



ERITREA

Delivering Together for Eritrea's
Development and Self-Reliance



United Nations

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Preface

H.E. Dr. Giorgis
Teklemikael,
Minister of National
Development

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Giorgis Teklemikael". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the printed name.

Eritrea is a young nation with enormous potential. Since independence, the Government of the State of Eritrea has focused on improving the welfare and dignity of our citizens. Progress has been made towards addressing some of the immediate post-independence challenges, such as poverty, illiteracy, disease, and a degraded environment. Notably, access to and utilization of basic social services have improved and food security has been enhanced. The Government has also paid particular attention to gender equity and the empowerment of women as pillars of the national development process. There is still a lot to do to achieve our national development goals, but with good partnership we believe a lot will be accomplished.

Eritrea's development aspiration is to achieve rapid, balanced, home-grown and sustainable economic growth with social equity and justice. Using an approach anchored in the self-reliance principle, the Government is leading this development course, with the ongoing external support and cooperation of development partners such as the United Nations (UN).

Today, through the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF), 2013-2016, the Government is working closely with the UN system in Eritrea to complement national efforts to enhance basic social service provision, national capacity development, food security and sustainable livelihoods, environmental sustainability and national resilience, as well as gender equality and the empowerment of women. We sincerely appreciate the continued partnership and cooperation with the UN.



Introduction

Ms. Christine
N. Umutoni,
UN Resident
and Humanitarian
Coordinator

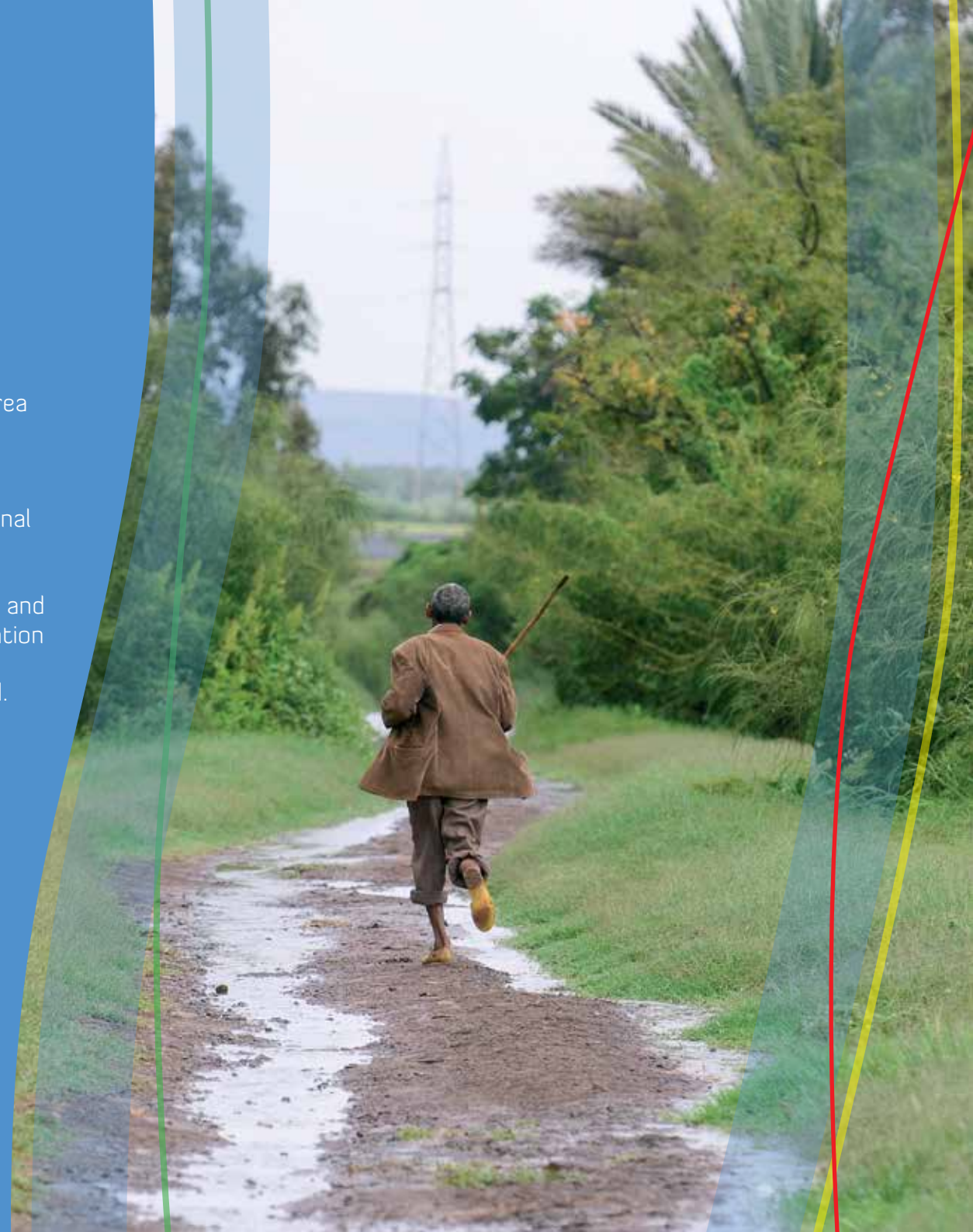
Eritrea has shown commendable commitment to its development agenda. The United Nations applauds Eritrea's development programmes, which have improved the lives of many people despite the harsh environmental conditions in the Horn of Africa.

Although a number of challenges still exist, Eritrea is a country with high levels of accountability for resources and impressive return on investment. Small but visible interventions make powerful impacts on people's livelihoods in Eritrea and evidence shows that the country has recorded significant progress towards achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4, 5 and 6.

The UN is pleased to be associated with this notable record. Still, much more needs to be done to achieve the country's development aspirations of sustainable economic growth, social equity, justice and human dignity for all. Our support seeks to build on and sustain the gains already made as well as address those areas lagging behind. This is a mammoth task that requires huge resources, expanded partnerships and the participation of other development partners, as well as the international community.

As one of Eritrea's partners in development, the United Nations has the unified goal of supporting these aspirations and ensuring that everyone in Eritrea experiences a dignified life free of hunger, poverty, disease and inequity. The current framework of cooperation, the SPCF, defines our collective efforts to support the Government and is aligned with national priorities and the nation's self-reliance policy.

Through the voices of people in Eritrea, photography and descriptions of UN activities and results, this publication showcases the United Nations' work in Eritrea and the strong partnerships on which that work is based. The publication also offers readers a glimpse of the development context in Eritrea, including the challenges, achievements and opportunities.



ERITREA



COUNTRY

Presentation

“At this critical moment, let us reaffirm our commitment to empowering the marginalized and vulnerable. On United Nations Day, I call on Governments and individuals to work in common cause for the common good.”

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
in a message read at the UN Day
Celebration in Eritrea in October 2014



Eritrea became independent in 1991. Located in the Horn of Africa, the country borders Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the southeast and the Red Sea to the East. It covers 122,000 square kilometres and is home to an estimated 3.5 million people (National Statistics Office (NSO)) estimate based on the Eritrean Population and Health Survey (EPHS) 2010. Eritrea has a diverse geography, with lowlands in the west, highlands in the central and northern regions and plains in the east and along the coast.

