



ANNEX 10

THEMATIC SPOTLIGHTS FOR PEOPLE-CENTRED PROGRAMMING

This annex presents thematic spotlights on three UNDP programming areas—Digitalization and E-Justice, Environmental Justice, and Business and Human Rights—that highlight how the people-centred approach informs analysis, design and implementation. Each spotlight provides concrete examples, entry points and additional resources for how UNDP integrates the approach.

Thematic spotlight 1: Digitalization and E-justice

E-justice is more than a tool for efficiency. It is a strategic tool for transforming justice systems to be more effective, accessible and responsive to people’s rights and needs, especially the rights and needs of those most at risk of being left behind. A people-centred approach to e-justice means co-designing digital tools with users, ensuring digital inclusion (especially for women, rural communities and persons with disabilities), and embedding safeguards around data privacy and due process. UNDP supports governments and communities to ensure that digital transformation delivers more accessible, fair and accountable justice. For example:

- In Malawi, UNDP partnered with the Malawi Judiciary and Airtel Malawi to roll out an e-court platform that expands access to justice in rural areas and improves coordination between prisons and courts. The digital solution removes geographic and financial barriers that previously delayed justice, enabling timely, local resolution of cases, particularly for vulnerable people. It has reduced operations costs for courts and prisons and improved efficiency, ensuring that individuals no longer wait years for a hearing due to logistical constraints.
- In Kenya, the E-Judiciary mobile application allows people to track case progress, access judgments or receive court notifications. Linked to the roll out of Small Claims Courts, the solution supports the judiciary’s efforts to bring justice services closer to people through simplified procedures, expedited proceedings and low-cost access for disputes under 1 million Kenyan shillings. By mid-2024, the courts had resolved over 68,000 cases, releasing approximately US\$100 million back into the economy.

- In Syria, a virtual legal aid platform provides Syrians inside and outside the country with access to legal information and advice.
- Across contexts, from Palestine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Indonesia and Uzbekistan, judiciaries and government entities are using digital technologies to gather and analyse data to detect gaps and improve justice service delivery. For a snapshot of these country examples and lessons learned, see the Independent Evaluation Office’s *Evaluation of UNDP’s Support to Access to Justice* (2023).

For resources, toolkits and updates on UNDP’s support to digitalization and e-justice, see <https://www.undp.org/rolhr/justice/digitalization-and-e-justice>.

Thematic spotlight 2: Environmental Justice

Environmental harm disproportionately affects marginalized groups, who often face barriers to legal redress. The people-centred approach amplifies their voices, supports communities in claiming environmental rights, strengthens grievance mechanisms and promotes participation in environmental governance.

UNDP’s global strategy advances accountability and protection of environmental rights through legal and policy reform, people-centred institutions and legal empowerment. It emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach across sectors, including justice, human rights, environment and climate, and business and human rights.

Examples of UNDP’s environmental justice work include the following:

- In Mongolia, a comprehensive approach combined legal reform with community-led action. The government adopted a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, mandating “human rights due diligence” across sectors, including mining. The national mining association reinforced this step by requiring all member companies to comply with the Responsible Mining Codex. Locally, participatory environmental monitoring committees empowered herder communities, especially women, to jointly monitor mining impacts



with companies and authorities. Communities uncovered unapproved mining activities, restored 3.2 hectares of pastureland degraded by mining and enabled community participation in the renewal of environmental impact assessments. Herders gained legal knowledge, built trust with companies and secured commitments to rehabilitate sacred sites, strengthening accountability and delivering tangible justice outcomes.

- In Georgia, environmental rights are protected by the Constitution. To support the realization of these rights, UNDP conducted the country's first [Baseline Assessment on Access to Environmental Justice](#), mapping legal and institutional barriers to redress for environmental harm, especially for marginalized groups. Broad stakeholder engagement informed actionable recommendations to strengthen environmental accountability. A complementary [awareness campaign](#) reached over 326,000 people through online and in-person events. By engaging youth, journalists, activists and human rights defenders, the initiative raised legal awareness and promoted citizen participation, laying a foundation for advancing environmental justice in the country.

For UNDP's strategy and guidance note on environmental justice, see <https://www.undp.org/rolhr/justice/environmental-justice>.

Thematic spotlight 3: Business and Human Rights

Businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights under the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), a global standard built on three pillars: protect, respect and remedy. These pillars define the respective duties of states and businesses in upholding rights. UNDP engagement includes supporting participatory policymaking processes to advance implementation of the UNGPs, integrating human rights due diligence into public and private sector practices, strengthening non-State grievance mechanisms and improving access to remedy. The people-centred approach enables affected communities to shape how policies and accountability mechanisms are designed and monitored, while addressing practical justice needs—such as secure land tenure, safe working conditions and legal identity for small enterprise registration.

Examples of UNDP's activity in the area include the following:

- In Sri Lanka, awareness-raising led to increased reporting of business-related rights violations and policy changes. Community sessions targeting women-headed households, women-led enterprises and war widows exposed the harms of unregulated microfinance. As a result, over 100 complaints and 1 public interest litigation were filed, and nearly 280 women submitted appeals to the Central Bank. Engagement with the Human Rights Commission, government officials and the Microfinance Practitioners' Association mobilized political support to address illegal practices. A documentary on rural women entrepreneurs supported advocacy that led to new regulations protecting women from exploitation. Over 400 women were trained and organized into a network sustaining advocacy efforts beyond the project.
- In the Asia-Pacific, the [Routes2Remedy](#) digital toolkit was developed in response to rising threats by the State or businesses against those reporting business-related rights abuses. The toolkit provides practical guidance and legal resources to help users access remedies and navigate risks. It also supports defenders in documenting abuses, engaging with grievance mechanisms, and advocating for stronger protections against corporate and State reprisals.

For resources, tools and updates on UNDP's support to Business and Human Rights, see <https://www.undp.org/rolhr/business-and-human-rights>.