaluated, along with their impact on implementation of the UNDAF results. As example, some of the most relevant conclusions reported in this evaluation process related to progress in UN Reform:

“There is no doubt that the Programme was helping advance United Nations reform and Delivering as One, and represents value-added inter-agency collaboration in the frame of UNDAF. There was a very positive process of constructing inter-agency effort– Common Programming (CP) has helped improve cooperation among UN agencies in CP themes and in general, to address workstyles. The agencies have worked effectively with all actors in pursuing the greatest efficiency possible in the processes and specific results expected. CP facilitated the work of agency cohesion as team.”

“The joint programme was a good example of interinstitutional and inter-agency work to achieve a country development objective, [and] was significant in the resident coordinator role of forging synergies within the programme and between this and the other programmes. Specific examples can be seen in the convergence strategy and in the development of the Information System to support coordination, linkage and convergence.”

“The joint work and approach was successful and leaves as lesson learnt that greater structural impacts can be obtained when UNS agencies work in an integrated fashion. While there are still some rough edges, the culture of joint execution should be strengthened as long as this is the work modality UNS donors are promoting at the time these types of programmes are financed.”

“The evaluation considers that inter-agency cooperation has been a factor giving greater force to CP interventions, and enabled construction of a joint vision that will capitalize on the strengths of all the agencies involved.”

“Coordination between UNS agencies has been, throughout the CP, a continual learning process requiring sacrifice of time. There was a challenge for agencies with dissimilar processes (especially financial administration), different identities and ways of working, and also different intervention visions and experience in the local arena. Nonetheless, coordination improved at both national level and in the field.”

Even though these programmes did not originate directly from the UNDAF since they arose outside of UNDAF strategic planning in order to take advantage of several financing opportunities or existing work with government institutions, they did contribute a great deal to achieving some of the strategic results and outcomes of the UNDAF, especially in areas 1, 2 and 3.

In addition, strengthening continued of the monitoring and evaluation team set up to provide technical support to execution of common programming, reinforcing implementation of the convergence strategy and its implementation through an information system for convergence with flexibility to include all of the common programming actions, and even becoming the system of reference for Monitoring of common programming actions for the next UNDAF 2013-2017.

In Human Rights, the UNS supported the validation process of the National Plan against Racism as well as follow-up actions concerning land conflict between the Indigenous population and non-Indigenous in the southern region. During the final months of 2012 accompaniment was strengthened to support recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to the Diquis Hydroelectric Dam. The United Nations System has been asked to support the facilitation of intercultural dialogue between the Government of Costa Rica and the Indigenous Peoples on several themes, helping to mitigate the escalating social conflict taking place in this region since 2011.

In the theme of security, we continue advancing in MOSS compliance, from a score of 66.71% in 2008 to 95% in 2011. A relevant fact worth highlighting was training for the Security Management Team in the new information and trip report system (UNSMIN database), to strengthen capacities in the Inter-Agency Security Management System.

Note should also be made of the Inter-agency Gender Group's work in positioning the UN Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women," including inter-agency mobilization of financial resources to produce promotional materials and carry out activities such as the visit by Mrs. Michelle Bachelet, who came to reinforce campaign positioning and mediate for strengthening of governance in Gender in the country.

Adhesion of the last power of State, the Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Costa Rica, was also achieved during the year. The adhesion activity held in the frame of celebrating International Women's Day also provided occasion to launch the process toward creating a gender equality and equity policy for the legislative assembly, an initiative promoted by the United Nations Development Program.

In coordination with the National Institute of Women, vice-mayoresses and those responsible in the Women's Offices of the municipalities of Alajuelita, Heredia and Puntarenas, from October 1 to November 30 a local convocation was held in the three cantons to identify successful and innovative projects in reduction of violence against women that are having direct impact on the population and promoting learning and sharing of good practices in prevention and attention to gender violence. Awards were given to the best of these projects in each canton.

Key Aspects of the Workplan for 2013

In 2013 the UNCT will follow up on all of the tasks that were initiated in 2012 and need to be completed this year. One is the report on the MDG costing study; the final document will be printed and presented at the level of the general public. Consultation of the Post 2015 development agenda will also continue as a priority for the UNCT, and a document is expected to be generated as input to UN Headquarters for this process.

Regarding UNDAF, based on the M&E strategy already set out and agreed by the UNCT, the respective annual review will be coordinated and carried out through the Joint Programme Inter-Agency Technical Group.

Final evaluations will be done of the Joint Programmes underway, and new inter-agency proposals have been formulated. One of these focuses on improving the Human Security of Ngöbe and Buglé Temporary Migrants in Costa Rica and Panama; another one on Violence against Women which the Inter-Agency Gender Group will be presenting to compete for UN Women funding.

The thematic groups in general will make efforts to continue strengthening their inter-agency work to generate synergies among agencies. The Gender Group will continue follow-up and implementation of the Secretary-General's Campaign and the Communication Group will work towards positioning key themes: promotion of human rights, peaceful co-existence, MDGs, public advocacy processes such as the rights of Indigenous Peoples, publicizing the impacts and results UN work in Costa Rica, and others.

With respect to Human Rights, as priority the UNCT will continue providing accompaniment and follow-up for the recommendations of treaty bodies and special procedures. Special emphasis will be given to CEDAW recommendations on gender and to the recent recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Work will be done on strengthening intercultural dialogue between the government and Indigenous peoples, particularly in the southern region of the country. Actions increasing awareness of the situation of the most vulnerable populations will be reinforced, bolstering Human Rights training where necessary.

In national response to HIV, support will continue for implementation of the National Plan of Prevention and Attention to Congenital Syphilis and Vertical Transmission of HIV, the Workplan of the National Plan on Sexuality and the HIV Intersectoral Operational Plan 2013, as well as technical support for political advocacy in the work of women with HIV and the coalition of organizations for sexual diversity and sex workers (*Coalición de Organizaciones de la Diversidad Sexual y Trabajadoras Sexuales*). As for Workplace issues, training will continue for new staff in HIV prevention, UN

policies, the PEP Kit and other important themes. Staff sensitization activities will be held on discrimination and sexual diversity, work will continue with staff family members and young people, and HIV prevention in stable couples will be studied.

In attention to emergencies, the inter-agency team will be strengthening their capacities in order to maintain the good response in support to the national emergency system provided thus far. Drills and different trial exercises will be done, as well as the necessary updating to comply with the UNS Inter-agency Response Plan (PIRESNU).

Common services among agencies will be maintained this year and agreements with hotels and airlines updated in an attempt to improve discounts for UNS agencies.

The LFSA will continue monitoring and advising for all agencies in order to maintain MOSS compliance at satisfactory, and update all respective security reports and documents. Relations and coordination with national authorities in security will continue to be strengthened, and trainings provided in this theme for new staff, focal security points and wardens.