Eritrea's temperature varies with altitude, ranging from 17 degrees Celsius in the central and northern highlands to 28 degrees in the western lowlands and to more than 30 degrees in the coastal plains. Most of the western lowlands and coastal plains are associated with hot and dry climatic conditions, while the highlands are relatively cool. Rainfall levels vary across the country.

The Eritrean economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism. About 80 per cent of the country's population live in rural areas and rely on crop and rain-fed agriculture, livestock and fisheries for employment and income.





Eritrea's key development indicators as of 2010 and 2013

Estimated population	3.5 million
Urban population (% of total)	35%
Population aged 0–14 years	47%
Gross domestic product growth (2013)	1.1%
Under-five mortality rate	63 per 1,000
Maternal mortality ratio	486 deaths per 100,000 live births
Infant mortality rate	42 per 1,000 live births
Literacy rate of 15–24 year olds	85.2%
Primary school net enrolment ratio	56.2%
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	24%

Sources: Eritrean Population and Health Survey 2010, National Statistics Office, and African Economic Outlook–Eritrea 2014.



Development context

Following independence, the country enjoyed rapid economic growth. The health and education sectors saw marked improvements due to effective social and economic policies and programmes.

Progress slowed following the resumption of war (1998-2000), and the 'no war, no peace' situation continues to be a challenge. Annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth dropped sharply to an estimated 1-2 per cent for the period 2007/2008, but reversed in 2010, peaking at 8.2 per cent in 2011, before slowing down again in 2012, mainly due to falling mineral prices¹.

The country also faces multiple hazards that slow progress towards sustainable development, poverty reduction and livelihoods, such as climate variability, droughts, water stress, land degradation, rising temperatures and deforestation. As a result, vulnerable communities and groups, especially female-headed households, are adversely affected.

¹ According to the 2014 African Economic Outlook.

On the social front, Eritrea is among the few African countries on track to meet the health-related MDGs, including reducing child and maternal mortality. School enrolment has increased in recent years following a decline from 2005 to 2010, especially among girls and children living in hard-to-reach areas, but high youth unemployment remains a concern. In addition, while the Government has demonstrated a commitment to promoting gender equality, additional work is needed to fully integrate gender issues into national development policies and strategies. Much remains to be done to meet the other MDG targets, particularly eradicating poverty and hunger and achieving universal access to primary education.

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THE UNITED NATIONS

in Eritrea

“The Government of Eritrea is committed to working hand-in-hand with the entire United Nations system in Eritrea.”

H.E. Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs



UN Programmes in Eritrea

The UN system initiated operations in Eritrea in March 1992 and concentrated on rehabilitation and reconstruction during its first two years of activity. Subsequently, the Bridging Programme (1994-1996) supported national capacity development, as well as post-war emergency programmes, including rehabilitation, resettlement of returning refugees and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The years 1997-2001 focused on capacity development and institution building, as well as support to basic social services.

In 2002, the Government of the State of Eritrea (GoSE) and the UN entered into its first UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the years 2002-2006. The first UNDAF priorities were to promote democratic governance, basic social services, pro-poor economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. The second UNDAF 2007-2011 prioritized support for basic social services, capacity development, emergency and recovery, environment, food security and gender. An interim agreement in 2011-2012 limited the cooperation to health, water and sanitation. This followed a challenging period for the relationship, between 2007 and 2012, which threatened future cooperation.

In January 2013, the GoSE and the UN System in Eritrea signed a new cooperation agreement entitled the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework (SPCF): 2013-2016. With the signing of the SPCF, Eritrea's active participation in the UN General Assembly and productive high-level UN dialogues, the State of Eritrea has signalled its interest in

renewed cooperation with the UN as a key partner in sustainable development. The rejuvenated partnership also provides a platform for broader engagement and cooperation with the Government not only for the UN, but also for other development partners and the international community at large.

Overall, UN support has contributed to notable national achievements, including enhanced basic social services (including for HIV and AIDS), improved food security, strengthened institutional capacities within the civil services, the empowerment of women, environmental and climate change adaptation and strengthened energy, emergency and recovery programmes.



Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki greets Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, Head of UNDG Eastern and Southern Africa during their visit to Eritrea in December 2013.



United Nations agencies working in Eritrea

Resident agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
World Food Programme (WFP) (non-operational)
World Health Organization (WHO)

Non-resident agencies

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)



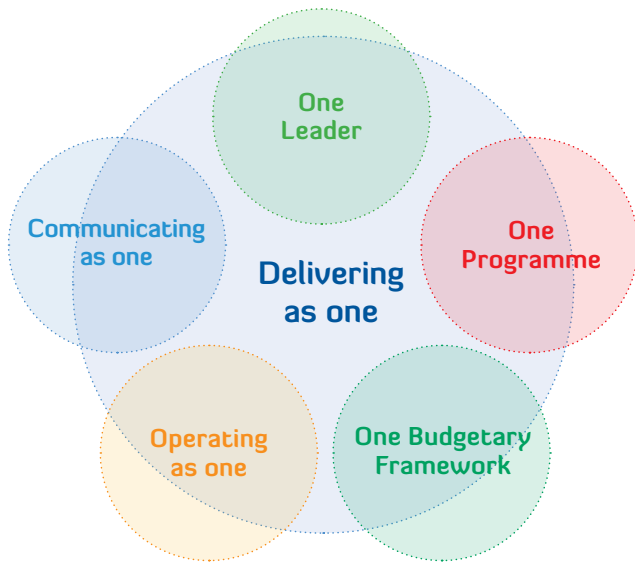
In October, 2013, the Government and the UN system celebrated UN Day for the first time since 2007. The commemoration marked Eritrea's progress towards health-related MDGs and signalled a major step forward for the Government's partnership with the UN.

UN advocacy work in Eritrea

In line with the broader UN mandate, the UN Country Team (UNCT) is also engaging with the Government in focused dialogue on policy advocacy and human rights (including human trafficking). Key advocacy efforts include (but are not limited to) cooperation with the international community, regional and international bodies and development partners; ratification and implementation of international and regional treaties and conventions; and preparation of the national development plan as a framework for alignment of development partners' support. The UN also supports the Government's participation in international processes such as the Universal Periodic Review on human rights, data management, including reporting on MDG progress, and taking part in the post-2015 development agenda discussions.



Moving towards Delivering As One



UN Reform

The UN Delivering as One (DaO) reform process was launched internationally in 2006 by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in response to the global shift towards greater aid effectiveness. Its main objective is to enable the UN to become a more effective partner to governments and people around the world and to better respond to the challenges of the MDGs and other internationally agreed upon development goals.

The UN in Eritrea is fully committed to the adoption of DaO approach to the extent possible. Beginning in 2015, Eritrea will become one of the new DaO roll out countries, in anticipation of the expiration of the SPCF and the initiation of a new programme cycle in 2016. Participation in the roll-out process will allow Eritrea to begin implementing elements of the DaO Standard Operating Procedures. To date, the UN Country Team has already been implementing some of the elements of DaO. This includes a collective UN response to national priorities through joint programming initiatives, operations and resource mobilization efforts, as well as a joint cooperation framework and UN communication strategy. Furthermore, strong Government leadership and ownership of programmes, high levels of transparency and accountability in resource utilization, and the high return on investment especially at the community level, provide a strong foundation for Eritrea to advance the DaO approach in future programme cycles.

