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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The Longer Term **Impact** of **UNDP** Electoral Assistance: **Lessons Learned**

At a polling station in Kirkuk, a voter's index finger is marked with ink on the day of Iraqi parliamentary elections. 7 March 2010

UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE   Electoral Knowledge Network
ADR   Assessment of Development Results
AEC   Australian Electoral Commission
AU   African Union
BCPR   Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BDP   Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
BEC   Bangladesh Election Commission
BRIDGE   Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CCA   Common Country Assessments
CD   Capacity Development
CD   Country Director (UNDP)
CEC   Central Election Commission
CEDAW   Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA   Canadian International Development Agency
CMS   Candidate Management System
CNE   National Elections Commission of Mozambique
CO   Country Office
CORE   Cost of Registration and Elections
CPAP   Country Programme Action Plan
CSO   Civil Society Organization
CTA   Chief Technical Advisor
CTG   Care Taker Government
DEX/DIM   Direct Execution/Direct Implementation
DFID   Department for International Development (UK)
DFS   Department of Field Security (UN)
DPA   Department of Political Affairs (UN)
DPKO   Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EAD   Electoral Assistance Division (UN/DPA)
EASC   Electoral Assistance Steering Committee (of ICMEA)
EAWG   Electoral Assistance Working Group (of ICMEA)
EC   European Commission
ECIS   Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
ECZ   Election Commission of Zambia
EDR   Electoral Dispute Resolution
ERC   Electoral Resource Centre
EU   European Union
EUEOM   European Union Election Observation Mission
EISA   Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EMB   Electoral Management Body
ERIS   Electoral Reform International Services (UK)
GA   General Assembly
GEO   Global Electoral Organization
GIS   Geographic Information Systems
GPECS   Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support
GPU   Global Procurement Unit
HDI   Human Development Index
HQ   UN headquarters (New York)
ICA   Institutional Context Analysis
ICAI   Independent Commission for Aid Impact (UK)
ICMEA   Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism for UN Electoral Assistance
ICCP   International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT   Information and Communications Technology
IFE   Instituto Federal Electoral (Mexico)
IFES   International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMPP   Integrated Mission Planning Process
IOM   International Organization for Migration
IPCC   Inter-Party Consultative Committee
JEMB   Joint Electoral Management Body (Afghanistan)
JTF   Joint Task Force (EC-UNDP)
KPU   Komisi Pemilihan Umum (General Election Commission in Indonesia)
LDC   Least Developed Country
LEMB   Local Electoral Management Body
MDGs   Millennium Development Goals
MoI   Ministry of Interior
MOU   Memorandum of Understanding
MP   Member of Parliament
NAM   Needs Assessment Mission (DPA)
NDI   National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NEC   National Election Commission
NEX/NIM   National Execution/National Implementation
NGO   Non-Governmental Organization
OAS   Organization of American States
OECD-DAC Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR   Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PALOP	Steering Committee of the Project to Support the Electoral Cycles of the Portuguese Speaking African Countries
PAPEP	Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project
PAPP	Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
PEC	Precinct Election Commission
PERP	Preparation of the Electoral Roll with Photographs Project (Bangladesh)
PCNA	Post-Conflict Needs Assessment
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSO	Peace Support Operations
RC	UN Resident Coordinator
RMS	Results Management System
STAE	Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration
TEPJF	Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación (Electoral Court - Mexico)
TTF	Train-the-Facilitator (BRIDGE)
UN	United Nations
UN CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDA	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNOPS	UN Office of Procurement Services
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor
UNV	UN Volunteer
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Election workers in Bunia, Ituri, explain the electoral process to voters before the second round of presidential and provincial elections began in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. 27 October 2006

UN Photo/Martine Perret

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNDP electoral assistance has grown substantially in the past decade. The wealth of knowledge and experience gathered has culminated in policy and implementation guidelines, global knowledge tools and resources, regional and thematic communities of practice, a vast roster of experts, objectives that are longer-term and a stronger focus on capacity development and sustainability. Despite these achievements, there are still lessons to be learned in designing appropriate programmes that draw on sound political analysis and needs assessments to achieve better results and stronger linkages to democratic governance. UNDP has the experience and the expertise to deliver many components of such electoral support programming, but should focus more on where it can achieve results. It still faces challenges in the areas of electoral reform, improving the quality and integrity of electoral processes, creating an enabling environment, and measuring results.

In 2001, UNDP conducted a 10-year review (1990-2000) of UN electoral assistance, including case studies in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia and Mozambique, which are also reviewed in this paper.[1] That assessment took place in the context of the years just after the Cold War, following dramatic changes in global peace and security, intra- and inter-state conflict, and the third wave of democratization. Member State requests to the UN Focal Point[2] for elections increased dramatically and UNDP was asked to take on the largest share of programmatic assistance.

One of the main recommendations stemming from that review was to move beyond supporting discrete electoral events to a more holistic and sustainable approach that supported and partnered with national institutions in the entire electoral process. The 'electoral cycle' approach, which emerged as a policy in the mid-2000s, attempted to address these concerns. As a result, some support started earlier and interim election needs such as capacity and institutional development were addressed. The European Union (EU) in particular and many bilateral development partners also adopted this model at the policy level, but have found it more challenging to implement as it sometimes conflicts with existing practice and mechanisms. The aim of the electoral cycle approach according to UN policy is to secure needed resources and expertise to support effective planning and institution-building between electoral events, and therefore to hasten sustainability and to decrease the time frames for long-term UN support.[3] In practice, as evidenced from the case studies, the implementation of this policy is inconsistent.

Within the same period, UNDP/BDP was a main partner in supporting a set of impressive global tools and forums such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network;[4] the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) professional development curriculum;[5] and, through the Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS),[6] the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF)[7] based in Brussels and electoral advisors based in the regions. It also provided various resources to support best practice such as the UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, the Elections and Conflict Prevention Guide, the Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE) project, various gender

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1. UNDP and Electoral Assistance: Ten Years of Experience (2001)

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and head of DPA is also the focal point for electoral assistance by the United Nations, evaluating requests from Member States and ensuring consistency in the delivery of assistance by the various UN agencies and departments involved.

3. UN Secretary-General Report, A/64/304, p. 10

4. ACE is an online dynamic information resource and network of electoral experts.

5. BRIDGE is a 24-module course on electoral process with an interactive methodology.

6. GPECS is a three-year global initiative launched by UNDP to help countries improve their electoral laws, processes and institutions and enhance the participation of women in electoral processes.

7. The overall purpose of the JTF is to strengthen and facilitate the European Commission-UNDP partnership in the electoral assistance field.

mainstreaming tools, thematic trainings organized by the JTF, and global and regional Communities of Practice.[8]

Given the nature of Member State requests for assistance to the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance, UNDP's electoral support naturally still revolves around electoral 'events', but the electoral cycle approach has extended the project period before and after an election to a total of around three years on average compared to one year or less previously. The focus remains on the key electoral institution, the Electoral Management Body (EMB), mainly because a large part of the assistance and capacity development needed is in planning and implementing key EMBs operations such as voter registration. This work is complemented by support to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders, though to a much lesser extent. The result of such investments in partner institutions, such as EMBs, has been an increase in the capacity and ownership of election management, but investment in the broader enabling environment has been harder to measure. EMBs and electoral processes have shown improved technical proficiency, but challenges to democratic development remain in civic participation, legislative reform, freedom of the media and gender balance.

The UN in general, and UNDP in particular, are in a good position due to 20 years of experience, reputation and technical expertise to capitalize on its strengths to respond effectively to the increasing demand for electoral support. The UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance contributes through needs assessments, electoral policies and the provision of a vetted roster of experts. UNDP/ BDP can pool resources and harness experience from the UN System, the JTF, the regional centres[9] and regular consultants and form a well-resourced response mechanism. Also, UNDP/BDP, by systematically taking account of recommendations from evaluations, lessons-learned exercises and feedback from communities of practice and development partners, can address the following issues:

- Ensuring the conduct of contextual analysis
- Achieving quicker start-up and recruitment
- Providing user-friendly tools, policy guidance and knowledge resources to help UNDP staff and consultants apply policy and good practice consistently and ensuring that they do so
- Achieving quicker start-up and recruitment
- Adhering to the principles of sustainability, cost-effectiveness and national ownership
- Seeking more effective collaboration and coordination with other electoral assistance providers
- Forging stronger linkages with other areas of governance
- Focusing more on impact and less on comprehensive coverage
- Keeping up-to-date with trends in technology and social media
- Ensuring that the 'electoral cycle' approach translates into longer-term impact rather than merely the extension of a project

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8. UNDP periodically runs Communities of Practice meetings bringing together UNDP COs, consultants and EMBs to share experiences and lessons learned, in this case, on electoral assistance.

9. UNDP Regional Centres are in Bangkok (Asia-Pacific), Bratislava (Europe), Dakar (West and Central Africa) and Johannesburg (Eastern and Southern Africa).

- Showing strategic vision in setting and achieving longer-term goals over multiple electoral cycles

- Improving indicators of achievement and the reporting of results

- Planning transition strategies

Having a UNDP Electoral Team in BDP to handle engagement with EAD and the Regional Bureaus, assists UNDP in being more efficient, effective and coordinated with the UN system. When UNDP plays to its strengths and takes calculated risks using the expertise and experience from various parts of the UN system, its electoral support can have a better impact. The next phase of electoral assistance is an opportunity to consolidate experience and apply it for better results.

Young people and women from indigenous peoples organizations attending the Regional School on Political Leadership for Indigenous Youth and Women which was held in Quito, Ecuador. November 2012

Photo/ Carolina Arias

1. BACKGROUND

The Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), within the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), supports the UN Focal Point in ensuring system-wide coherence and consistency in the provision of UN electoral assistance as well as developing electoral policy and monitors around 50 electoral projects at any given time. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the main provider of technical electoral assistance of the UN system, which is delivered as part of its mandate to lead democratic governance assistance at the country level. Over the last 20 years, the UN has provided electoral assistance to more than 100 Member States. UNDP provides electoral assistance to an average of 60 Member States annually to develop sustainable electoral management capacities, foster inclusive participation in elections, particularly of women and youth and other underrepresented groups, and coordinate donor support to electoral processes.[10]

As an organization concerned primarily with reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), UNDP supports elections because democratic governance – of which elections are a fundamental component – promotes human development and, in turn, reduces poverty. The World Bank argues that a growing middle class is most highly related to the development of democracy. Development will lead to democracy and democratic governance, in turn, sustains human development.

Today, technical assistance initiatives offered by UNDP are increasingly targeted at the institutional development of key institutions such as EMBs in the periods between electoral events. This model, which is known as the 'electoral cycle' approach, is not only about mobilizing resources and starting assistance earlier, but also linking electoral support to the broader context. Indeed, working throughout the electoral cycle has been shown to open opportunities to work not only with EMBs, but also with other stakeholders, such as parliamentary electoral reform committees, legal drafters, political parties, and CSOs, among others.

In 2010, UNDP provided electoral assistance to 60 countries across all regions of the world, and over half of these programmes used the electoral cycle approach. Through these programmes, UNDP aims to ensure that elections are credible and fully owned at the national level; that awareness of elections is inherent in a broader democratic governance framework; that elections provide a vital means to safeguard human rights, exercise choice and express opinions; and that electoral assistance aims towards rendering itself obsolete.[11] To advance these goals, UNDP helps countries acquire the necessary skills to organize elections that are well run and enjoy the confidence of electoral stakeholders.

There is also an increasing trend of delivering electoral assistance over a long period of time, in some cases more than a decade, and over multiple electoral cycles. However, to date, the lessons learned and good practices of longer-term UN electoral assistance have not been consolidated systematically. Therefore, it has been difficult for electoral practitioners to systematically apply lessons learned from other countries when planning and implementing sustainable electoral assistance initiatives.

In order to address this gap, the Secretary-General's Policy Committee Review of Electoral Assistance in October 2010 tasked UNDP, with support from DPA and in consultation with relevant UN partners, with leading a lessons-learned exercise on long-term UNDP electoral assistance focusing on principles including sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership and strengthening human rights. Other related exercises that have been concluded are the independent UNDP Evaluation Office's strategic-level

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10. http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/democracy/elections.shtml
11. UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, p. 1

evaluation of UNDP's contribution to strengthening electoral systems and processes and the joint DPA, UNDP, DPKO lessons learned on integrated electoral assistance in UN mission settings. Sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership and gender issues were addressed in both of these studies; each of them looked at a set of case studies covering all regions.

In this context, UNDP initiated the present study on the longer-term impact of UNDP electoral assistance with the intention of identifying best practices that can be shared to inform future programming and policy formation. This lessons-learned report aims to provide guidance for a coherent and harmonized approach to UNDP's longer-term electoral assistance, focusing on the principles of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership and human rights. This study also looks at electoral assistance from the perspective of aid effectiveness in line with principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action, i.e., ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results, and mutual accountability. The report will help fulfil UNDP and DPA 2011-2012 commitments to produce various knowledge products and policy guidance and incorporates lessons learned on women's representation and gender mainstreaming.

A Libyan woman shows her national voter ID.
Photo/Iason Athanasiadis/UNSMIL

2. PURPOSE

This lessons-learned exercise was designed to follow up on a previous review, which covered eight countries from 1990 to 2000. Building on this earlier work, the current study looks at the period of 2000 to 2011 with the aim of assisting electoral practitioners in planning and implementing long-term electoral support projects more effectively and sustainably while achieving development objectives.

The primary target audience for this document consists of UNDP's Country Offices (CO) and particularly its Resident Coordinators (RC), Country Directors (CD) and Governance teams, in addition to electoral project staff and external consultants. However, it should also be useful for a wider group of practitioners within the UN (EAD/DPA, DPKO, UNOPS, UN Volunteers (UNV) and UN Women) and outside the UN (such as global and regional organizations and development partners) in addition to national partners such as governments, EMBs, political entities, parliamentarians, CSOs and other stakeholders.

