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Decision on SECU Case No. SECU0007

UNDP takes note of the compliance review that the Office of Audit and Investigations conducted on Case No. SECU0007 and wished to thank the Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) for its analysis and recommendations which will be used to inform UNDP's approaches going forward.

UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES) are a mandatory requirement for all parts of the organisation – in all programmes and projects- as part of UNDP's quality assurance and risk management process.

The purpose of SECU is to ensure accountability to those individuals and communities with whom we work. It is important that these voices are heard, and that UNDP has an opportunity to respond to the issues that they have raised.

In my capacity as Administrator of UNDP, I therefore take very seriously SECU's reports and our responsibility to comply fully with our Social and Environmental Standards (SES).

The Final Compliance Report dated 6 December 2019 has been thoroughly analyzed by the Regional Bureau for Arab States and the UNDP Country Office in Jordan.

The report acknowledges UNDP's history of supporting the forest sector in Jordan by investing in projects aimed at conserving and sustaining the forests' ecosystems. The report also acknowledges the importance of this project in addressing the social and environmental stresses caused by the presence of an unprecedented number of Syrian refugees in the northern region of Jordan, as well as the long-term challenge of rising waste volumes across Jordanian society. Nevertheless, the findings also show there is room for organizational learning, in particular in relation to the application of UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and community engagement in the project including in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) .

Looking ahead, UNDP will put in place a series of follow up actions to respond to each of the five recommendations of the report. These include actions to:

- Work with the Ministry of Environment to suggest an adequate amendment to the article in the local Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Bylaw on the disclosure of ESIA reports so that in the future these reports can be shared with stakeholders;



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- Related to this, develop a training program on “public participation” in the ESIA process in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and the Jordan Federation for environmental NGOs and other relevant stakeholders including NGOs, CBOs, community leaders and youth groups;
- Continue to prioritise and support the environment in general, and forests in particular, as part of UNDP’s programmes to conserve and sustain the forests’ ecosystems in Jordan;
- Analyse the compatibility/comparability of UNDP’s SES with the relevant ESIA legislation;
- Work with local partners to rehabilitate and replant trees at the abandoned site in Me’rad;
- Continue to raise awareness of all staff in the Country Office of the importance of UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES) and ensure compliance across all projects and programmes.

More generally, to ensure that all UNDP Country Offices are supported in implementing the requirements of the SES, an inter-Bureau Task Force is now in place responsible for developing a plan to strengthen institutional capacities for SES implementation across the organisation, including enhanced capacities for oversight, support and learning. In addition, new guidance is under development on how Country Offices can review their national regulatory frameworks in the context of UNDP’s SES to identify potential gaps and help ensure the higher standards are applied in the context of UNDP programming.

I would like to reiterate my strong personal commitment to ensuring UNDP’s adherence and commitment to SES standards and principles. The work of SECU through its compliance function is important to helping us achieve this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Achim Steiner'.

Achim Steiner
Administrator
10 June 2020