The UN going green

In an effort to reduce the environmental impact of office activities, and to manage the problem of frequent power outages, the UN Common Premises, comprised of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOCHA, UNAIDS, UNDSS and the UN Clinic, installed a solar power system in 2013. The entire system cost the UN Agencies more than €78,000. The solar power system is designed to serve and supply equipment that is essential for the business continuity of the offices. The system has been operational for almost a year now without any problems and has consistently supported a number of user needs, including uninterrupted connectivity, printing, document digitizing, and voice and fax communications.



The Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework: 2013-2016

The SPCF expresses the UN's collective response to national development priorities. It focuses on five strategic areas of cooperation over a period of four years: (1) basic social services; (2) national capacity development; (3) food security and sustainable livelihoods; (4) environmental sustainability; and (5) gender equity and advancement of women. These priority areas have been further elaborated into eight outcomes (result areas), which form the basis for specific programme interventions (see figure on p. 18).

The framework was developed through a consultative process involving the Government and the UN. Its overarching aim is to enhance the wellbeing of the people of Eritrea, particularly the most vulnerable, through rapid, balanced, home-grown and sustainable economic growth.

The cooperation framework is also guided by the MDGs and various international goals and commitments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and Eritrea's stated national development priorities. It is informed by lessons drawn from previous UN-Government cooperation. The framework was developed and designed to accommodate emerging needs within the UN's mandate and capabilities, while focusing on the five strategic areas.

Since the signature of the SPCF, emerging issues and potential areas of support include: capacity building in statistics and data development; capacity development for national resilience and disaster risk management, youth empowerment including efforts to curb youth migration and human trafficking and support to higher education and human rights.



Areas of Cooperation

Basic social services

MDGs 1 2 3 4 5 6

WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNHCR

Outcome

1. Improved access and utilization of quality and integrated health and nutrition services
2. Children, including refugees, provided with access to quality basic education in hard-to-reach areas
3. Strengthened protection and participation of vulnerable children, adolescents, young people, women, and people with special needs

National capacity development

MDGs 3

UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO, OCHA

Outcome

4. Improved capacity of government institutions to deliver services
5. Strengthened national and sectoral disaster risk management

Food security and sustainable livelihoods

MDGs 1 7

UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, IFAD, IAEA

Outcome

6. Improved access to, and utilization of quality food and enhanced livelihood opportunities

Environmental sustainability MDG 7

UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, UNHCR, WHO

Outcome

7. Achievement of the MDG targets for environmental sustainability

Gender equity and advancement of women MDG 3

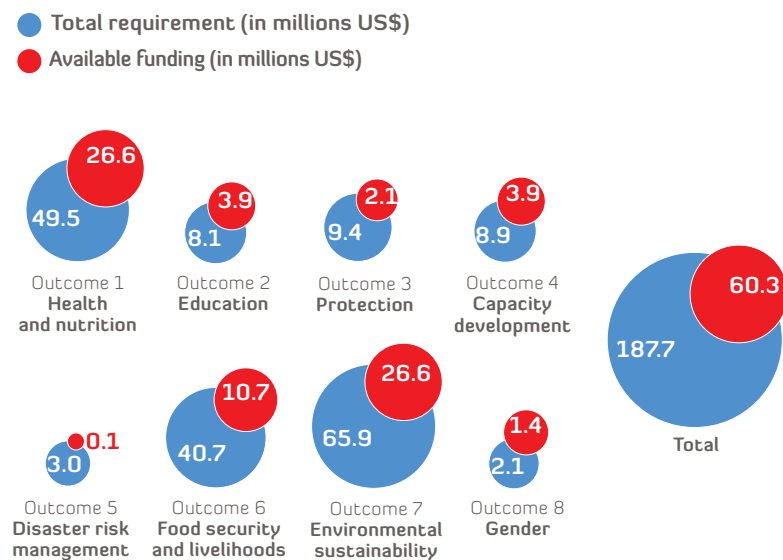
UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF

Outcome

8. National institutions have gender responsive sector plans and policies

Funding of UN Programmes

In addition to the Government's own resources for funding the priority areas, the UN's resources amount to US\$187.6 million. US\$50 million will be from core budgets and US\$138 million will be jointly mobilized from other sources. The funding snapshot for the SPCF as of September 2014 shows clear needs for more funding, with only US\$60.3 million, or 32 per cent, funded and US\$127.3 million still unfunded.



The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

The CERF was established by the UN General Assembly in 2006 to enable more timely and reliable assistance to those affected by natural disasters and other emergencies. The Fund is managed on behalf of the UN Secretary General by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

To address poor rainfall and persistent drought in Eritrea, CERF funds have been directed towards programmes in nutrition, health, water, sanitation, hygiene and food security. In 2013 US\$6.3 million was allocated mainly for nutrition, health and livelihoods support. In mid-2014, another US\$2.5 million was allocated to support nutrition, health and food security interventions largely in the Northern and Southern Red Sea Regions. Since 2006, Eritrea has benefitted from US\$34 million in cumulative CERF grants.

ERITREA

PRIORITY AREAS

and outcomes

“There was strong Government commitment, strong community participation, country leadership, involvement of religious leaders, dedicated health workers and efficient use of resources. In our experience, partnerships — international and local — are as important as all the factors that have led to the progress made”

Dr. Usman Abdulmumini, WHO Representative, Eritrea, at the UN General Assembly Side Event showcasing Eritrea’s success on health MDGs, 26 September, 2014, New York



MDGs 1 4 5 6

Health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS

Improving access to quality health and nutrition services

Eritrea has made considerable progress towards providing equitable, accessible and affordable health services to the majority of the population and as a result is on track to achieve the targets for MDGs 4, 5 and 6.

MDG4 - reduce the under-five mortality rate by half. Infant mortality in Eritrea has decreased per 1,000 live births over the past two decades, from 92 in 1990, to 37 in 2012. During the same period, the under-five-mortality rate was reduced from 150 in 1990 to 50 in 2013. These achievements are the result of a number of improvements, including:


- Increased coverage of key child health and immunization service: today over 95 per cent of children under 5 are fully immunized according to a coverage survey. Measles is being controlled, the country has been free of polio since 2005 and neonatal tetanus has been eliminated.
- Increased access to nutritional services for children and pregnant or lactating mothers: in 2013, nearly 12,000 children with severe acute malnutrition received treatment, with an 87 per cent cure rate.



MDG5 - improve maternal health. Eritrea has also expanded reproductive health services and has reduced maternal mortality by more than fifty per cent since 1995.

MDG6 - combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Steady progress has been made through the expansion of prevention and treatment services. HIV prevalence among the general population is less than 1 per cent and is declining every year. Tuberculosis prevalence has been reduced to a remarkable 69 per cent of the 1990 level and tuberculosis mortality has been reduced to 62 per cent of the 1990 level. Malaria could soon be declared at the pre-elimination stage.

In addition, national capacity to reduce the incidence of major communicable diseases has also been enhanced and more efficient surveillance has resulted in the timely detection and control of outbreaks before they can overwhelm the system. Functional services for major non-communicable diseases have also been established.



“The secrets behind such achievements [in health] are the high political commitment, multi-sectoral approach, effective development partnerships, strong community participation and the hardworking workforce in the health sector.”