Specifically, this lessons-learned exercise will address the following questions:

a) What has UNDP done and what can it do better to ensure that electoral processes reflect the principles of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership and strengthening human rights? Has long-term electoral assistance been cost-effective, contributed to strengthening human rights, and increased national ownership?

b) Did long-term electoral assistance contribute to sustainable capacity development of EMBs and national counterparts, sustainable electoral processes and achievement of overall national development objectives in the long run? Under what wider country conditions did long-term electoral assistance contribute to countries' development objectives? What are the good practices as well as lessons learned?

c) What can UNDP do better in transitional and post-transitional countries to translate technically efficient elections into broader democratic gains?

d) How have transitions from peacekeeping or special political missions[12] to UNDP been handled in terms of the handover of electoral assistance? Have different modalities been used and did some work better than others?

e) What are the exit strategies for electoral assistance? In cases where electoral assistance has been eliminated altogether or significantly downsized, how has this been achieved? What are the benchmarks to aim for?

f) What are the strengths and weaknesses of different implementation models and procurement options for electoral assistance, with a view toward following principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness?

g) What is UNDP's niche for long-term electoral assistance, given its democratic governance and capacity development mandate?

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12. There is no such category as 'peace-building' mission.

The overall objectives of the lessons-learned exercise are to:

a) Provide a brief overview of the contributions of UNDP's long-term electoral assistance to countries' democratization and achievement of national development objectives.

b) Analyse how basic principles, including sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership and human rights, are addressed in the transition of electoral assistance from mission contexts to non-mission contexts.

c) Assess to what degree UNDP's long-term electoral assistance is informed by the above principles.

d) Identify best practices from long-term electoral assistance, including, where possible, lessons learned on gender-mainstreaming.

The lessons-learned exercise will produce the following outputs:

a) Overview of long-term electoral assistance, its results and contributions to the national democratization and achievement of development objectives

b) Analysis of the degree to which UNDP electoral assistance is informed by principles of sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership, and human rights

c) Five to seven country case studies (later increased to eight)

d) Recommendations to electoral practitioners for planning, implementing and phasing out long-term electoral assistance based on principles including sustainability, cost-effectiveness, national ownership, and strengthening human rights

e) Guidance on UNDP's approach to long-term electoral assistance

A woman casts her ballot in legislative elections at a polling station in Bondoukou, Côte d'Ivoire.11 December 2011

UN Photo/Hien Macline

3. METHODOLOGY

The scope of the lessons-learned exercise is global, though it is focused on eight country case studies spanning the past decade. These cases, which were selected on the basis of the UN's long-term electoral assistance programmes in each country, are Bangladesh, Cambodia, Georgia, Indonesia, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT).

In each of the country case studies, the lead author, with a country expert and UNDP/BDP staff, conducted a series of interviews over five days with the UNDP CO, UN Mission (where applicable), the EMB, main political parties, parliamentarians, CSOs, international assistance providers and development partners. The total number of face-to-face interviews exceeded 150. During the validation workshop held in New York in March 2012, a number of interviews were conducted with staff from UNDP/BDP, EAD and several country desks in DPA. Other sources of information include UN needs assessment mission reports, project documents, evaluations and international observer reports.

Multiple methods for analysis, synthesis and drawing conclusions were used, including a trend analysis of key outcomes, eight in-depth country case studies and prominent examples from other countries, a review of existing lessons-learned studies and reports and a synthesis of information gathered first hand from interlocutors in country.

Vote counting for the second round of the presidential election in Timor-Leste at an election office in the capital, Dili. 16 April 20121

UN Photo/Martine Perret

4. FINDINGS

4.1　Policy Frameworks, Political Analysis, and Contextual Assessment

The nature of electoral assistance is that it is explicitly political and technical. This, combined with the 'sovereignty' and 'non-interference' principles in state affairs, gave rise to the original (and still unique) General Assembly resolution on how UN assistance would be requested and decided.[13] With technical and political issues closely interlinked, it is important for the UN to have a comprehensive picture and coordinated response to addressing both. The revised Note of Guidance on Electoral Assistance (2010) governs the relationship between the EAD and UNDP. EAD Needs Assessment Missions (NAM) are essential to understanding the suitability of the assistance and the consistency of the approach with the political risk analysis. EAD is codifying a number of key policies on electoral assistance that will provide a reference for effectively assessing approaches, the variance of contexts withstanding.

When planning and implementing electoral assistance, it is important that UNDP remains strategically positioned and considers the relevant actions and activities that would enable a more conducive electoral environment and promote the integrity of elections. Using the UN's triple comparative advantage — political expertise, operational experience, and ability to convene and coordinate partners — provides a sound basis to conduct electoral assistance.

Bangladesh:
Using the UN system and political analysis to support electoral reform

The UN played an active role throughout the electoral reform period. After the UN Secretary-General visited Bangladesh in November 2008 to encourage peaceful elections, he appointed a high-level panel to continue this engagement immediately before, during and after the December 2008 elections. The Secretary-General returned to Bangladesh in November 2011 and took the opportunity to encourage stakeholders to work towards peaceful and credible elections in the future.

The UN Resident Coordinator (RC) played a critical, prominent and active role before, during and after the Care Taker Government (CTG) electoral reforms. Many interlocutors interviewed for this report stressed that the RC was actively engaged with the electoral process, especially in regards to the registration project where she was directly involved, and worked to mobilize development partner support, manage information sharing between the various partners, and played a generally active and supportive role. The RC also frequently met with ambassadors and development partner officials and helped to coordinate a common stance in the face of the escalating political crisis in 2006/2007 and throughout the period of the CTG.

At the height of the political crisis in 2006/2007, the UN recruited a team of three election experts to carefully track electoral and political developments in Bangladesh and advised the RC on how to handle the increasingly volatile electoral process. The idea to deploy this expert team came from a UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) NAM in mid-2006, which recognized the many significant political issues that were blocking the electoral process in Bangladesh.

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13. The original resolution from a December 1991 General Assembly plenary meeting was A/RES/46/137, 9 March 1992. For a selection of GA resolutions, see: http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/issues/elections

A number of analytical tools and resources have emerged in recent years, ranging from the UN strategic assessment, the Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP), the Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA), to the Common Country Assessment (CCA). The Resident Coordinator's office in non-mission settings provides political analysis for the UN Country Team, including the UNDP CO, and can call on Peace and Development Advisors or external consultants for specific analysis on electoral matters.

The UNDP Oslo Governance Centre has developed the Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA),[14] which could be a particularly useful programming tool. The ICA focuses on political and institutional factors as well as processes concerning the use of national and external resources in a given setting and looks at how these affect the implementation of UNDP programmes and policy advice. The ICA could complement other UN analyses and provide a better understanding of the enabling/disabling environment and the real interests of stakeholders. ICA could assess the likelihood of achieving the intended development change, given the prevailing political conditions, social constraints, and resources. By prioritizing objectives and entry points and sequencing interventions in a way that maximizes impact and sustainability, risks would be easier to predict and manage.

During project design and implementation, attention must be devoted to the political environment and risks. Another recent trend in the analytical tools being used by UNDP is for specific country risk assessments to be conducted, with a specific focus on the credibility of the electoral process. Assistance to improve the technical implementation of elections is of little value unless it is accompanied by political commitments to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms necessary to ensure a genuine election process and to provide a level playing field for all contestants. Some projects could promote this by focusing on areas such as capacity development and civic education, stakeholder dialogue, consensus-building, electoral legal reform and the strengthening of civil and political rights.[15]

A clearer policy on how and when to use tools could encourage a more consistent approach to informing electoral assistance programming.

During consecutive electoral cycles, project design should focus on addressing specific problems that have been identified in previous elections and that have not yet been addressed. These may relate either to the electoral process or to broader political issues. Reports by domestic and international observers can provide the basis for identifying deficiencies that should be addressed. A good design process may conclude that a problem previously encountered was transient or that it is being addressed effectively by national authorities or by a bilateral donor.

These political issues can result in shifts in democratic development. As seen in the chart below, each context is prone to advances and backsliding. Rather than hold unrealistic expectations through electoral assistance in one or two electoral cycles, UNDP could ensure support towards a steady upward trend through stronger links to other areas of governance and attempt to address factors that may have caused the downturns.

The Democracy Index chart below, which is based on indicators in the electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture, shows that democracy development is a complex and slow process with no anticipation of major shifts over one

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14. The Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance Note is UNDP's methodology for undertaking political economy analysis to support of development programmes. The Guidance Note has emerged as a direct response to demand from Country Offices for a resource that helps UNDP staff understand the political and institutional context in which they operate in a way that is suited to the needs and mandate of the organization. It offers practical guidance to UNDP Country Offices on how to use ICA to assess the enabling environment. Sep 2012 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/Institutional_and_Context_Analysis_Guidance_Note.html

15. The Role of UNDP in Supporting Democratic Elections in Africa (2013)

electoral cycle. The trends indicate slow progress in some countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and Mexico, a static trend in Cambodia and a slight decline in Liberia, Mozambique and the OPT. Overall, it suggests that context and political culture do not change much over five years, which emphasizes the need for better contextual analyses when formulating assistance projects to be realistic about what will have impact.

Figure 1: Democracy Index [16] Shift over Time 2006 to 2011
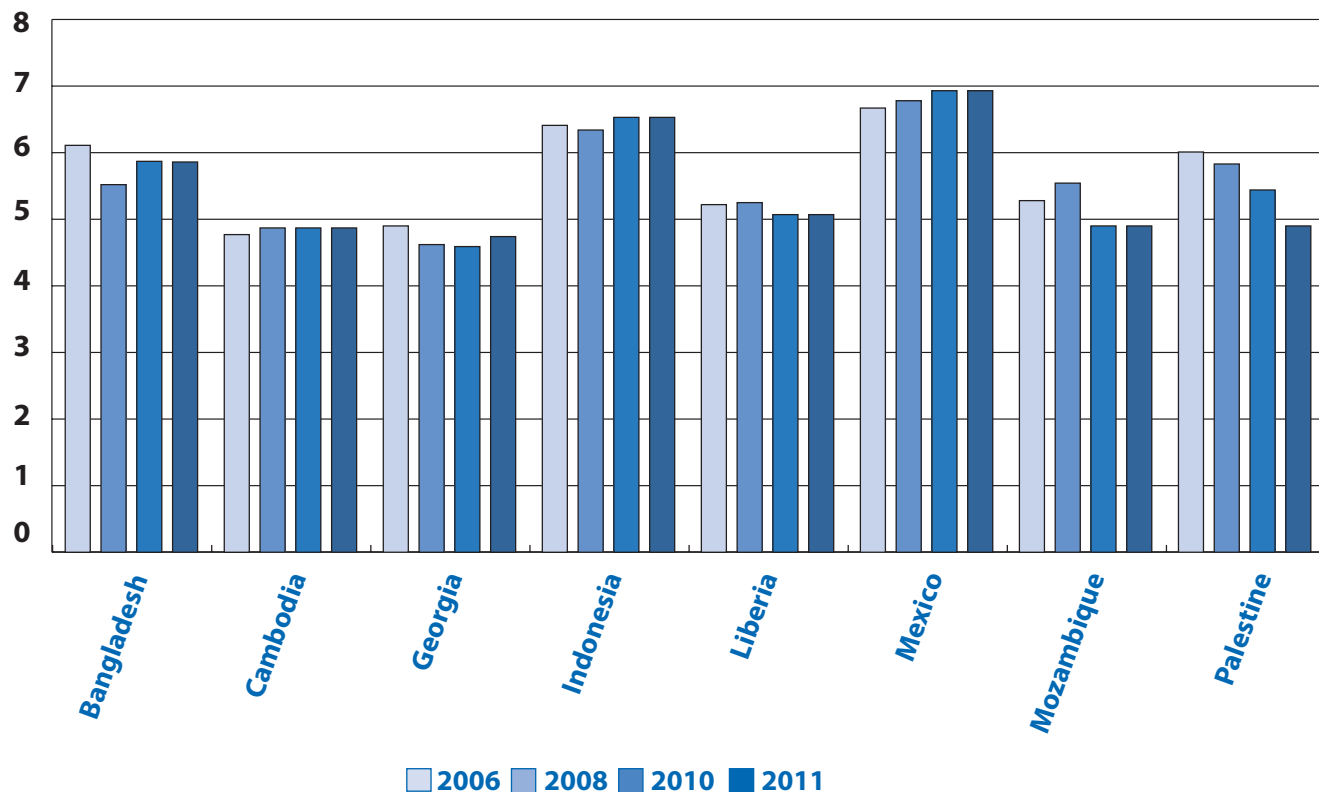
The following chart reflects perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media, with a range from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) in terms of governance performance.

16. The Democracy Index is an index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (a private business) that measures the state of democracy in 167 countries, of which 166 are sovereign states and 165 are United Nations Member States. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index is based on 60 indicators grouped in five different categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture. The Index was first produced in 2006, with updated lists produced in 2008, 2010 and 2011.