H.E. Ms. Amina Nurhusien, Minister of Health, on progress made towards reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as other diseases



To continue to build on and expand the progress already made in health, and address the remaining challenges, the UN is supporting Eritrea in a number of key areas in health, including:

- **Strengthening health systems**, including service delivery, commodities, technology, financing, human resources, research and information;
- **Child health**, reducing new-born and child mortality;
- **Nutrition**, sustaining and expanding therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes;
- **Sexual and reproductive health**, particularly maternal and new-born health, including emergency obstetric care and antenatal care;
- **Non-communicable diseases**, including cardiovascular diseases, cancer, lung diseases, diabetes, mental disorders, disability and injury, as well as prevention of risk factors;
- **Communicable diseases**, supporting surveillance and control, especially for HIV, tuberculosis, malaria and other outbreak-prone diseases.

The road ahead

Despite the achievements, a number of health challenges remain. The MDG targets are not an end in themselves but a measure of progress, and therefore more work in health is needed to address the remaining issues. Six children in 100 die before their fifth birthday. Only about a half of deliveries take place with skilled health workers, and maternal mortality is still high, at 380 per 100,000 live births. Communicable diseases, malnutrition and occasional disease outbreaks negatively affect people's health, as do socially-driven health issues, such as female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

Non-communicable diseases are creating a double burden for the health system and are hampering national development. A WHO package for essential non-communicable diseases is currently being implemented in all regions to address this emerging threat.

Overall, health systems need further strengthening to address all of the aforementioned challenges. To sustain the current gains, additional financial and material resources and renewed efforts are needed. Progress towards other MDGs must also be made as all goals and targets are mutually reinforcing.

Providing community-based therapeutic feeding

When Mariam Hassan, 24, rushed her one and a half year old son, Ismail, to the Community Based Therapeutic Feeding Programme in Umkulu Refugee Camp, he was struggling to breathe and running a high fever. Ismail was quickly diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition and transferred to a nearby hospital for treatment. He is back in Umkulu Camp now and receives regular care at the clinic and supplementary food from the program. These therapeutic feeding services, provided by partners all over the country, are vital for children.

“I could see my baby getting better every day,” Mariam remembers.



A mother and child in the pediatric ward at Elabered Community Hospital



At the National Fistula Centre supported by UNFPA, women gather to make baskets, string necklaces and chat with each other in the craft-making room. Samples are displayed on a table and photos on a board depict the success stories of some of the women that have undergone fistula surgery at the centre. These images give others hope and show them that life can get better.

Addressing obstetric fistula

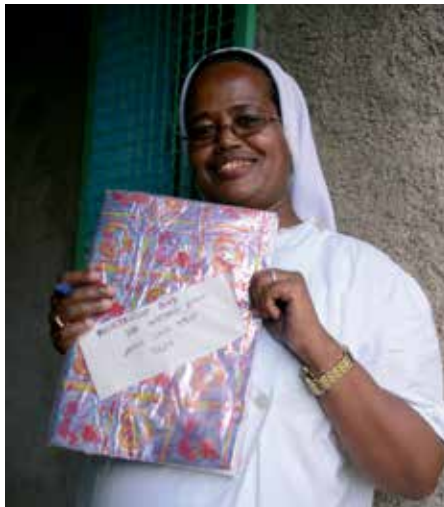
Most young women living with fistula in Eritrea are under the age of 20, illiterate and poor. Many have been abandoned by their husbands, forced from their homes, and ostracized by family and friends. Lacking livelihood skills, many of these women are forced to beg for a living.

Amal, 18, was lucky. After developing obstetric fistula due to prolonged labour, her family and community stuck by her side and brought her to the UNFPA-supported fistula centre. When she arrived at the centre she was met with kindness and has since given birth to a healthy baby boy named Mohammed. The obstetric fistula programme has contributed to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of fistula patients and the reduction of maternal morbidity. More than 1,100 cases of obstetric fistula were treated between 2003 and 2013.

Improving the quality of maternal and child health services

Maternal and child health services are key priorities in Eritrea. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA have supported the establishment of maternity waiting homes to encourage women who live far from health facilities to deliver in healthy and safe environments.

“My first two deliveries were at home without complications,” said Fatema Usman, 22, who arrived at the maternity waiting home in Hagaz from a village 37 kilometres away to deliver her third child. “But I have understood that delivering in a health facility is better, so I wanted to come here.”



Sereke Tesfatsion, Department Head of the National Health Laboratory at Orotta Hospital in Asmara, presents GeneExpert, an advanced diagnostic machine used to diagnose tuberculosis, provided by WHO.

Preventing the spread of tuberculosis

“Earlier we needed two weeks to get results for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB), now we get the results in two hours,” said Sereke Tesfatsion, Department Head of the National Health Laboratory at Orotta Hospital in Asmara. “Clearly this machine donated by WHO is very helpful in preventing the spread of MDR TB.”



Mobilizing the community for health

Community health workers are key to supporting Eritrea's progress towards the MDGs. They are the first to intervene when a child or adult is sick in a community and their timely intervention can prevent situations from becoming worse. UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA are supporting the training of community health workers.

"We work 24 hours a day," said community health worker Idris Mohammed Kier, 50, who has served in the role for four years. **"People sometimes come to me in the night to ask for help. I was selected by the community to do this job and I want to serve my people."**





Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)

The EPI programme delivers immunization for children against eight vaccine preventable diseases: tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, hepatitis B and influenza type B. Despite limited funding, 90 per cent of children are currently fully vaccinated, resulting in elimination of most of the targeted diseases. The immunization programme is supported by WHO and UNICEF.

UNAIDS Eritrea: Keeping HIV/AIDS at bay

Eritrea is among a handful of countries in sub-Saharan Africa where HIV prevalence was below 1 per cent in 2013. The recent UNAIDS Gap Report estimates that HIV prevalence among adults is 0.6 per cent in Eritrea, down from 1.3 per cent in 2005.

Eritrea has shown great commitment and dedication to confronting HIV/AIDS. The Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in Eritrea has been strengthening the national response efforts of the Ministry of Health for a number of years. UNAIDS also works to strengthen the association of people living with HIV and AIDS and other civil society organizations, like the National Union of Eritrean Workers, to make significant contributions to the HIV/AIDS response.





"I want to advise and motivate my peers to stay in school and to get a good education and guide them beyond any doubts they may have. If you have hope, everything is easy."

Abshir Hussein Abdullahi, 22, one of two Somali refugees to graduate from Mai Nefhi College in Eritrea in 2013.



MDGs ②

Education

Providing equal access to quality basic education everywhere

Eritrea made considerable gains towards increasing school enrolment following independence. The net enrolment rate increased from 34.8 per cent in 1991/1992 to 76.8 per cent in 2011/2012. The UN in Eritrea is helping the Government continue to increase school enrolment, participation, learning and completion of basic education. The joint approach takes special account of the unique needs of girls, nomadic children, and children facing special circumstances, including refugee children. Establishing thriving learning spaces, especially in hard-to-reach areas, and enabling teachers to deliver basic education according to a set of quality standards, will ensure that children of all backgrounds and needs have improved access to quality education.

Through complimentary support from the UN, access to quality education has increased, especially for the most vulnerable children. Physical spaces for education have been expanded in hard-to-reach areas and local teachers have received invaluable training. Refugee children continue to access basic education, using the Somali curriculum in lower grades and the Eritrean curriculum in high school. Tertiary education for refugees has been possible thanks to the German DAFI Scholarship Scheme.



The road ahead

Even with increased enrolment rates, only half of Eritrea's children graduate from elementary school. Enrolment of girls and out-of-school children in hard-to-reach areas remains a challenge. Efforts to achieve equitable access and quality education through accessible learning spaces and well-trained teachers are needed. Parents and communities still need to be made more aware of the value and importance of educating girls.

In the years to come, stronger and more effective progress will be possible through the finalization of the Education Sector Plan, the securing of additional funding from the Global Partnership for Education, and increased opportunities for collaboration with new partners.



Educating hard-to-reach children

In support of the Government's education programmes for hard-to-reach children, UNICEF is working to increase the participation of the most disadvantaged boys and girls. Interventions have focused in particular on the hard-to-reach areas of Anseba, Gash-Barka, Southern Red Sea and Northern Red Sea. Education interventions specifically targeting nomadic children aim to provide flexible and child-centred quality schooling that are sensitive to the lifestyles of nomadic communities. Learning spaces, learning materials and training are all provided to nomadic teachers. In addition, UNICEF has collaborated with the Ministry of Education on the Complementary Elementary Education programme, which caters to the educational needs of children aged 9-14 years who were late to start school.



Ahmed, 8, is attending the second grade at Saroyta Nomadic School in the Southern Red Sea region, which is part of the Nomadic Education programme. He travelled 11 kilometres to attend first grade, but still managed to earn strong marks and ranked first in his class. With the encouragement of his teachers and parents, Ahmed is now living with

a teacher and attending second grade with much less difficulty. Teacher Jemal said, **"Our living conditions are poor with no water or sanitation facilities nearby. However, we keep teaching happily because of students like Ahmed who achieve good academic performance."**



Donkeys for school project

Through UNICEF's Donkeys for School Project, 1,000 children living with disabilities in Anseba were able to access crucial social services. The otherwise immobile children were provided with donkeys, an affordable and locally available resource, to increase their mobility. Afet Abubakar Osman, 14, is in the fifth grade. Before she got her donkey three years ago, she walked to school and often fell along the way.

"My dream is big, I dream a lot. I want to go to university and become a doctor to help people with illnesses," said Afet, whose donkey's name is Hamelmal, which means beauty. **"We called it this because it is helping my daughter and the household,"** said Afet's mother Amna.



The UN is supporting the Government to strengthen the delivery of an integrated and community-owned social protection system by improving service quality, increasing geographic coverage of services and providing families and young people with recovery support. The UN is also facilitating policy dialogues, victim assistance, risk mitigation and community safety nets. Support is also provided to promote child rights, social justice and birth registration, and reach adolescents and young people with life skills training, counselling and comprehensive health education.

MDGs 1 3

Social protection

Strengthening the protection and participation of children, young people and women

There are more than 105,000 orphans, 23,000 children living with disabilities and 218,000 children out of school in Eritrea. All of these children have limited access to basic social services. In addition, injuries due to road accidents, drowning, domestic violence, burns and falls are now the five most common morbidity and disability factors for children above five and young people. Injuries represent a massive cost for public health. 63,356 injuries were reported in 2013, and children and young people are those most affected. The number of children in contact with the law has also increased, from 6,000 in 2008 to 8,000 in 2010.

Significant progress has already been made in a number of areas, however. Awareness about landmines and explosive remnants of war has increased and has led to a reduction in injuries and fatalities in war-affected communities. Female genital mutilation (FGM/C) has become less common following mapping and awareness activities. From 1995 to 2010, the prevalence of female circumcision showed a 12 per cent decline, also reflecting that the practice has been illegal since 2007. The integrated national welfare system has been strengthened, leading to improvements in community-based social assistance. Refugees with specific needs, who include the elderly, persons with diverse medical needs, and vulnerable children and women, have been assisted in Umkulu camp.



The road ahead

The social protection system in Eritrea needs further strengthening to ensure that all vulnerable groups are able to access essential services. Though the prevalence of FGM/C among girls under the age of 5 years is declining, 1 in 10 girls under 5 are still being cut. Many war-affected communities have no access to mine risk education and refugees lack access to education, health, water, shelter and livelihood programmes.

Moving forward, the main priority will be to strengthen all sectors' approach to the protection and care of vulnerable children and women. Continuing to leverage community commitment to social welfare has been identified as a key opportunity. However, rigorous resource mobilization is needed to address the critical funding gap.



Samira Hassan, 12.

Providing Mine Risk Education in school

In partnership with the Ministries of Education, Health and Labour and Human Welfare, UNICEF is promoting awareness and preventing injuries among school children and communities impacted by landmines/explosive remnants of war through mine risk education. In 1,000 schools, unexploded devices used as school bells were replaced with safe bells. This helped avoid potential risks and raised the awareness of 500,000 children and teachers.

“It is important that they tell us about mines,” said Samira Hassan, 12, a 5th grader who has participated in the Mine Risk Education Programme at a school in Keren. “They have told us what to touch and not to touch.”





Conducting protection activities in Umkulu Refugee Camp

UNHCR and resettlement countries arrange the resettlement of refugees from Eritrea to third countries. 489 refugees departed for resettlement in 2013. Some were moved to the Emergency Transit Centres in Slovakia and Romania for eventual resettlement to the USA, and others to countries like Canada, Australia and France. In 2014, 382 individuals departed for resettlement to the mentioned countries. UNHCR uses resettlement as both a strategic protection tool, as well as a burden sharing mechanism between countries, in an effort to find durable solutions to the plight of refugees.