Figure 2. Voice & Accountability Index for Eight Case Studies: 10-Year Trend

Mexico		Liberia	
Mozambique		West Bank/Gaza	
Georgia		Cambodia	
Indonesia		Bangladesh	
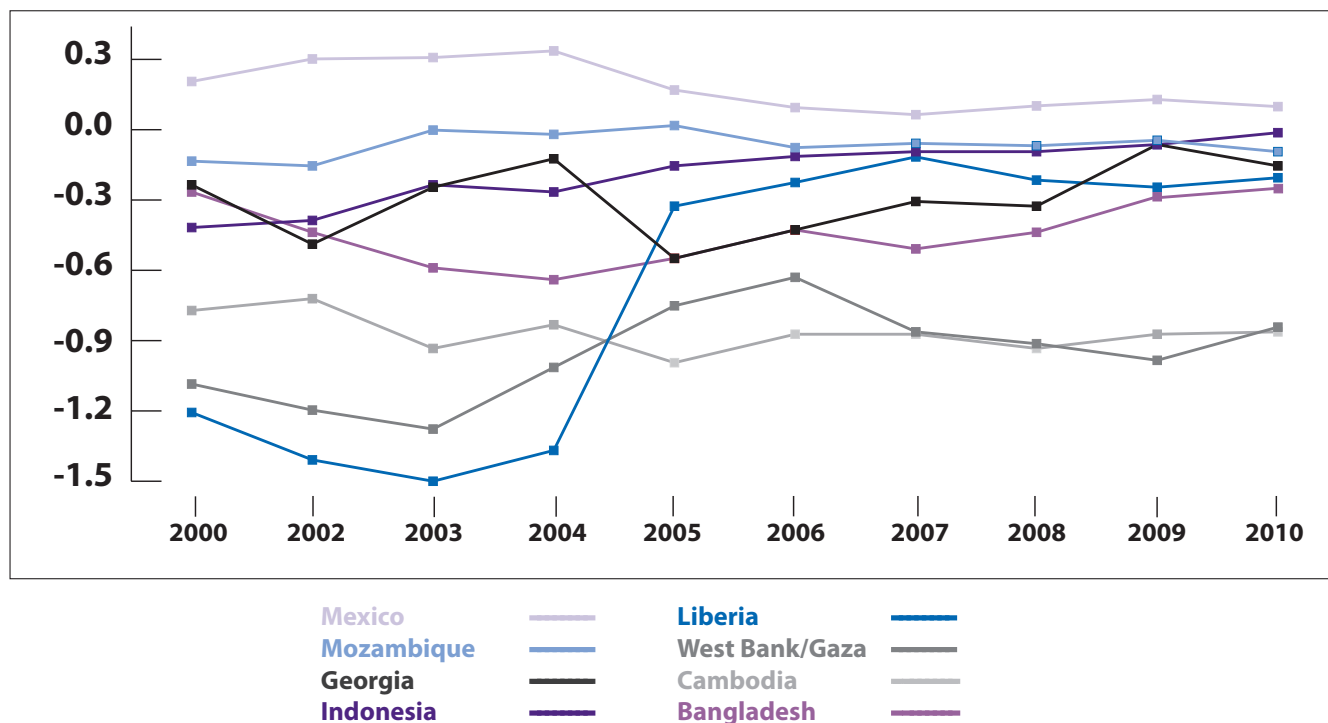
An electoral support project has to be flexible and responsive to the reality of unforeseen political factors such as protests, the results not being accepted, or the death of a president, while maintaining clear objectives, indicators, outputs and intended outcomes. Crisis management or a reactive approach may be necessary when things happen suddenly, but contingency risk analysis and scenarios would help keep the project on track.

SEE RECOMMENDATIONS (1)

4.2   International Obligations

Many countries have signed international and regional treaties, covenants, protocols and charters such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the African Charter on Democracy. The aim of electoral assistance is to support partner countries in meeting the international commitments and obligations they have committed to by ratifying these agreements.[17]

Public international law offers important guiding principles for the design of electoral assistance project; for several reasons, it also provides a sound foundation for an electoral assessment methodology. First, as states have obligated themselves through the signature and ratification of treaties to standards of

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17. The Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support (NEEDS) Compendium of International Standards for Elections provides a comprehensive list of each country to which international and regional obligations has signed up and/or ratified http://web.needsproject.eu/files/Compendium_of_Int_Standards_3_EN.pdf

behaviour and respect for human rights, public international law provides a recognized, objective, and transparent set of standards for assessing elections. In addition, these standards are prescriptive, recognizing that all democracies are imperfect and require vigilance and constant efforts to maintain and improve their functioning.[18] Development partners committed to advancing credible and acceptable elections should strive toward greater normative consistency in responding to flawed elections.[19] The NAM is the approved UN guideline to carry out any electoral assessment.

[SEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2)](#)

4.3   Guiding Principles

Sustainability, national ownership and cost-effectiveness are guiding principles for electoral assistance.[20] The sustainability of electoral institutions and processes has improved in cases of longer-term assistance where international technical and financial assistance has decreased over multiple cycles. However, CSOs are still heavily dependent on international funding. High-tech approaches to voter registration have yet to prove sustainable or cost-effective.

No clear definition of cost-effectiveness for electoral institutions and processes has been identified. Analysis of the cost of electoral processes, including institutional running costs, event costs and diffuse costs for the number of elections required by law at national and subnational levels, however, should be integral in working towards cost-effective measures and reducing development-partner dependency in some cases. Electoral system design, frequency of elections, type of registration, technology upgrades, procurement and staffing rates are all factors in determining these costs. Assistance should then be provided on a transparent basis with information on who is providing funding. In addition, cost-effectiveness should be ensured so that state expenditure is in line with efforts to meet the MDGs.[21] In this regard, Indonesia offers a good example of a National Development Planning Agency that manages donor funding for elections and acts as a liaison between the state ministry of finance, home affairs and development partners.

The comparative study on the cost of elections, the Cost of Registration and Elections (CORE),[22] with new case studies and data, analysis and guidance, and, in particular, the emerging costs of biometric voter registration and e-voting since 2005, would help governments and development partners strategically gauge how much a registrant and voter would cost per election. The CORE could then also identify high costs, essential or increasing costs, and costs that could be reduced over time. An election cost database would help track shifts and averages depending on a set of factors (e.g., population size, relevant context such as post-conflict or first-cycle, re-usage versus one-off usage of equipment), which could offer some parameters and provide trajectories for sustainability within a state budget and prevalence of donor support.

Assessing whether electoral assistance offers good 'value for money', however, may still be difficult because, even though the costs of an election are quantifiable, the benefits may not be. The problem, also, is that the true value may need to be measured not by comparing the outcome to some measured

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18. The Carter Center's database on international obligations for each phase of the electoral process http://www.cartercenter.org/des-search/des/Introduction.aspx
19. OECD DAC Draft Principles on Electoral Assistance, March 2010
20. UNEAD has reiterated that these are fundamental principles of UN electoral assistance.
21. OECD DAC Draft Principles on Electoral Assistance, March 2010
22. UNDP/IFES - Getting to CORE: Cost of Registration and Elections, 2007

baseline, but by comparing it counterfactually to what might have happened had assistance not been provided. Things may get worse from election one to election two, but assistance provided between the two events may still have been useful if it 'slowed the slide'.

According to the Department for International Development (DFID), 'value for money' should include the strategic significance of the election, the risks of not providing support (particularly the risks of violence), the cost per voter compared to similar countries, the efficiency of the proposed delivery mechanism, and procurement arrangements.[23] DFID will work with UNDP in 2013 to develop a new methodology for assessing value for money in electoral assistance, taking into account electoral systems, technologies, delivery context, and the need for greater budget and resource transparency.[24] Benefits are also difficult to attribute to a single UNDP electoral support project or even a governance programme, but, in project design, SMARTER [25] objectives, clearer indicators and better measuring tools would help. UNDP could develop with partners a revised methodology for assessing 'value for money' in electoral assistance. In Bangladesh, the cost of the registration exercise in 2008 was US$85 million, a large amount in electoral support terms, but the benefit, in a highly polarized society, was an accurate voter register that restored credibility to the electoral process and helped defuse a potentially volatile political process. Also as a result, all voters were given a form of ID, which they could use for multiple purposes to enhance access to banks, phones, etc. The incentive of an ID encouraged women, who were previously unregistered, to become voters. The problem of 'value for money' arises when large amounts of funding spent do not yield such positive results and in some cases burden the country with high-cost elections and technology.

The notion of national ownership is often tied to the government that is requesting support based on their perceived needs. Support to electoral processes, in terms of project design, implementation and evaluation, however, should consider national ownership of election processes as it relates not only to host governments, but to all national election stakeholders, including opposition political parties and CSOs. Electoral assistance providers should embrace an interpretation of local ownership that takes account of this political imperative.[26] Projects are most likely to foster inclusiveness and build public confidence in electoral processes if they are designed to address the needs of multiple stakeholders.

In some of the case studies, namely Cambodia and Mozambique, where there has not been a change in government for more than a decade, the ruling party and state can become conflated in the public perception. In all of the case studies, governments and EMBs felt ownership of the UNDP electoral support, which they received in response to a request and an agreed project proposal. While assessment and project formulation missions gather most views, it would be interesting to note which stakeholders feel more ownership than others. At the same time, more could be done to include parliaments, opposition parties, CSOs and the citizenry into this sense of national ownership by providing mechanisms for sharing views[27] through which they can contribute to the issues that arise during an electoral process. Building national ownership of electoral processes in general can also be facilitated through the provision of support to local elections.

SEE RECOMMENDATIONS (3)

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23. DFID Electoral Assistance – How To Note, p. 5, July 2010

24. This agreement was made during a between UNDP/BDP and the DFID Governance Team, HQ, UK July 2012.

25. Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound, evaluate and re-evaluate

26. OECD DAC Draft Principles on Electoral Assistance, March 2010

27. Particular methods that can be used include focus groups, citizen surveys, public hearings, or periodic consultative processes.

4.4 Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Electoral Assistance

UN electoral assistance has to evolve to meet new demands and challenges in areas that are becoming increasingly specialized. A first-electoral event in a post-conflict environment, for example, would require heavy international assistance, while a transitional democracy in its third or fourth electoral cycle may need support to build confidence in the process – and not only in terms of capacity. Assistance can shift over time, as well, from basic operational support, training and voter education, to legislative reform, electoral dispute resolution or political party finance monitoring. Some countries are emerging from Least Developed Country (LDC) status to middle-income, such as Indonesia, and others, such as Cambodia and Mozambique, are in their fifth electoral cycle since their respective peace agreements. These shifting contexts require electoral assistance to meet new demands and challenges.

New issues will continue to arise and electoral assistance has to mature accordingly with increased awareness of gender sensitivity, as all these issues have a great impact on women's participation as candidates and voters. This could mean dedicating greater attention to developing codes of conduct (for political parties, candidates, EMBs, observers and the media); establishing rules and enforcement mechanisms for the use of government resources during campaign periods; dealing with campaign financing issues; setting up media monitoring mechanisms; organizing out-of-country voting introducing new technologies; or promoting electoral system reform to engender better representation and participation of all citizens, including women, youth and people with disabilities.[28]

As well, while UNDP electoral assistance has seen notable successes in the case studies and other countries, there is a need for a continuing review of global and regional strategies and individual country interventions to ensure that they are updated to remain relevant to changing needs, circumstances and priorities.

As a growing proportion of UNDP electoral assistance is directed to second, third and fourth electoral cycles, increased emphasis should be given to support a range of electoral stakeholders, not just the EMB. This includes political parties, CSOs, media, the judiciary and the electorate in many subgroups. A comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach would not only enhance EMB capacity incrementally, but also support and strengthen other actors who play critical roles in the electoral process. Regardless of whether it is UNDP or other assistance providers that support other stakeholders, a mapping of who is receiving support through coordination meetings could help identify gaps. In terms of downsizing support, different stakeholders have different needs over time: for example, an EMB may be technically proficient and no longer need support, whereas domestic monitors might remain in need of assistance.

4.5 Electoral Cycle

While the electoral cycle policy[29] is clear, its implementation is not always consistent. One recommendation could be to show how this policy translates into project design, implementation and evaluation of programmes/projects.

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28. The Role of UNDP in Supporting Democratic Elections in Africa (2013)

29. UN GA Resolution on electoral assistance 66/163. Resolution adopted by the General Assembly Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization: **no. 7** *Recommends that*, throughout the timespan of the entire electoral cycle, including before and after elections, as appropriate, based on a needs assessment and in accordance with the evolving needs of requesting Member States, bearing in mind sustainability and cost-effectiveness, the United Nations continue to provide technical advice and other assistance to requesting States and electoral institutions in order to help to strengthen their democratic processes, also bearing in mind that the relevant office may additionally provide assistance in the form of mediation and good offices, upon the request of Member States.

The overall objective of electoral assistance is not only to ensure the success of electoral events, but also to consolidate that investment by making democratic institutions and processes sustainable and linked into broader democratic governance goals. In that sense, references sometimes made to 'support *for* the electoral cycle' can carry the implication wrongly that a choice has to be made between supporting events and supporting the cycle. It might be clear to define the cycle as that which has been established after an electoral event to ensure the credible conduct of a subsequent electoral event.

Once the false dichotomy between supporting events or supporting the cycle is clarified, a proper emphasis needs to be given to the reasons for working throughout the electoral cycle: that elections are massive undertakings with long lead times that call for long-term preparation; that, in order to be effective, assistance needs to be provided on time; and that assistance provided at the last minute can be damaging, in that it encourages national institutions themselves to leave things to the last minute.

It should also be clarified that the electoral cycle is not like a merry-go-round, which can be mounted or dismounted whenever the assistance providers feel like it: the overall timelines associated with a particular election deadline continue to be the key factors that determine when assistance is needed.

In a UNDP Evaluation Office survey on electoral assistance,[30] 85 percent of respondents believed that electoral cycle assistance is more effective than assistance provided for an electoral event or as a stand-alone initiative. While the electoral cycle enjoys broad positive support, it is not without its critics (including some of the interviewees), likely as a result of the concept being 'oversold' at times as a solution to a complex set of challenges – both political and technical. The original intention of the electoral cycle was to persuade development partners to fund electoral assistance projects earlier to ensure better quality and more impact. As the cycle approach involves a longer project time, mid-term reviews or political and technical analysis at critical junctures could help steer the project to meet its objectives.

Notwithstanding the electoral cycle approach, UNDP should have an eye towards a gradual handover to the host country, even in the long term. A handover of responsibility should not perhaps be seen as the same as walking away from all provision of support, for example networking. The UN should stay engaged and find new approaches and innovative ways to support democracy and electoral processes while at the same time avoid being 'trapped' into long-term assistance that yields poor results and being compromised on principles in order to keep good relations with the government or ruling party. Any form of long-term assistance should have an exit strategy or an end point in mind or the ability to evolve and provide support for new challenges. Elections remain a cornerstone of democratic governance and could possibly be mainstreamed into a governance programme so as not to lose their importance in this area of UNDP's work.

Exit strategies should be reserved for countries ready to assume responsibility for their own elections without support or in contexts where it is not politically advisable for the UN to be involved due to particular risks. In Georgia and Indonesia, UNDP is phasing out its electoral programme after an assessment that the EMBs, in particular, no longer require support. By focusing on the end of missions and exit strategies, it should not overlook to some extent the related question of the appropriate size and scale of assistance provided or targeted assistance on particular issues. In the lead-up to the 2012 national elections in Timor-Leste, the assistance provided, though less than before, was still considerable, which means a greater drop if little or no assistance is provided in the subsequent cycle.

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30. In December 2011, responses were gathered from over 320 persons, capturing the opinions of EMBs, electoral practitioners, UNDP and other UN staff along with CSOs, media, development partners and other organizations/persons working in the sector.

4. FINDINGS

Also, expectations can be raised by heavily assisted or perfect elections that cannot be met without such assistance. In other circumstances, though, an exit strategy should not be a default position due to a lack of funding. A phased approach to reducing assistance may help EMBs gradually take on more ownership and self-sufficiency, rather than a sudden pull-out that could undermine their credibility if not managed carefully.

Regardless of whether the most desirable end state is (a) one in which there is no international assistance, countries and their EMBs are totally self-sufficient, and elections are seen as a purely internally undertaken or (b) one in which countries are able to run their own elections but are nevertheless given ongoing support (on a small scale) for regional and international networking, the latter approach may be preferable for two reasons. First, professionalism is enhanced if people are connected with a professional community of practice. Second, the electoral environment is increasingly dynamic and, even if a country is well-placed to run elections according to its current laws, it may still benefit greatly from being able to tap into international experience regarding new challenges, such as biometric voter registration or internet voting for expatriate voters.

4.6   Integration in Electoral Assistance

Integrating the UN's electoral assistance in mission settings has developed as policy and practice since the Security Council mandated UN assistance to elections in the early 1990s. After mixed results and inconsistent and ad hoc practice over those 20 years, the UN adopted a policy on the issue (for a detailed analysis and lessons see the *Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission settings: Lessons Learned*).[31] The transition from mission to non-mission settings has several challenges, namely, a shift in mandates, leadership and resources.[32]

Several relevant lessons learned include, first, Member States need to be more supportive of the integration policy (including resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council) and that all UN agencies and staff be made familiar with the policy and practice and encouraged to follow it; second, the Security Council should include longer-term assistance objectives for democratic institutions like EMBs in mandates establishing new or successor missions, providing the necessary clarity for UN mission and UN Country Team staff planning on transition. Two other lessons were that UNDP is not providing sufficient assistance for the building blocks of the EMBs' longer-term institutional development and that almost no election costs are being drawn from peacekeeping and political missions, making it impossible to calculate the 'cost' of the election.

The Liberia case showed that there were gaps between the end of the elections in 2005 and the lead-time before the 2011 election due to limited resources and expiring contracts. Efforts were made to archive all operational plans on a memory drive for later use by the EMB. As the EMB was not involved in the design, however, it felt no ownership of the operation and efforts stalled. As a result, a budget had to be built from scratch by IFES and later by UNDP, which meant that costs were considered late in the process.

To address these potential challenges – assuming a request for assistance is forthcoming – when a country comes off the agenda of the Security Council, a minimum number of staff, including a Chief Technical Adviser/Project Manager, should be retained to keep continuity and institutional memory

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31. Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission settings: Lessons Learned, 2012
32. Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission settings: Lessons Learned, 2012

and avoid gaps and a late start-up for the next electoral cycle. Retention of staff would be based on the specific situation and be generally recommended by the NAM. Relying on UNDP Governance Unit staff may be a cost-effective stopgap, but it does not replace specific electoral expertise. As well, heavy assistance and resources used in the first, second and third cycles can raise expectations for subsequent cycles and can impact the ability of a country and its institutions (EMB, parliament, security actors) to run an election at the same level.

4.7 Capacity Development

The past decade has seen a noticeable shift away from the support of operational training needs during the 1990s. Although operational training is still a prominent feature of current electoral assistance projects, particularly for newly established EMBs, there has been a shift to a more capacity-development approach that began with the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 2001. For the first time, the BRIDGE training programme was introduced as part of the electoral support programme.

Though in first-cycle contexts, or with new EMBs, the tendency is for internationals to do much of the work when the time pressure to ramp up is on, this practice should be avoided to the extent possible. On-the-job learning is invaluable, but national counterparts need to be involved in the planning, not just the implementation, if any successful transfer is to take place. As EMBs become more experienced, different types of capacity development are required, including various methods of mentoring, training, peer exchange and observing other elections. For example, while initial UNDP capacity-building assistance may focus on basic operations to deliver an election, subsequent assistance may be more appropriately focused on less urgent, but still critical, areas such as strategic planning, personnel management, campaign financing, public affairs or budgeting. Different methods of capacity-building may also become more relevant over time, with less emphasis needed on international assistance for basic cascade training for poll workers and more attention to professional development through such programmes as BRIDGE, individual mentoring or peer exchange.

The UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development states that capacity development, intentionally or not, can lead to shifts in roles and responsibilities. These can unsettle vested interests and established power structures and require changes in behaviour, norms and values. To be effective, support to capacity development also requires UNDP to create appropriate political and social incentives and mobilize strong political ownership and commitment.[33]

4.7.1 Levels of Capacity Development

The UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development also highlights three levels of capacity, all of which should be considered when designing programme activities.[34] The levels are as follows:

The **enabling environment** level reflects the broader system within which individuals and organizations function – one that facilitates or hampers their existence and performance. This level of capacity is not easy to grasp tangibly, but it is central to the understanding of capacity issues. The enabling environment determines the 'rules of the game' for interaction between and among organizations. Important capacities at this level need to be built in the areas of policy, legislation, power relations and

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33. UNDP Practice Note: Capacity Development, p. 5, October 2008
34. UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development, pp. 5 and 6, October 2008

social norms, all of which govern the mandates, priorities, modes of operation and civic engagement across different parts of society.

The ICA would provide a good foundation for assessing relationships between key stakeholders. Capacity development in this area could include facilitating dialogue in safe or neutral spaces, rather than merely trainings. Interactive methodologies can be applied, but the objective should be learning through peer exchange rather than through a training course.

The **organizational level** of capacity is comprised of the internal policies, arrangements, procedures and frameworks that allow an organization to operate and deliver on its mandate and that enable the merging of individual capacities in order to achieve goals. If these exist and are well-resourced and well-aligned, the capability of an organization to perform will be greater than that of the sum of its parts. Assessments of organizational and individual levels of capacity could be linked to the broader ICA and other analyses.

Good practice in this regard is to hire a capacity development specialist who has a sound understanding of the electoral environment to make a thorough institutional and staff assessment while also considering the enabling environment. UN/UNDP capacity development policy could be accompanied and benefit from a standardized assessment format, particularly for EMBs. This will allow the identification of strengths and deficiencies, including in the areas of structure, function, resources, and competencies, as well as the enabling environment that includes the level of independence of staff, incentives to retain and promote staff, and comparable civil service or public administration hierarchies. A gender audit can be done to complement the institutional assessment and address gender balance by incorporating gender mainstreaming into a capacity development strategy.

In Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia and Liberia, an institutional assessment would include reviewing institutional structure, functions and responsibilities of each section; skills required; gender balance; internal and external communication strategies; integration of financial and administrative systems; human resource requirements in election and non-election periods; staff incentives and career paths; training needs; and effective archiving of materials.

At the **individual level**, capacity refers to the level of skills, experience and knowledge that are vested in people. Each person is endowed with a mix of capacities that allows him or her to perform. Some of these are acquired through formal training and education, while others come through learning by practice and experience.

When assessing professionalization of individual staff, it is important to look at other factors, such as recruitment and incentives. Issues to focus on include how an EMB attracts applicants with the right skills while avoiding nepotism and increasing the gender balance; the application and interview processes and salary incentives; and effective ways to retain staff.

To retain EMB staff, employees in Liberia were given salaries higher than the average public servant. In the OPT, the EMB complained that many competent staff left for jobs with a higher salary in international organizations. Staff retention, which can be improved through salary incentives and the provision of professional development opportunities, are critical factors for the functionality of an EMB, as they help to preserve institutional memory and build experience, which are key to sustaining an EMB's institutional development.

As shown in Figure 3, the three levels of capacity are interactive and each level influences the other through complex, co-dependent relationships.

Figure 3. Levels of Capacity: A Systemic Approach

Enabling Environment
(policies, legislation,
power relations, social norms)

Organizational Level
(internal policies, arrangements,
procedures, frameworks)

Individual Level
(experience, knowledge,
technical skills)
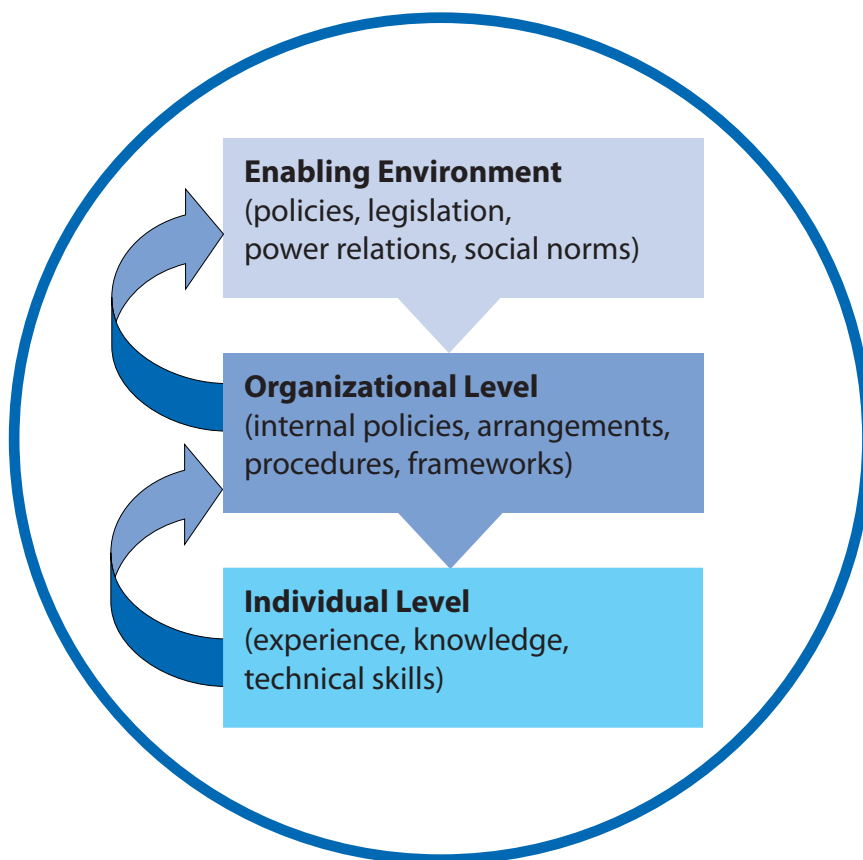
4.7.2 BRIDGE

The recent tendency of UNDP's electoral assistance has been to conduct capacity development through BRIDGE[35] and by targeting individual staff. In the past decade, BRIDGE has risen to prominence as a global tool for professional development of EMBs in particular and is a feature of many projects with the aim of creating a national pool of facilitators to continue running customized courses and provide a sustainable approach to capacity development. However, BRIDGE is simply a tool and one of many approaches that can be employed and BRIDGE alone is not enough to develop capacity. It therefore needs to be an integrated part of a broader capacity development strategy.

BRIDGE has been used in many projects and is popular among those who have participated. The BRIDGE ethos has been noted to encourage genuine capacity development, recognizing each individual's knowledge and offering an opportunity to share experiences with colleagues or other stakeholders. This results in teambuilding, increasing individuals' confidence and enhancing comparative knowledge of models/systems. It also provides a globally recognized curriculum 'brand name', which can be adapted and used by EMBs and associated training centres all over the world, but also individuals want this recognition on their CVs for potential employment elsewhere.

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35. BRIDGE: Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections, a global professional development course with 25 modular topics run by accredited facilitators for EMBs and stakeholders in electoral processes, was piloted in 2001 and is currently widely used in UNDP electoral assistance projects. BRIDGE Partners include AEC, International IDEA, IFES, UNEAD and UNDP. http://www.bridge-project.org

However, it remains difficult to measure how much these outcomes affect the day-to-day work of an individual or institution. While few doubt that BRIDGE builds individual confidence and skills, more could be done on institution-building. The danger of increasing individual confidence without institutional development is that it leaves little incentive for good staff to stay.

Elements of institution-building after assessment include restructuring, maximizing resources, skill-job match, and monitoring staff performance, all combined in a capacity development goal in a strategic plan. Training alone or a series of workshops will not achieve this goal.

Lecture-style trainings are still prevalent, most likely as a result of low resources, limited time and a lack of exposure to alternative methods. While the BRIDGE accreditation process is designed to provide quality assurance, there is a shortage of accreditation facilitators to advance national pools of BRIDGE trainers. Also, due to a proliferation of train-the-facilitator workshops, an inordinate number of semi-accredited facilitators cannot yet run modules. The majority of facilitators are in Africa and Asia and there are fewer women facilitators than men.

Though the BRIDGE approach to training has merit, it also carries risks for sustainability if BRIDGE-trained staff leave. More attempts at addressing organizational capacity through thorough assessments and the establishment of training resource centres are needed.