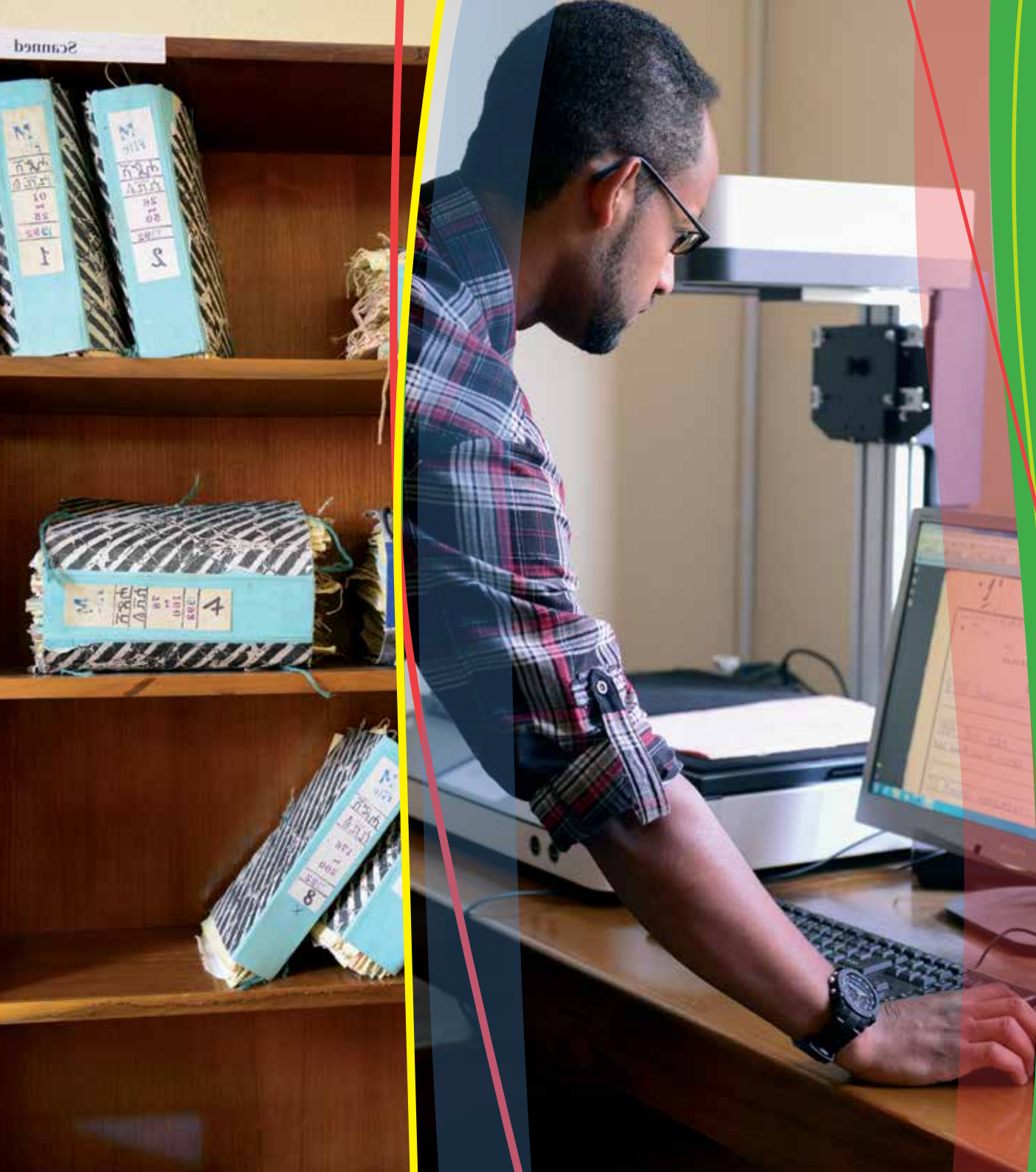
Addressing gender-based violence: The Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Abandonment Project

Eritrea has committed to ending female circumcision. As part of the Female Genital Mutilation Abandonment Project, UNICEF and UNFPA together with the National Union of Eritrean Women and the Ministry of Health provided community sensitization programmes and group discussions about harmful traditional practices.

“Since the 1980s we have been working on changing minds regarding FGM and early marriage, but changing a population’s culture takes time,” said Luul Gebreab, out-going President of the National Union of Eritrean Women.



Amna Haj, the administrator of Hagaz sub-zoba, heads the female genital mutilation committee in Hagaz. The inter-sectoral FGM committees were set up in 2005 throughout Eritrea and include representatives from each sector of the government as well as religious leaders and youth.



“It used to be difficult for community court judges to access information but with a fully computerised data system provided by UNDP, in the ministry of justice where cases are well archived in a high tech library, it is now easy to access data and to do research.”

Ms. Fozia Hashim
Minister of Justice

MDGs 3

National capacity development and disaster risk management

Building the capacity of government institutions

The strength of Eritrea's institutions and human resources are critical to the country's ability to carry out its national development agenda and achieve the MDGs. Over the past few years, the UN has provided effective support that has strengthened human and institutional capacities within government service sectors, resulting in improved service delivery in these sectors. Examples include the Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Department of Immigration and Nationality (DIN), the Civil Service Administration, the Eritrean Institute of Technology, the Orotta School of Medicine, and the College of Marine Science and Technology.

Similarly, the Office for Refugee Affairs has received technical and material assistance in the management of refugee affairs. Support was also provided to the National Statistics Office to build its human and institutional capacity through the joint programme of Data for Development and as a result, the Eritrean Population and Health Survey 2010 was completed in 2013. In addition, the UN supported the decentralization of regional planning and implementation processes through the Anseba Local Development Programme (ALDP), although this has not yet been replicated elsewhere.

The road ahead

Although a great deal has been achieved to improve Eritrea's administrative, legal and regulatory institutions, much remains to be done to reach a standard that fosters effective multi-sector national development. The Government and other public institutions need further support to undertake capacity needs assessments; advocate for the approval or enactment of draft policies and laws; support the National Statistical Office and line ministries on data collection, analysis and dissemination for development and planning purposes; and address the institutional and national coordination mechanisms for disaster mitigation. Data available to the relevant implementing ministries must be systematically integrated into a single data reporting system.

The UN is continuing to enable capacity building in development planning and data for development, the implementation of international obligations and commitments, youth training and development, and higher education.



Anseba Local Development Project

As part of the Anseba Local Development Project, UNDP, through UNCDF, supported local government to deliver public services based on responsive, transparent and pro-poor planning processes. Various levels of local government were engaged in the project. Local communities enthusiastically contributed to and led the process of planning and implementing key services, demonstrating that community engagement is an extremely effective, efficient and sustainable approach to service delivery.





Robel Woldemichael, project coordinator for the digital library and digitization project aimed at strengthening the capacity of the justice sector. UNDP has been supporting the Ministry of Justice in Eritrea since 1997.

Developing the capacity of the Department of Immigration and Nationality (DIN)

This UNDP project strengthened the capacity of DIN to deliver public services. Activities focused on enhancing staff skills and modernizing existing systems. Despite human resource limitations, the Department has been completely transformed from manual operations to a computer-based system. This has reduced the time spent carrying out essential functions such as issuing visas and passports. Human capacity development has also improved day-to-day efficiency.

Strengthening national capacities for resilience

Eritrea is vulnerable to climate variability and natural disasters. The frequent droughts, floods and varied rainfall patterns are common challenges. Building national systems for resilience through enhanced mechanisms for disaster risk management is therefore critical to minimizing the impact on systems and individuals and increasing capacity to withstand shocks.

The Government has worked hard to mainstream resilience and disaster risk reduction into key sector strategies, including those for health, agriculture, labour and human welfare. However, greater synergy across sectors and a national coordination mechanism is needed.

The UN intends to support the strengthening of national resilience through disaster risk management mechanisms by enabling stronger coordination and carrying out assessments. Support will also be provided to prepare a disaster risk management plan and establish a multi-sector national platform for coordination. Some activities for this outcome have been agreed on through discussion with Government and implementation began in 2014 with the support of UNDP.



The majority of Eritreans live in rural areas and generate their livelihoods through crop production, livestock and fisheries. Arable land accounts for only 12 per cent of land use, however, and 95 per cent of that land is not irrigated and therefore depends on rainfall. Food security and livelihoods are also challenged by the negative effects of climate variability and recurrent drought that can lead to crop failure. Overexploitation of natural resources is also a key challenge.

MDGs 1 7

Food security and sustainable livelihoods

Improving access to quality food and better livelihoods

The Government of Eritrea considers food security a top national priority and works hard to ensure that all Eritreans have sufficient quantities of acceptable quality food at an affordable price regardless of where they live. The UN supports the Government's efforts through an integrated approach focusing on:

- **Enhancing food production capacities** in agriculture, livestock and fisheries,
- **Enhancing employment** and income generating schemes for the rural poor and vulnerable communities; and
- **Increasing access to shelter** for poor and vulnerable households affected by war, drought, floods or their own mobility.