The main recommendation for future investment in BRIDGE at the country level is to avoid the Train-the-Facilitator (TTF) trap and follow through with the accreditation of a core pool of facilitators with a better gender balance. Indonesia has been a good example of creating such a pool; UNDP-Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and IFES invested in developing a pool of BRIDGE facilitators who could lead the customization process and run any course on a needs basis. This type of capacity development meets all of the objectives of sustainability, national ownership and cost-effectiveness. Two BRIDGE facilitators are now Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU) Commissioners.[36] Monitoring and evaluation could be more rigorously encouraged through the improved resourcing of capacity development components in electoral assistance projects.

With BRIDGE likely to continue to be used, an investment should be made in the BRIDGE Secretariat to update partners, manage the website and the roster of accredited facilitators, track events, and act as an archive of BRIDGE activities and a repository for new and revised materials such as the Gender and Elections module that has been updated by UNDP and tested numerous times in different contexts. A complete audit of BRIDGE modular content needs to be done and revisions made to ensure that the latest case studies and examples are used as well as to synchronize materials with updates to source materials such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and IDEA Handbooks.

Likewise, better assurance is needed in evaluating the performance of accredited BRIDGE facilitators, the relevance and appropriate customization of the materials, and the impact of training beyond the duration of the workshop for the individual and the institution. For project design, a thorough needs assessment and guidance on how BRIDGE can best be used within a broader capacity development strategy is recommended.

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36. KPU Commissioners Hadar Gumay and Ferry Kurnia Rizkiyansyah appointed in 2012

Indonesia: Nationalizing BRIDGE as Part of Institutional and Staff Development

BRIDGE was introduced to the Indonesian KPU (in early 2003) by the AEC as part of capacity development support leading up to the 2004 elections. From the inception of this support until 2010, BRIDGE activities slowed; beginning in 2010, however, as a result of renewed internal and external funding and commitment from the KPU and its partners (AEC, IFES and UNDP), there have been rapid developments in the KPU's BRIDGE programme.

In 2010, UNDP and KPU created a pool of facilitators to customize six selected modules to the Indonesian context, but focused mainly on four: introduction to electoral processes, voter registration, voter information and strategic planning. Three TTF workshops have been conducted since 2010, resulting in 32 accredited and 29 semi-accredited facilitators to date in the KPU. In 2011, the customized modules were revised and delivered in 2012. Indonesia has run 39 workshops to date, becoming the biggest BRIDGE user outside Australia. A plan has been agreed to that will customize new modules on electoral management, electoral systems, political contestants, civic education, electoral dispute resolution, media and elections, and counting.

With the aim of transforming work practices through a longer-term capacity development plan, it is important that BRIDGE be linked to institutional hierarchies through relations with national and subnational commissioners and training and human resources divisions. With a strong sense of national ownership, the KPU has committed to BRIDGE as part of its capacity development strategy. Since 2011, the KPU has allocated a budget to 33 provinces for BRIDGE training, but external support from the AEC remains essential. Twenty-seven of 33 local governments (300 cities/municipalities) are fully funding BRIDGE training for their own pre-election stages, signifying increasing national ownership. KPU seeks to have one facilitator in each province and to decentralize and empower provincial trainings with BRIDGE modules conducted in each city/municipality.

The customization that the KPU has done represents best practice in getting the balance right by making it relevant to the local context while retaining comparative examples. One continual challenge will be to periodically update modules that have already been customized and translated to keep up with latest revisions to the English BRIDGE curriculum.

Innovations from Indonesia that deserve mention include: the KPU developing its own BRIDGE website in Indonesian, which hosts a community of practice called BRIDGE Indonesia Network (BIN) and includes BRIDGE alumni since 2002; video tutorials and demonstrations that provide models for new facilitators; and a monitoring and evaluation commitment to apply learning through ongoing mentoring and feedback.

BRIDGE methodology has also been applied in socialization and civic education campaigns for target groups such as women and youth or first-time voters and has proved popular as participants enjoy the interactive sessions.

4.7.3 Other Capacity Development Strategies

Capacity development strategies other than BRIDGE do exist and should be considered. A new initiative that has emerged and that could be implemented more widely is to support EMBs with an effective methodology for designing a strategic plan[1] including a capacity development strategy for institutional

and staff development. It is important for the EMB to develop a strategic plan[37] and budget around the electoral cycle, with a clear vision, goals and objectives, as a framework to mobilize resources from the state (and development partners, if needed) and, most important, to consult with stakeholders. In Indonesia, UNDP and IFES jointly conducted a strategic planning workshop[38] for the EMB that included a methodology for developing a strategic plan in steps.

4.7.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of capacity development seems to be one particular element of UNDP programming that needs strengthening. Workshop evaluations, while valid, only reflect the participants' views immediately after a course. How such mentoring or training provided has improved staff performance amid other factors such as institutional culture and resources should be better captured in periodic staff surveys, assessments and annual performance reviews. Larger EMBs (such as those in Indonesia) need systems to monitor staff performance, to conduct departmental assessments and institutional evaluations with clear criteria to acknowledge strengths and achievements and to guide them on areas for improvement. The human resource department, if it exists, must be involved in any capacity development strategy in order to complement a staff performance evaluation system.

In Indonesia, the EMB included its capacity development strategy into its strategic plan. Another essential element was to make institutional hierarchy aware and commit to the effort. It furthermore developed its own monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for this component with the Training Division and Human Resources. Likewise, in Georgia, the EMB has a recognized certification process, which provides a strong incentive for staff to complete courses as part of their professional development. In Nepal as well, the EMB is supportive of the professional development of staff. All three countries have made these institutional commitments and have had support from UNDP and their governments.

4.7.5 Leadership Forums

Leadership forums are needed for Election Commissioners and EMB senior management as they deal with a range of stakeholders – government, parliament, security actors, political parties, CSOs, and the media – and have a broad spectrum of responsibilities. They have to design public relations strategies, lead conflict resolution processes, show vision and guide the strategic direction of the institute. In addition, they must advocate for democratic principles and innovation, lobby for more resources, manage international support, and represent the country in regional and international conferences, seminars, and forums on electoral issues.

A global leadership forum for Election Commissioners could be developed, or linked to existing EMB forums and networks, in partnership with experienced former commissioners. This effort would be useful for orienting newly appointed staff and also for providing a forum for peer exchange with outgoing Commissioners. The BRIDGE and ACE partnerships would be a natural group to steer such an initiative, as leadership courses would provide a good vehicle for regional organizations to convene leaders of EMBs. Due to the high level of the commissioner post, and the responsibility that comes with such a position, the leadership briefings and exchanges would not be a course like BRIDGE per se, but would be based on BRIDGE interactive methodology and would complement existing materials.

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37. IFES has an updated guide on *Strategic Planning for Effective Electoral Management*, 2011.

38. IFES and UNDP jointly supported a three-day KPU workshop on Strategic Planning, Bali, February 2011.

4.7.6 Electoral Resource Centres

Electoral Resource Centres (ERC) (also called Education Centres or Training Institutes) have been an emerging trend in the past few years. In fact, they are either in the pipeline or established in Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia and Nepal, to name but a few. These centres are a welcome addition to capacity-building efforts as they can offer information on assessment methodologies, leadership/ strategic planning, office management, media monitoring, party finance monitoring, IT skills for internal communication (email, intranet) and also for any new technologies introduced. Training courses that would be useful to add include gender mainstreaming and conflict resolution. In addition, democratic values and the importance of impartiality could be emphasized. In order to sustain these centres, however, a long-term national commitment, including government funding, is necessary. Sustainability lies also in the value of these centres and the impact of their work. A smaller-scale and more effective targeting of needs will help sustain such centres in the medium term when donor support diminishes.

Countries with Electoral Resource Centres

In **Georgia**, the Centre of Electoral Systems Development provides a good example of establishing ownership and sustainability. The government has fully funded the Centre without relying on future external funding. The Centre has its own director and customized programme and is recognized by the CEC. Guidelines and materials are prepared for District and Precinct Election Commission members, representatives of political party/election block, monitoring organizations, penitentiary and probation system staff, and representatives of press and other mass media. As well, guidelines for the Precinct Election Commission (PEC) were translated into the Armenian, Azeri and Russian languages and spread throughout populated regions. The Centre also provided English-language translations of guidelines for PEC members and international observers and prepared various display materials for election precincts, clearly showing voting day procedures.

In **Bangladesh**, the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC) has a training institute called Electoral Training Institute (ETI). UNDP recently provided support through a Capacity Development Adviser who assisted restructuring of the ETI as a separately managed but linked unit of the BEC. An institutional assessment has provided the basis for customizing BRIDGE materials into structured courses for BEC staff. One of the ETI objectives is to hold an induction course for new staff, which would be run by accredited facilitators from the BEC. In May 2012, 20 officers participated in the BRIDGE module Introduction to Electoral Administration.

In 2011, the Election Commission of **Nepal** (ECN) established the Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) to enhance awareness and participation of voters in the electoral system by making electoral education more interesting and accessible to voters. The EEIC has an electoral museum, mini-theatre and other voter and civic education programmes such as interactive voter education, opportunities to participate in mock elections, an electoral library and media centre, and facilities for training and capacity-building of Commission staff and stakeholders.

For a full Checklist for Beginning an ERC, see Annex 1.

4.7.7 Regional Networks

Regional peer sharing and learning is a popular and emerging trend among capacity development efforts. These meetings provide a forum for new ideas and stimulate empathy among peers who face shared challenges.

While there is some scepticism of exchange study tours[39] in general, often considered junkets, most interviewees believe there is value in South-South exchanges, peer learning, regional networks and workshops (such as regional community of practice meetings). The most successful peer learning experiences occur when meetings are shaped around a specific capacity development objective. While these South-South peer exchanges are valuable in terms of learning and empathy, they are often limited by a lack of comparative perspective. On the other hand, work placements tend to be quite intense and potentially most beneficial for participants.

Benefits of Regional Networks

UNDP has supported regional networks through a number of initiatives, including through country-level support. In Mexico, UNDP used its international network and status to promote South-South cooperation with electoral authorities and a number of global partnerships and networks. The PALOP programme allowed Mozambique and other lusophone countries to benefit from a linguistic regional network. UNDP also supports the Global Election Organization (GEO), where most EMBs from around the world get to exchange their experiences, as well as through the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and BRIDGE. Furthermore, although to a lesser extent, the EC-UNDP JTF and regional Communities of Practice, provide forums to gather feedback from national partners and build an electoral community that strives to improve its professionalism and practice despite political challenges. UNDP, through its Regional Centres, has unique access to governments and stakeholders and can play an effective role of convener at the political level and at the technical level in specific regional workshops or exchange visits.

To date, UNDP's efforts to promote South-South cooperation in the electoral field have had encouraging results and it remains a promising field for future programming. Though much effort in this area has taken place without direct UNDP involvement, UNDP is well placed to further advance the process by strengthening inter-EMB cooperation, including within the framework of South-South cooperation.

4.8   Use of Technology in Elections

UNDP can help guide EMBs to make sound choices on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in elections. This issue will become increasingly important, as more EMBs seek to take advantage of ICT solutions for election processes.

In order for ICT solutions to be helpful, they need to be feasible, cost-effective and sustainable for the EMB without outside assistance. Also, vendor-locks on equipment or software purchased must not be

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39. In exchange study placements, EMB staff are invited to have work experience in a particular division of another more experienced EMB for a few months as part of an exchange programme.

in place, high-cost replacements should not be needed, and internal capacity must be built to maintain hardware and reprogram software if needed.

UNDP's thematic workshop 'Information Technology and Elections Management: Informed Decisions for Sustainable Outcomes'[40] provides a good example of how UNDP can advise countries and EMBs, in particular, on making informed choices on ICT-related issues such as biometric registration, e-voting, Geographic Information System (GIS) for boundary delimitation and results management.

Feasibility studies and pilot projects can highlight challenges before making large investments and expanding nationally. Comparative analysis is also crucial for considering evidence and hidden and maintenance costs in terms of national financial capacities.

Though the benefits of adopting new technologies could include better management of data and updating results faster, it should be noted that experience throughout the world has shown that a more complex or expensive electoral system does not necessarily result in more successful elections.[41]

Social media are a powerful tool in enhancing inclusiveness and an effective channel for communication and participation and should be taken into consideration. UNDP could play a supportive role in providing comparative experience highlighting the positive and negative effects of this burgeoning sector. Further comparative analysis of new social media and elections and best practice would be a useful study as they relate to all stakeholders, EMBs in public outreach (especially to urban areas and youth), political parties and candidates in campaigning and results, and observers in providing live witness accounts. UNDP may also be called to advise on the use of technology in other areas including governance, media and education. A comprehensive approach could produce cost-effective synergies between technologies and avoid different sectors having incompatible systems.

Through its thematic workshop 'Information Technology and Elections Management' held in Mombasa in 2012, the EC-UNDP JTF has begun to document recent practices and experiences. The development of a subsequent e-learning course[42] is a good lesson to be replicated as not seeing workshops as one-off events.

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40. Organized by the EC-UNDP JTF, in Mombasa, March 2012. A sister e-learning course on ICTs and election management that draws on the discussion from the workshop is available at http://elearning.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/

41. Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General, Strengthening the Role of the United Nations in Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Periodic and Genuine Elections and the Promotion of Democratization, Report to the General Assembly of the United Nations A/64/304, 14 August 2009, paragraphs 39-41.

42. The e-learning course on ICTs and election management that draws on the discussion from the workshop is available at http://elearning.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/

Experiences of Using Technology in Elections

In **Bangladesh**, UNDP provided critical assistance in the early stages of the voter registration process through the Preparation of the Electoral Roll with Photographs Project (PERP), given the difficulties of preparing a photo-voter list of over 80 million voters. As the BEC had committed itself to holding the 9th Parliamentary Elections by the end of 2008, it was essential that voter registration stay on track, lest they risk delaying the elections and a return to electoral democracy in Bangladesh. This meant that UNDP had to jump in immediately to support the voter registration process.

UNDP provided initial support to the BEC for voter registration by providing IT consultants to help develop the voter registration systems and software. The project was also instrumental in making initial procurements for the voter registration pilot test. To make these initial procurements, UNDP in fact raised its contribution to the project budget by US$3 million.[43] The project also provided support to the BEC by providing technical consultants for its constituency delimitation process.

The US$84 million PERP project stands at the heart of UNDP's electoral assistance in Bangladesh and is generally considered to have been a tremendously successful project.[44] Under the project, the bulk of the procurement activities for the voter registration drive (including the procurement of 12,000 laptop computers) took place. The PERP project also covered payments to enumerators, technical staff and project managers. An external evaluation of UNDP's election work noted that UNDP Bangladesh stepped up to the plate and "with a major institutional effort that included its regional offices in Bangkok and Copenhagen, was able to deliver the needed commodities on time."[45] As a result, the bulk of the technical equipment for voter registration was deployed to the field in November 2007 (only three months after the PERP Project Document was signed), when the monthly registration rate jumped from over 6 million voters per month to over 10 million voters per month.[46]

UNDP and the UN RCs Office made an enormous effort to ensure that the procurement of critical materials went smoothly. In the end, 81 million voters were registered to a high level of accuracy by June 2008, allowing the BEC to use the new voter lists in 11 local government elections in August 2008, as well as in subsequent local elections.

Experiences in **Zambia** suggest that the introduction of technology in voter registration needs to be implemented well before an electoral event and should be legally supported. The technology should also be independent from proprietorship (and should not be vendor-locked). Enhanced capacity-building should be undertaken for the IT department and electoral officials. The system should be cost-effective and sustainable.

The process should not be driven by vendor or donor interests, but should be home-grown, have sufficient buy-in of national stakeholders and not be implemented without sufficient funds, time and capacities.

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43. UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation, December 2009, p. 2
44. Monitoring and Evaluation reports by DFID, the EU and UNDP have given the PERP project very positive assessments.
45. UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation, December 2009, p. 20
46. See: UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation, December 2009, p. 19

The use of biometric technology to register voters showed its potential during the registration exercise in Zambia. Because the use of this technology reduces the frequency of human error and the time it takes to fill out forms, overall registration time was greatly reduced for each eligible Zambian. It also increased the number of registered voters. With 1,000 mobile registration kits operating on a daily basis in each district of Zambia, the Election Commission of Zambia (ECZ) managed to register over 5.2 million people, representing 86 percent of eligible voters. Over 1 million were newly registered 18- to 35-year-olds.

The challenge for the Commission, however, is to maintain the system and ensure that the technology is enhanced to allow the ECZ database to be linked with the database of the Department of National Registration. This will ensure that those who turn 18 are immediately transferred to the voter register. This requires major changes in the business operating system of the Department of National Registration and the Commission in conjunction with the Department of National Registration. UNDP, however, is currently assisting with the digitization of the department.[47]

In **Tanzania**, software design for the Candidate Management System (CMS) enabled the NEC to more efficiently process the large number of candidates – there were 9,000 candidates for the 2010 presidential, parliamentary and councillor elections. The CMS enhanced verification of information, validation of nominators and the generation of sample ballots. Likewise, the Results Management System (RMS) developed for election day presented substantial improvements, including in the functionality of the system used in 2005. Improvements included enhanced security and detailed auditing that allowed all data communication to and from the remote Results Accumulation Sites to occur in a secure environment and separate polling station results, which enabled a countrywide breakdown of polling station results on the internet. The new system increased transparency and the credibility of the results aggregation and reduced the time required for tabulation. However, concerns remained about the time it took to release the results, which was delayed for several reasons, including that some constituencies reverted to manual tabulation because they did not receive adequate training in the application of the new system.[48]

In **Yemen**, UNDP successfully promoted a more cost-effective approach to voter registration. The EMB Chief noted that UNDP had been instrumental in helping the Commission work through various voter registration options so they could make an informed decision.

4.9   Conflict Prevention

Without regular, genuine, credible and transparent elections, democracy simply cannot exist. By the same token, democratic political regimes with inoperative, dysfunctional electoral systems tend to be more vulnerable to social and political disruption.[49]

Member States and regional and other organizations have increasingly sought UN assistance to respond to what is perceived to be a recent rise in electoral violence in developing countries. As stated in a

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47. Taken from article *BRIDGE in Zambia* by Taona E Mwanyisa Project Manager, UNDP Zambia in the BRIDGE Facilitator Bulletin 7 July 2012.

48. Independent External Evaluation of UNDP Elections Support Project in Tanzania, December 2011

49. Collier, Paul (2010). Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places

recent UN report, "This risk is particularly high in countries with systemic, long-standing and unresolved grievances, combined with a 'winner takes all' approach to competitive politics."[50]

Since the Kenyan elections in 2007, there is a general impression that the UN should pay greater attention to potential electoral risks and the long-term causes of political violence that could ignite during election processes. With significant differences in the scale and scope of the challenges from post-conflict elections to more stable political scenarios, there has been a great deal of research on the topic in the last five years.[51] There is general agreement that these issues should be assessed early on and therefore be incorporated into the design and implementation of electoral assistance interventions.[52] An all-encompassing policy for conflict mitigation throughout an electoral cycle should also be crafted by national actors – in particular the EMB and the security sector – and should centre on the institutional design, political system and election laws of a given country. The mix of these three factors is especially important in countries that experience political violence.[53] Electoral dispute resolution (EDR), electoral monitoring and observation, forums for mediation between political parties, and civic education programmes that involve citizens directly, should be discussed with all the relevant national actors during project design.

The credibility of the EMB and its processes is vital to fostering confidence and reducing the potential for conflict. The key to developing trust and confidence is transparency, which often might not be the practice of bureaucrats in post-conflict situations. In post-conflict or low-trust contexts, UNDP could work with EMBs to help them develop transparent processes, or a transparency strategy or policy.

In addition, it is essential to engage with political parties and security forces and ensure they understand that the rules are needed to address conflict. In fact, one of the key lessons in preventing and mitigating electoral violence is the need for a holistic and integrated strategy between key actors. The UN can promote this approach among national actors, the international diplomatic and donor communities and within the UN.[54] Supporting monitoring and observation efforts is another preventative measure that can increase transparency and confidence in the electoral process as well as deter conflict. BDP can collaborate further with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) on capturing and applying the lessons from electoral and conflict (prevention) perspectives.

UNDP Elections and Conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning and Programming provides practical steps for analysis and programming. Further case studies and discussions have also taken place at the 'Elections, Violence and Conflict Prevention' thematic workshop.[55] Likewise, lessons can be drawn from the *UNDP Study on Understanding Electoral Violence in Asia,* and from IFES, International IDEA and ACE project initiatives.[56] With a number of recently developed risk assessment tools offered to EMBs and

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50. *UN, Preventive Diplomacy* (2011), S/2011/552, p. 12

51. See, for example: UN, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions: Election-related violence and killings* (2012), A/HRC/14/24/Add.7; World Bank, *World Development Report 2011, Overview* (2011), Feature 1 and 2 'How violence is changing', pp. 3-4; Gillies, ed., *Elections in Dangerous Places* (2011); Straus, Taylor, *Democratization and Electoral Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990-2007* (2009); Atwood, *How the EU can support peaceful post-election transitions of power: Lessons from Africa* (2012).

52. OECD DAC Draft Principles on International Electoral Assistance, March 2010

53. UNDP Study on Understanding Electoral Violence in Asia, p. 15, 2011 On integrated mitigation, see Fomunyoh, Mediating election-related conflicts, Humanitarian Dialogue (2009), p. 6 and Call 'Political Missions and Departures from Constitutional Order', Center for International Cooperation (2011)

54. On integrated mitigation, see Fomunyoh, Mediating election-related conflicts, Humanitarian Dialogue (2009), p. 6 and Call 'Political Missions and Departures from Constitutional Order', Center for International Cooperation (2011)

55. Organized by UNDP-EC Joint Task Force, UNDP-BCPR and Barcelona International Peace Centre in Barcelona, in June 2011 and June 2012

56. IFES has used its 'EVER' project methodology since 2005, found here: http://www.ifes.org/Research/Cross-Cutting/Election-Violence-Education-and-Resolution/Nav/Electoral-Violence-and-Mitigation/Methodology.aspx; for International IDEA's new Electoral Risk Management tool, see http://www.idea.int/elections/the-idea-electoral-risk-management-tool-pilots.cfm

governments by assistance providers, feasibility in usage and compatibility with existing security or GIS systems should be considered.

UNDP COs can use UNDP support staff from BDP and BCPR (or consultants) to help with risk assessment and mitigation early on in programme design. Such an assessment would give confidence to UNDP COs and donors to understand and take calculated risks in volatile contexts. UNDP could develop a framework for various assessments, not a template that constrains political analysis, but at least an outline to keep all assessments on the same page and be cross-referenced.
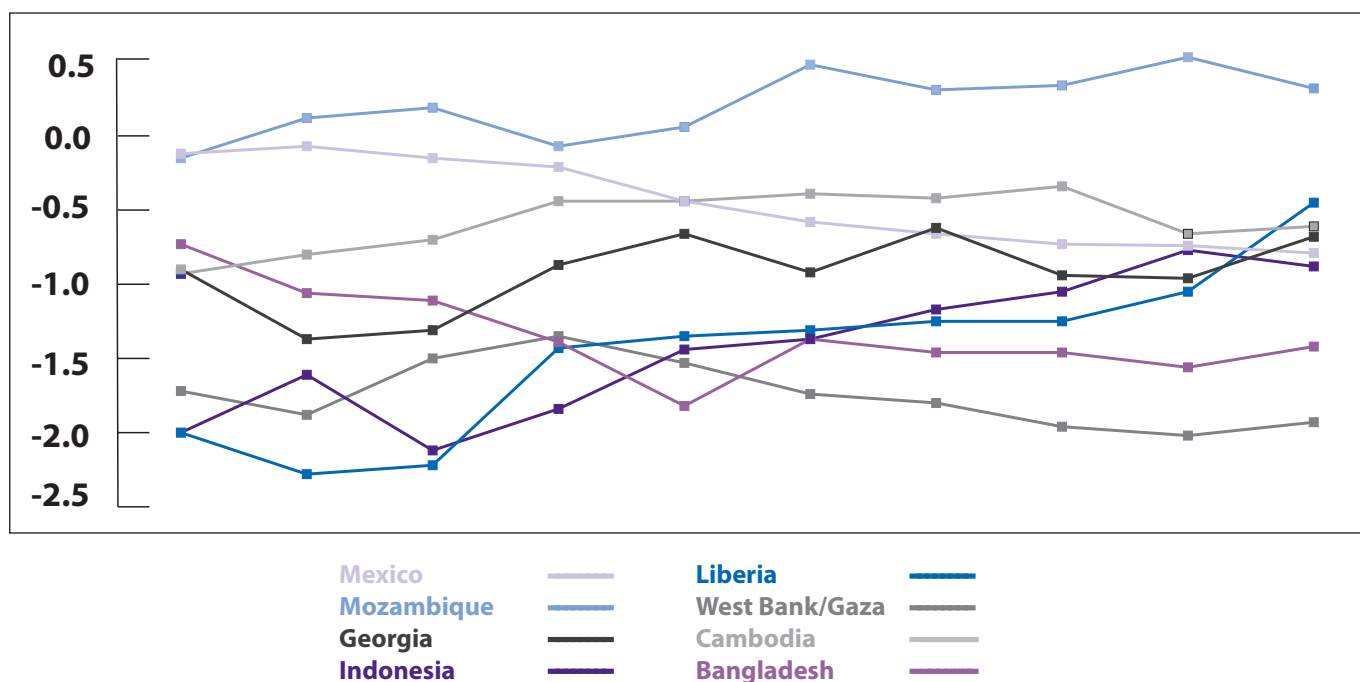
Conflict Prevention Best Practices

Liberia offers a number of good examples of conflict prevention measures in the UN's electoral programme. The formation and the use of the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC), re-initiated by UNDP during the 2011 election, which engages the opposition as well as civil society to reach consensus on specific issues, represented a big step toward effective political dialogue and the prevention of electoral conflict. UNDP further facilitated conflict prevention by training the Liberian National Police in electoral rules and regulations. UNDP also supported a CSO, which worked with youth wings of political parties on conflict prevention measures, whose role was to calm down and defuse the potential for conflict between supporters. In Liberia, this was crucial to preventing violence after the election when the main opposition party did not initially accept the results. High-level interventions from the African Union (AU) and the UN also helped pacify a volatile situation.

In **Tanzania,** US$2 million was spent on an Incident Response and Reporting System (IRRS), which uses technology already available to the police and, as a result, is considered to be user-friendly and sustainable. Due to delays, the system was not fully operational until after Election Day. Nevertheless, the system was up and running in the 12 hotspots identified by the police in Zanzibar, enabling the Tanzanian Police Force to efficiently coordinate on election day. Although originally aimed at ensuring that election-related incidents were monitored, the system has a far wider range of scope. The police are now able to use it on a daily basis to track, record, and respond to all types of incidents. Given the simplicity of the system, the police are able to expand it at a minimum cost, and its design ensured that only simple training was required to be able to use it.[57]

Other best practices for conflict prevention include facilitating dialogue on peaceful elections throughout the electoral cycle and delivering transparent and timely final results.