The partnership has seen an increase in food productivity through the construction of micro-dams, water tanks and ponds, the provision of improved seeds and the distribution of fishing inputs and tools in the Southern Red Sea, Northern Red Sea, Debub and Gash Barka regions. Food production capacity has also increased with the introduction of new techniques and crops, trainings in various disciplines, the establishment of an eco-dairy training centre at Hamelmalo Agricultural College and the upgrade of the fish quality control laboratory at the College of

Marine Resource and Technology in Massawa. Assistance has also been provided to drought-affected households in the Northern and Southern Red Sea Regions, as well as refugees and host community households to enhance the livelihoods and skills of vulnerable women and youth.

The road ahead

A number of vulnerable groups require food and livelihood support in Eritrea. These include poor, former internally displaced people, female-headed households and children under five, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women, who are particularly vulnerable to poor nutrition. Refugee populations that often lack farming and livelihood opportunities are continuously dependent on external assistance and are badly in need of more sustainable solutions. Opportunities exist, however, for working with experienced farmers to create sustainable livelihoods. Streamlining logistics and mobilizing additional resources will be key to future success. To update information on the food security situation, the Government has accepted a proposal from WFP to carry out a food security assessment within the regional context.



Improving crop productivity through mutation breeding for climate change adaptation

Since 2007, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been supporting the National Agricultural Research Institute to develop capacity in mutation breeding. The goal is to produce varieties of crops that are adaptable to climate change. The initial focus was on millet and sorghum, resulting in the production of advanced mutant lines of the two grains. Since 2012, the focus has been on barley.

Eritrea is a centre of barley diversity, and barley is a key crop for the country providing food for human consumption, animal feed for livestock and enabling beer production. The current goal is to develop new climate tolerant and high-yielding varieties of barley, provide these seeds to farmers, and improve farmers' livelihoods as a result. To date, advanced mutant lines of barley have been generated and tested. The results are promising and there is hope that the required traits will be achieved by the end of the project in 2015.

Dawit Andehaimanet, 56, has helped plough the field being used to test the improved barley. He, like many farmers, is eager to benefit from the results of the project. Dawit's bread is made from "hamphet", a mix of barley and wheat.

Dawit Andehaimanet,
farmer.



Integrating temperate fruit crops into the Eritrean highland


FAO has supported the Government to boost production in the country over the last 20 years. Now, the agency is working to introduce and integrate temperate fruit crops into irrigated production units in the highland. The most urgent technical barriers to temperate fruit production are addressed by developing human production capacity. The aim is to increase home production to satisfy local demand and to improve the region's food security and its residents' nutritional status. So far, 30,000 rootstock of peaches and apples and 75 kilograms of peach seeds have been imported and are being prepared for distribution to farmers.

Fisheries Development Project

IFAD's Fisheries Development Project is responding to the Government's request for assistance for artisanal fishers in the Red Sea coastal regions. These regions suffered greatly during the border conflict of 1998-2000 and have yet to fully recover. The project is aiming to raise production and productivity in the fisheries sector while conserving fish stocks and the marine ecosystem.

“The old landing site was an open air one, so the quality and hygiene could not be controlled so easily,” said Hamed Ali Sheik, who manages a landing site built one year ago to improve local fishing conditions. **“This is very different and a great improvement.”**



A photograph showing a man and a young boy crouching by a water source. The man, in the foreground, is smiling and washing yellow vegetables in his hands. The boy is behind him, also crouching and looking towards the camera. The background is a lush green field with some trees. The image is framed by a green border on the right and a blue and red border on the left.

“I have witnessed improvement in the living standards of the population, particularly women and children who are the main beneficiaries of the project,” said Ms. Abrahazion, administrator of a village in Gala-Nefhi sub-region. “Now, water is at the gate of our doors and we no longer walk long distances to fetch water.”

“Water availability is now better throughout the year, so we can continuously produce. We harvest three times a year, and with favourable prices in the market in Asmara, this makes a difference to our income,” said farmer Misghina Beraki.



Food Security Project in the Central Region

As part of its poverty eradication efforts, UNDP supported the construction and rehabilitation of three micro dams in the Gala-Nefhi sub region, which are now benefitting up to 1,200 households. According to Mr. Abraham Daniel, Head of the Agriculture Ministry at Zoba Maekel Branch, the micro-dam constructed in Lamza is 20 metres deep and holds 1 million cubic metres of water. Farmers are irrigating up to 20 hectares a day by pumping water up using gravity. The dam has enabled farmers to plough their land throughout the year and the inhabitants of the village have started to reap the benefits of higher production. According to the local farmers, earlier they were only sending one truck to the market each week, now they are sending three. In addition to income generation, there are also environmental and ecological advantages – the vegetation in the area has improved with the increased water availability. Mr. Daniel says that the scope of the irrigation can expand to 100 hectares if a modern drip irrigation system is introduced.

Poultry and goat projects

As part of a multi-year livelihood strategy, UNHCR, the Office of Refugee Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture launched the poultry and goat projects to improve the health and livelihoods of 60 vulnerable Somali refugee families in Umkulu Camp and ten families from the host village. Hens and goats were distributed to help the families generate additional income and improve their nutritional intake. The project is progressing well. Moving forward, 160 additional families in Umkulu Camp and host community will start their own poultry farms.

“I feel very satisfied to participate in this project, put into practice my knowledge and give my time to help the refugee community. Also, improving nutrition and wellbeing of children is a strong motivation that drives me every day. This was a great experience which I will have tattooed on my soul for life.” –Dr. Isvany Tejiro Leon, Ministry of Agriculture Poultry Specialist on the Poultry Project in Umkulu Refugee Camp.





Eritrea is vulnerable to a range of environmental challenges. Droughts, floods, increased variability in rainfall patterns, soil erosion, desertification and land degradation all impact the environment and undermine livelihoods. The Government has demonstrated its commitment to climate change adaptation, improving access to safe water and sanitation and supporting energy and biodiversity conservation and has put into place a number of policies, strategies and legal safeguards regarding the protection, conservation and proper management of biodiversity.

MDG 7

Environmental sustainability

Achieving environmental sustainability

The UN is supporting the Government to build institutional capacities to address critical national and international environmental issues like climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental protection and sustainable resource management. The interventions have been instrumental in building capacity to create healthier and better living environments, through:

- **Combating deforestation and biodiversity loss;**
- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;**
- **Developing and managing sustainable water resources;**
- **Increasing sanitation and hygiene coverage;**
- **Enabling natural resource and environmental management;**
- **Increasing access to energy services**

A number of examples illustrate the success of this work. The Ministry of Land, Water and the Environment benefitted from capacity development in land use planning and policy development, including the use of a viable Geographic Information System and Land Information System. With

UN support, Adhanet, the energy efficient stove, has been widely disseminated and adopted and has reduced the consumption of firewood and increased savings for households. The introduction of energy efficient stoves in Umkulu Refugee Camp, generously funded by the Swiss Embassy in Sudan, will do the same for refugee households. In addition, an environmental policy framework has been prepared and a Coastal Marine and Island inventory and information system are now established and operational. In Assab, a 750 KW capacity Wind Park is providing energy to the port city.

Access to improved water sources has also increased significantly during the last years. Rural safe water supply coverage increased from 58 per cent in 2006 to over 68 per cent in 2012. Meanwhile, rural sanitation coverage has increased from 4 per cent in 2006 to about 25 per cent in 2012, according to surveys conducted by UNICEF. Since the start of the Community Led Total Sanitation programme in 2009, a total of 554 villages have been declared open defecation free, and the villagers are now practicing proper hygiene.