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57. UNDP Tanzania ESP Terminal Evaluation Report, 2011

Figure 4. Political Stability and Absence of Violence: Eight Case Studies, 2000-2010

Legend:
- Mexico
- Mozambique
- Georgia
- Indonesia
- Liberia
- West Bank/Gaza
- Cambodia
- Bangladesh

4.10 Gender Equality

Gender equality components in electoral assistance have evolved considerably over the past decade. In earlier project documents, there were few examples of gender awareness/ gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance. In the past few years, through GPECS and advocacy efforts by UN Women, there has been a shift in the inclusion of gender programming within the UN, and UNDP in particular. The findings from the UNDP corporate evaluation on UNDP's *Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Processes*[58] highlight the importance of a dedicated component and budget within GPECS on gender related work. In the budget allocations for 2012, it was estimated that over 30 percent of the total programming budget went to gender-targeted interventions.

UNDP and UN Women working together could support gender mainstreaming into all elements of UNDP electoral assistance projects. Including a distinct but separate gender component in project activities is not an adequate substitute for mainstreaming. Sensitizing national counterparts and UN staff to the importance of gender equality is critical for it to be taken seriously. The UN can play a highly influential role in the stand it takes regarding which electoral system a country chooses and which quota measures could be adopted, such as 'zipper' alternating male/female candidates in the PR list system. As well, gender mainstreaming should be reflected in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes. Gender mainstreaming objectives should look not only at the proportion of women political candidates, but also at a gender balance in the EMB structure and its decision-making

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58. Evaluation of UNDP's *Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes*, 2012

processes, in public information, civic education and training materials. It should also consider women's access to voter registration, to the complaints system, to voting processes, and to information, especially in places with low literacy.

Gender mainstreaming into electoral processes should be linked to the broader gender mainstreaming strategy in governance and done with partners such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs and UN Women. In a post-conflict context, DPA and DPKO have joint guidelines[59] on enhancing the role of women in electoral processes that are also useful for non-mission contexts. Since the last review of electoral assistance, UNDP has also been a core partner of iKNOWPolitics, which unites women in politics through an online community.

Although progress has been made to broaden and deepen the role of women in politics in many developing countries, development agencies should do more to incorporate a full gender dimension in electoral assistance, particularly in relation to candidate selection, EMBs and voter participation.[60]

Gender issues should be mainstreamed by UNDP into all aspects of its assistance projects throughout the electoral cycle. As part of election support projects, concerted efforts should be made to support the empowerment of women and marginalized groups as candidates, voters, and election officials. Producing gender-disaggregated election statistics, including on voter registration and voter turnout, can help identify any inequalities that should be addressed. In a small country, producing disaggregated statistics may be easier, but it is a massive task in a country like Indonesia, which has over half a million polling stations. National-level figures showing that more men voted than women might identify the problem, but they do not really help with the solution, not least because the problem is likely to vary geographically.

Men and women need to be sensitized in government, parliament, political parties, civil society, the media and security on the importance of women's participation in the electoral process.

To set the stage for a gender-sensitive initiative, a gender and elections specialist can be recruited to assist with needs assessments, project design and evaluation, and to link electoral support to broader gender initiatives. Beyond informing gender-sensitive NAMs and project formulation, a gender specialist could also assist in the design of Terms of Reference for Chief Technical Advisors (CTAs) and project staff and then provide training for the international and national staff recruited. An important element of project monitoring and evaluation is the formulation of indicators that can help UNDP gauge a project's successes vis-a-vis gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. EMBs should also incorporate gender equality into their strategic plan and show commitment to implementing it.

A workshop organized in partnership with UNDP and the Central Electoral Commission of Georgia focused on the gender aspects of electoral administration and mainstreaming gender throughout the electoral cycle. A similar regional workshop was held in South Africa for gender specialists. In addition, Nepal and Kenya have had gender workshops and UN Women has held gender workshops in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. As such, there are a number of updated tools and materials specifically on gender and elections (within the BRIDGE module) that can be customized for regional or national workshops in future programming.

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59. DPKO/DFS-DPA 'Joint Guidelines on enhancing the role of women in post-conflict electoral processes', October 2007
60. OECD DAC Draft principles on electoral assistance, March 2010

BRIDGE Workshops on Gender and Elections

The BRIDGE Module on Gender and Elections has been updated by gender and election experts and tested in the past two years. In the examples below, the impact of this type of training has been tangible and ready to roll out in many other countries making a cost-effective tool.

In February 2012, through GPECS, UNDP organized two BRIDGE workshops on gender and elections for EMB and UNDP representatives from the **Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) region.** The workshops aimed to build knowledge and introduce practical tools for mainstreaming gender into electoral administration and programming. Overall, 35 EMB and UNDP representatives from 12 countries attended the workshops, which were organized in two parallel Russian and English sessions. Expanding the regional pool of BRIDGE-accredited facilitators has been one of the key objectives of UNDP´s Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) and the two workshops in Georgia were a direct follow-up on the request to institutionalize BRIDGE in the ECIS region that the participants of TTF BRIDGE workshop in Budapest, Hungary in late 2011 made. The workshop agendum was tailored to raise participants' awareness of the gender aspects in electoral administration and programming and concentrated on electoral systems and their impact on women's participation, temporary special measures (quotas) and their implementation, gender mainstreaming in EMBs, as well as constraints and opportunities faced by women candidates within political party structures.

In their evaluations of the workshops, participants emphasized the novelty of the topic and that it addressed the common lack of awareness regarding the complexity and depth of obstacles to women's participation as voters and candidates. They also showed appreciation for the BRIDGE methodology and indicated interest in promoting gender-sensitive policies in their respective EMBs by using the new analytical tools. Overall, the sessions offered many opportunities to engage in lively debate and discussions on promoting women's electoral participation, to share experiences and exchange views, as well as to identify new topics for future BRIDGE workshops in the ECIS region.[61]

A similar BRIDGE regional workshop on gender and elections, held by partners in **South Africa** in October 2010, aimed to create a pool of facilitators with gender specialization and who could use BRIDGE to further capacity-development goals on gender and elections in Africa and beyond. The workshop also sought to create a community of practice in 'Gender and Elections' within the BRIDGE network and to strengthen the BRIDGE curriculum materials on gender.

At the country level, the Election Commission of **Nepal** and the UNDP Electoral Support Programme for Nepal hosted a three-day BRIDGE workshop to pilot the module on 'Gender and Elections' in October 2011. The workshop was supported and commissioned by the UNDP GPECS and supported by IFES. The objectives of the workshop were to offer information to the EMBs on the importance of women's participation and how to promote and improve it, to enhance women's advocacy groups' understanding of the electoral process, and to provide tools to help participants consider elections from a gender perspective.

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61. Information taken from a UNDP workshop report on the BRIDGE website http://bridge-project/news/europe-cis

Figure 5: Women in Parliament %
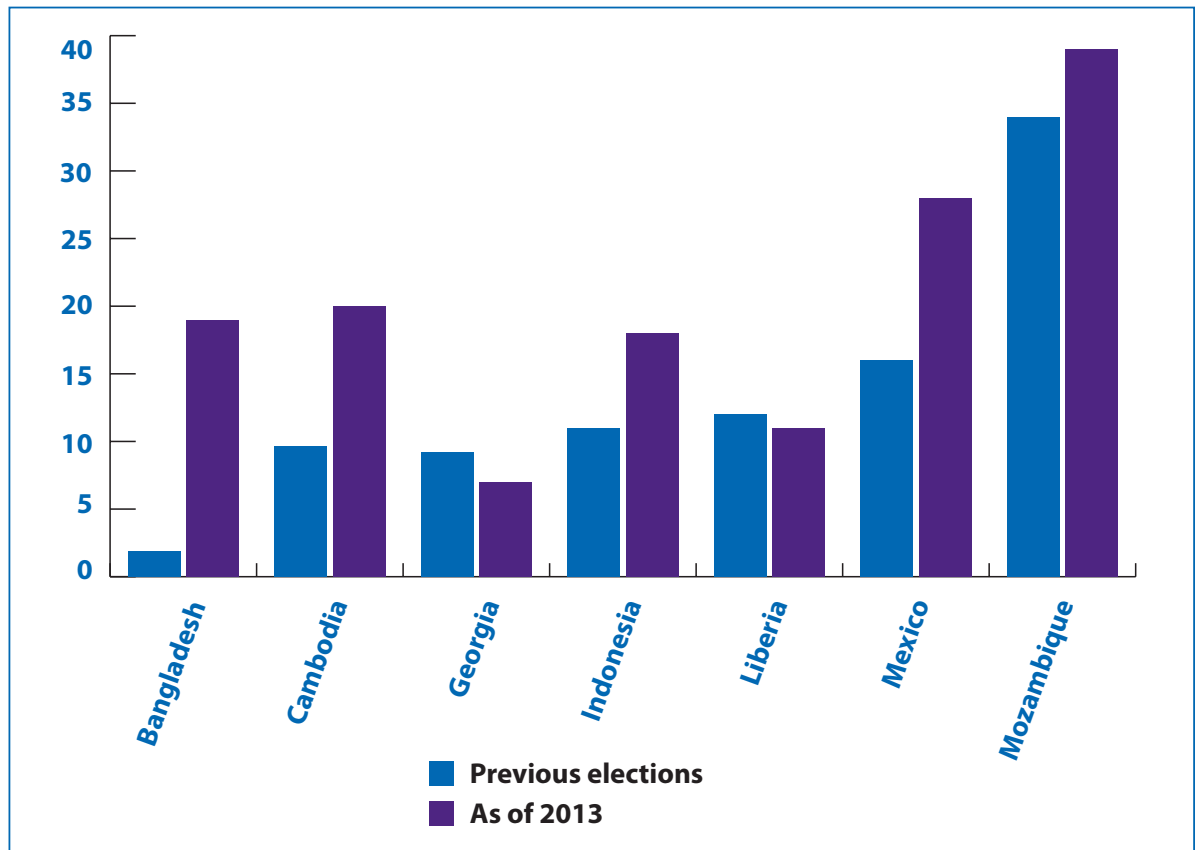
4.11 Areas of Electoral Assistance[62]

The pie chart below, taken from the evaluation of UNDP's *Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Processes*,[63] which reviewed all UNDP election projects in 39 countries from 2002 to 2012, shows that the greatest focus of UNDP assistance is on strengthening electoral administration (25 percent), followed by civic and voter education (19 percent) and building sustainable electoral processes (12 percent). The lowest level of effort was reflected in electoral dispute resolution (4 percent), media strengthening (5 percent) and work with political parties (5 percent).

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62. UN's policy directive clearly spells out Types of Electoral Assistance http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/issues/elections/types_of_assistance

63. Evaluation of *UNDP's Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes,* 2012

Figure 6: UNDP's Effort across Areas of Electoral Assistance*

* Electoral system reform
* Strengthening electoral administration
* Building sustainable electoral processes
* Mobilization and coordination of resources for electoral support
* Civic and voter education
* Electoral dispute resolution
* Support to dometic observation
* Working with political parties
* Media strengthening
* Increasing women's participation
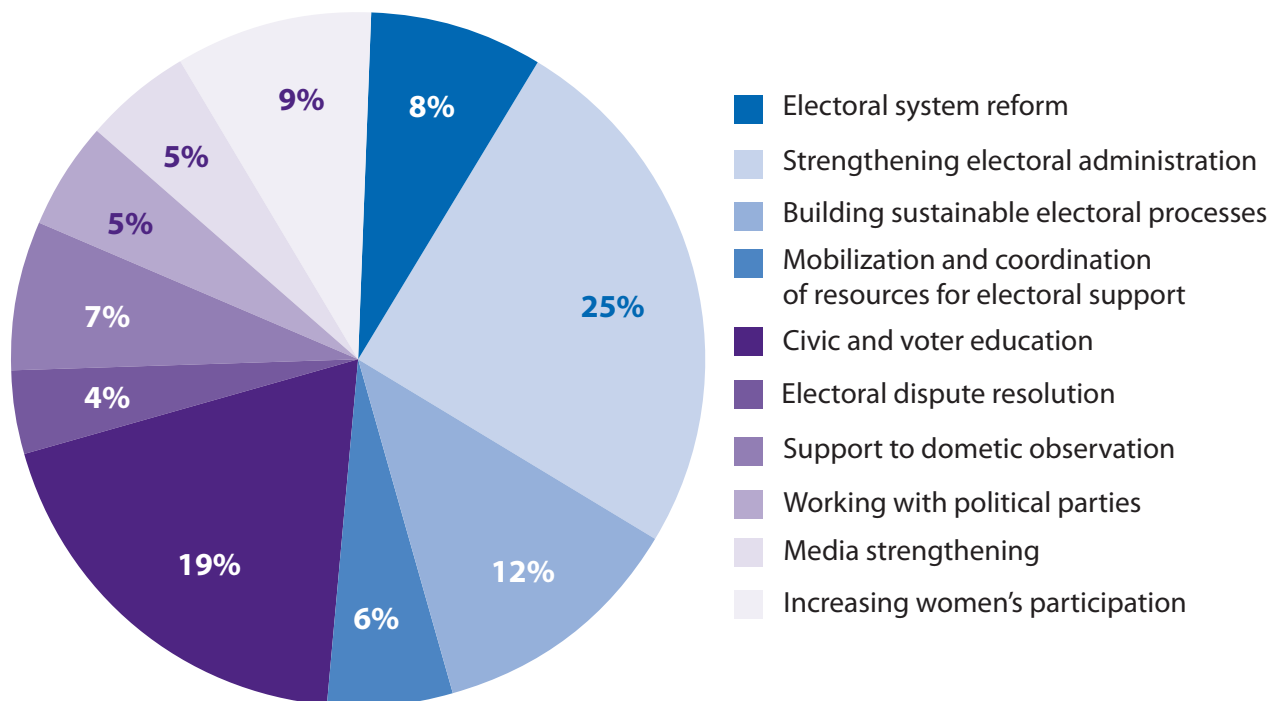
* UNDP percentage of effort (financial and human) towards electoral entry points (2002 to 2012)

4.11.1 Legal Reform

Most UNDP electoral projects have a component supporting legal or electoral system reform (8 percent in pie chart above). If this were combined with UNDP parliamentary support projects, however, the percentage of support to legal reform would be much higher. The legal framework for elections is important, as it sets the rules of the contest. A sound constitutional and legislative framework is the foundation for the integrity, fairness and transparency of any electoral process. In addition to an election law, provisions in the constitution and/or other legislation such as laws on political parties, campaign finance, access to information, media and citizenship, as well as the civil and criminal codes, contribute to the legal framework that shapes the electoral process. If amendments to the laws or subsidiary regulations are made late, this can impact on the process in many ways, such as shortening the timeframe for an EMB to administer the elections and for stakeholders to understand changes in electoral rules.