The Road Ahead

Despite the progress made, Eritrea still struggles to meet its global environmental commitments. An estimated 1.3 million people need access to safe water; 40 per cent of the population still drinks unsafe water from unprotected sources. Rural sanitation coverage is low at 25 per cent and diseases associated with water and sanitation are prevalent. Moreover, 99 per cent of households in rural areas dispose of solid waste and garbage in the open. Current patterns of resource consumption are also unsustainable.

The achievement of long-term environmental objectives hinge on the replication of pilot projects and approval of draft legislation. The slow development of alternative livelihood systems is also undermining sustainable solutions, forcing people to use environmental resources more aggressively for short-term as opposed to long-term benefits. Addressing logistical and resource challenges and taking advantage of the strong opportunities for continued joint planning and programming will be critical moving forward.

Reducing chemical threats to health and the environment

FAO is assisting Eritrea to eliminate stockpiles of persistent organic pollutants and other obsolete pesticides and to make sustainable improvements in pesticide management. The goal is to reduce the threats these chemicals pose to human health and the environment. So far, 400 metric tonnes of obsolete pesticides have been identified and training has been provided to technical staff on pesticide management and safeguarding obsolete pesticides. FAO has also supported the drafting of pesticide legislation, which has been approved by the Government.

Water, sanitation and hygiene projects

UNICEF has a number of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects in Eritrea. The Maebelle WASH project serves about 1,500 internally displaced and resettled persons affected by the 2011 Sieru volcanic eruption. The Robrobia water supply project is a solar driven water supply system serving nearly 3,500 people with clean drinking water. The Quazien water supply project is an electric power driven water supply system serving more than 5,000 rural people with clean drinking water. And thanks to the Senafe sub zone community-led total sanitation intervention, 67 villages have been declared free of open defecation.

Zaid Tekle, 20, remembers when her father built the community latrines two years ago as part of the Senafe sub zone community-led total sanitation project. “My father realized that it is inconvenient and risky – snakes, insects – to walk far to use the toilet, that is why he built it. Now, our compound is clean, and we don’t have to travel long to go to the toilet.”



Pilot Wind Energy Applications Project

Eritrea is among those countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are piloting wind energy applications with funding from the Government, UNDP and the Global Environment Facility. As part of this pilot project, the 750kw wind farm erected at the port of Assab is generating clean, renewable energy for the local population, covering about 15-20 per cent of annual electricity demand of the port city. This implies a savings of approximately 682,000 litres of diesel annually, decreasing dependence on imported fuel and saving about US\$730,000 on diesel costs annually.

Communities that were isolated from the national electricity grid now have 8 to 12 hours of electricity per day, which indicates that if replicated in other areas, the wind energy project could contribute significantly to the energy supply and reducing carbon emissions. It is estimated that the wind farm will reduce CO₂ carbon emissions by 37,500 tonnes over 20 years.

Out of the 30,000 project beneficiaries, 60 per cent were women and children. Overall, the pilot project has been a success in building national capacity to plan, design and operate wind energy technology interventions for the Ministry of Energy and Mines.



The UN supports the Government's emphasis on gender equity by providing technical and financial assistance to increase awareness of gender issues among the authorities and the general public. Special attention is given to behavioural and attitude change with regards to deep-rooted harmful traditional practices, values and attitudes, including female genital mutilation, early marriage and virginity testing. The UN also supports partners to monitor, evaluate and report on the process of integrating gender into national development processes, as well as monitoring national implementation and reporting on relevant international conventions such as the CEDAW.

MDG 3

Gender equity and the empowerment of women

Integrating gender into national processes

Notable progress has been made on gender mainstreaming in Government ministries. Of the twelve Ministries targeted, six have designated gender focal points, five have developed gender mainstreaming strategies and four have developed action plans. The Ministry of Land, Water and Environment is reported to reserve 30 per cent of land bank parcels for distribution to disadvantaged women. The Ministry of Education has reduced the entrance requirements for girls to tertiary education and set a 30 per cent quota for girls joining technical or vocational education and training. There is also enhanced capacity to implement the National Gender Action Plan and report on the implementation of international and regional human rights instruments.

The UN in Eritrea has had a longstanding relationship with the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), beginning in 2004. The partnership works to empower women, mainstream gender equality, fight harmful practices such as FGM and early marriage, and achieve the ultimate goal of gender equality. The UN also supported NUEW to publish the Beijing +20 report.





The Road Ahead

Despite the progress, gender disparities continue across sectors, including in education, agriculture, health and food security. Gender equality goals and interventions continue to face challenges due to deeply-rooted traditional values and practices. Women still lack decision-making power and face economic disempowerment and stigma within the workforce. Gender mainstreaming efforts suffer from limited capacity and lack of gender-specific data continues to pose a challenge.

There are clear needs for baseline data on gender; designation of gender focal points; implementation of gender budgeting in all institutions and administrative offices to support the mainstreaming process; and continuous sensitization, awareness raising and training on gender mainstreaming until the goal of equity for men and women is achieved. At the implementation level, there is the danger that gender will be conceptualized as a programme, rather than as an issue that should be mainstreamed into specific outcomes.



Joint Programme on Gender Equity and Empowerment of Women

This joint programme works to strengthen gender-sensitive research, including through the development and use of gender disaggregated data, mainstreaming gender into key government institutions, advocacy and economic empowerment of women. As part of this programme, a fully equipped resource and research centre has been established at the main office of the National Union of Eritrean Women. The centre will play a critical role in building capacity for gender equity. Among its features is a gender database, which will serve as a 'one stop shop' for gender resources.

"The good thing in Eritrea, with our history, is that women's issues are close to people's hearts," said Luul Gebreab, out-going President of the National Union of Eritrean Women, which has worked hand in hand with the Government and the UN to establish the new research centre. **"But we still have to institutionalize [gender] and this is what we are doing now."**

Role of women in Africa highlighted during Eritrean Women's Union Congress

UNDP and UNFPA supported the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) to organise a very successful 7th national congress and international symposium in September 2014.

The symposium brought together representatives from women's unions and ministers for gender issues from the COMESA region (South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan and Zimbabwe), China as well as gender experts and representatives of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. The participants discussed and shared country experiences on themes such as women's role in peace-building, networking and women's economic empowerment. The congress also elected a new chairperson and a 55-member council for the union, which has a membership of more than 200,000.

Partnerships

The SPCF offers an opportunity and a platform for development partners to provide coordinated and coherent support for Eritrea's national development priorities. Progress is being made in forging strategic partnerships with bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners (resident and non-resident) and in mobilising resources (financial and human). The UN highly acknowledges and appreciates the support from various partners and donors at both local and international levels, without which the UN would not have achieved the results that it has.



United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office - UN Eritrea

Tel: +291 1 151166 • E-mail: dpi.er@undp.org  / UN Eritrea  / UN Eritrea

Resident Agencies



Non-Resident Agencies





ERITREA



Under the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Agreement 2013-2016, the UN System is supporting the Government of the State of Eritrea to foster sustainable development by strengthening basic social services, developing national capacity, enabling food security and sustainable livelihoods, supporting environmental sustainability and promoting gender equity and the advancement of women. The renewed partnership between the Government and the UN represents a major step towards building national capacities for development.