A degree of stability and predictability is key to building confidence in electoral rules; changing the rules last minute, even if the reasons may be justified, can create confusion and is a potential trigger for conflict. During the first electoral cycle, this may be excused due to the lack of experience of the various electoral actors and the time pressure; for subsequent cycles, however, the reforms should be made in sufficient time to allow the EMB to plan accordingly and for stakeholders to fully understand

procedures. Electoral assistance providers can highlight the risks of late amendments and encourage or facilitate earlier reform processes beginning from a few months after the last election.

UNDP can provide valuable assistance in legislative reform and should consider the impact that a range of laws can have on the election process. Election regulations, as well as election laws, are critical elements of a solid framework for the conduct of elections, which deserve careful attention in UNDP projects. To the detriment of the overall process, inadequate or delayed regulations can lead to inconsistencies of approach in the different regions of a country or even in different polling or counting stations. On the other hand, legal reform is a politically sensitive area and there is a danger that international advisers will simply proceed on their own and produce a cut-and-paste draft of a law or a regulation, leaving their counterparts behind. One way to strengthen an EMB is to have one of its legal staff involved in the policy-/law-making process from the outset, i.e., someone who is aware of every subtlety and nuance of the relevant statute. Linking electoral legal reform support to constitution-building and parliamentary support programmes would help consolidate the legal framework and avoid the inconsistencies that inevitably arise in the absence of coordination.

Often, electoral assistance initiatives that focus mainly on the EMB do not adequately address legal reform issues that are dealt with by the parliament or the legislative bodies. Electoral legal reform, which is a political process, should be done as part of a consultative, inclusive, and participatory process. As part of its support, UNDP can help facilitate and advise working groups for legal amendments. Since the EMB has the mandate to administer and implement the law, it should have input into electoral legislation reform to ensure that it is feasible and cost-effective. An alternative longer-term approach would be to provide support for the development of a skilled legislative drafting unit in a country, which would be more useful than bringing in foreign legal advisors to do drafting whenever it is needed. Often, building consensus around legal reform takes time and this process can delay the final amendments; if delays are significant, they can impact operational timelines and put extra pressure on the EMB to deliver the election more quickly. One potential way to avoid such problems is for electoral reforms to begin in the post-election period and in consideration of recommendations from international and domestic observers.

To strengthen the legal reform aspects of electoral support, stronger links between electoral and parliamentary assistance could also be forged. In Georgia, UNDP worked with other electoral assistance providers to bring together party representatives and CSOs with the electoral legal reform committee in parliament to discuss the ways in which various issues could be reformed. While not all reforms were made due to the political interests of the majority party in parliament, some reforms were passed and a regular dialogue in the post-election period did take place. On occasion, the assistance providers even brought in an international expert to provide comparative experience on particular issues. Ideally, electoral laws work best when they reflect a consensus among major political parties and create public confidence when they are drafted in a transparent process through public consultation.

In Cambodia, the lack of legal reform during the past two electoral cycles has shown the ruling party's lack of political will to address issues highlighted repeatedly by international and domestic observers. In Mozambique, the Constitutional Council took the recommendations from observer groups on board and advocated for a plan for pushing legislative reform when progress is lacking. In Bangladesh and the OPT, the reform process is delayed by polarized positions in parliament. In Liberia, where the losing party accepted the results, a reform process would restore confidence in the electoral process and help to avoid creating a 'winner takes all' perception.

The legislative framework also establishes the regulatory powers of institutions other than the EMB, such as government ministries, security services, institutions that resolve electoral disputes and bodies that regulate broadcasting and other matters. Since these bodies can and often do have an important impact on the conduct of elections, they should also be eligible for UNDP electoral assistance.[64]

More technical assistance could be given on boundary delimitation processes to help guarantee the use of criteria to ensure fairness, give equal weight to each citizen's vote and to mitigate the potential for conflict. 'Fairness', in the context of boundary delimitation, is a highly technical concept, underpinned by a mathematically sophisticated literature. Experienced boundary delimitation experts could provide that needed level of assistance.

4.11.2 Electoral Dispute Resolution

While dispute resolution has become a key area of electoral assistance, it receives less attention than other aspects of elections (see Figure 6). Because inadequate performances by electoral commissions or the courts or other dispute resolution mechanisms can lead to a loss of public confidence, a rejection of election results, or even violence, EDR deserves consideration as a priority area during the design of UNDP election assistance projects.

No systems globally seem to fall into the 'all EMB' or 'all electoral court' models. They are all hybrids of some sort, and the health of EDR is explicitly tied to the health of rule of law, police investigative capacity, court adjudication capacity and public trust of all of the above. A key lesson seems to be that national belief and faith in the system they choose was a more important factor than the system per se. UNDP could play a role in helping national actors consider the pros and cons of different systems. Study tours tend to have the host EMB promoting their system, which might not always be appropriate or applicable to the guest EMB's context.

In Afghanistan, a highly dubious attempt was made by President Karzai, after the last legislative election, to set up a 'Special Election Court' to deal with complaints that had already been resolved by the Electoral Complaints Commission. Because improperly handled disputes can create more grievances and undermine confidence in the process, well-managed dispute resolution mechanisms are essential for conflict prevention and should be a key part of electoral assistance if and where deficiencies are identified.

As an example of a case where a complaints and appeals process is not working well, discussions about the Cambodian NEC's complaints and appeals processes did not proceed in 2009, despite observer recommendations. The NEC stated that its role was limited to implementing the law and referred the discussion of reforming the legal framework for elections to the Ministry of Interior (MoI). This response was an indication of the NEC's limited institutional independence.

4.11.3 Electoral Administration

Strengthening the professional capacity of EMBs has been a central element of most UNDP electoral assistance projects and has been vital to the successful delivery of free and credible elections. 'Strengthening Electoral Administration' is the core or the largest component of UNDP electoral projects (see Figure 6). Long-term electoral assistance can enhance the professionalism and capacity

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64. The Role of UNDP in Supporting Democratic Elections in Africa (2013)

of election management bodies to administer elections and can lead to significant improvements in the technical implementation of the election process. While operations, training, and voter education have remained staples of electoral assistance, key areas that still need further support are registration, dispute resolution, results management, leadership development, strategic planning and budgeting, facilitating dialogue with stakeholders, conflict resolution, ethical codes, media monitoring and party finance monitoring. The challenge lies in building faith in these activities and in addressing EMBs that face credibility issues because their decisions are considered biased. Credibility issues affect the institution, but also undermine the whole election process.

In order to decrease the reliance of EMBs on external experts, projects should be designed to address long-term capacity development and the professionalization of EMBs. If EMBs are not independent and impartial in their operations, capacity-building, training or technical assistance is unlikely to improve their performance or lead to elections that are in line with international standards.

Strengthened partnerships and sound working relationships between EMBs and other elections stakeholders (particularly political parties, CSOs and the media) are also critical to ensuring transparency and accountability and to building public confidence in the EMB and ensuring acceptance of elections results.

4.11.4 Registration of Voters

A voters' list ensures universal suffrage and is the basis of any election. Therefore, its accuracy determines whether the election is credible. Due to infrequent census and poor citizen data, EMBs often create their own voters' list. In a transitional situation, this may also be driven by the need for trust: a new list developed by a newly appointed but credible EMB may well be more trusted than a list taken from a civil register maintained by an interior ministry perceived to be controlled by a ruling party. In cases where the list is taken from the existing civil register, many inaccuracies and discrepancies are transferred. The expense of civil registration and IDs for voter registration is sizeable and many problems remain with both registration processes. UNDP should support a more comprehensive strategic approach to capture and update citizen data and issue national IDs. In cases where this issue has not been tackled fully, the problem continues to deteriorate. While civil registers are a governance issue and a voters' register is an electoral one, they are interlinked and expert assessments (political and technical) can determine whether investing in a merged database or keeping them separate would benefit the context.

This must be considered on a case-by-case basis: many countries manage to get by without a voters' register. Bangladesh appears to have benefited from its re-registration process and is a good example of how a high-cost, hi-tech voter registration project is benefiting the development of the civil register. Certain factors have helped its success, like having a non-partisan caretaker government in power at the time, considerable logistical support from the army and incentives for a citizen to obtain a card that had multiple benefits (such as accessing bank loans, mobile phones, etc.). Many other cases show a need to replace equipment, reprogram software, or, worse, start from scratch.

4.12 Civil Society

4.12.1 Civil Society Organizations

Grassroots civic education is an essential part of any electoral outreach programme and, in some case studies, the EMB wants to register CSOs or decide on who should get grants. If an EMB is giving grants to

CSOs to do voter education and if these CSOs are contracted as service delivery organizations, and not functioning as advocacy bodies, they should then be subject to appropriate controls and accountability mechanisms. While this can be a form of quality assurance, one has to be cautious that it is not control.

Targeting specific citizens, such as women and youth, or disadvantaged citizens such as minorities or disabled voters, has been prevalent in electoral assistance programmes, but identifying the differing needs through research and measuring the impact of civic and voter education has been weaker. Helping citizens to understand the importance of their role in elections as one part of a broader set of accountability mechanisms should be an integral part of electoral assistance and should be facilitated by engaging them in dialogue with their locally elected leaders.

CSOs play a key role in electoral processes, including mobilizing and informing citizens, advocating for positive change, contributing to conflict mitigation, and acting as watchdogs over the process. Figure 6 shows that a sizeable amount of UNDP support goes to CSOs (19 percent). However without specific surveys, it is difficult to attribute the impact of that particular support as different to other actors and assistance providers. Yet many donors still believe that continued support has value.

CSOs vary from big organizations with established bureaucratic structures to tiny bodies supported by the good will of volunteers. The latter will have little absorptive capacity for project management methods and rigorous methodologies, let alone statistical analysis. UNDP, by recognizing the diversity of the sector, can acknowledge the strengths as well as weaknesses of the smaller outfits. Many CSOs are still constrained by a lack of professional capacity and insufficient sustainable resources. While UNDP assistance has had a positive impact, CSOs need more help to develop their institutional capacity for project development and implementation, fundraising, advocacy, and, in the cases of national-level ones conducting domestic observation, the use of a more rigorous methodology and sound statistical analysis. Direct UNDP assistance for CSOs – rather than assistance channelled through EMBs – can help build their independence and strengthen their capacity for effective advocacy.

Non-partisan domestic election observers have made an enormous contribution to the transparency of elections, accountability, and public confidence. Many UNDP projects have included support for observers (see Figure 6: 7 percent). Many observer organizations, however, need greater assistance to improve their methodologies and reporting skills. Their role, moreover, has generally centred on election-day activities.

Their contribution could be far greater if support were provided to enable them to expand their activities to observe a greater range of election activities, including voter and candidate registration, political campaigns, and post-election dispute resolution and electoral observation with a youth lens. Support for this type of observation, for example of women's participation, campaign finance, and media, has yielded benefits in the past.

4.12.2 Enhancing Participation

First-cycle elections tend to have a sense of expectation, euphoria even, as citizens choose their leaders freely and democratically. Voter turnout can be high, despite security concerns. It is in the interest of an EMB to maintain a high turnout, which would reflect their efforts in the efficient organization of polling. Likewise, political contestants need votes so they need voters at the polls. After the second or third cycle, there may be a tendency for voter turnout (the only quantifiable indicator of participation) to decrease, especially where there is a dominant political party or no change in government or in local elections. Many voters become disillusioned by a number of factors, including poor economic

development at the local level, poor service delivery, or politicians seen as self-serving. Therefore, investment in participation, especially over time, is crucial to maintaining elections.

Efforts to help citizens understand the utility and significance of elections as one part of a broader set of accountability mechanisms should be an integral element of electoral assistance. Experience shows that it is important to support consultative approaches to help election stakeholders take joint responsibility and build their confidence in election management bodies and the other institutions involved,[65] that is, to determine whether the EMBs in question will be deserving of confidence. There are many recent examples of situations in which EMBs proved not to be of confidence (Kenya and Afghanistan, for example). In such situations, programmes designed to encourage people to trust untrustworthy institutions may be downright damaging.

While ensuring that men and women vote is important, young citizens' engagement will determine whether democracy will be sustained in the decades to come. Many countries in the South, in particular, have a relatively low median age, which means eligible youth become a sizeable percentage of the electorate. Of the regions in which UNDP provides electoral assistance (Africa, Arab States, Asia Pacific, Europe and the CIS and Latin America and the Caribbean), the median age ranges from 14 to 30 years old. Seven of the eight case studies have a median age under 28: Bangladesh: 23.5, Cambodia: 22.5, Indonesia: 27.9, Liberia: 18.4, Mexico: 26.7, Mozambique: 17.5, West Bank: 20.9. Only Georgia has a median age higher than 28, at 38.8 years old.

Cambodia: Engaging Youth

UNDP Cambodia is targeting 5 million youth as part of a broad civic education multimedia campaign that highlights a wide spectrum of opportunities for participation, including a focus on elections. In the country with the youngest population in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), many thousands of young people are coming of voting age ahead of local elections in June 2012 and national elections in mid-2013. Media offers the best vehicle for reaching out to and engaging young people and an innovative combination on TV, radio, online, mobile phones and community events is making this a reality. **The main assumption here is that young Cambodians have a choice about whom they vote for. The lack of strong opposition parties and candidates does not offer incentives for youth to participate. Participation is not just voting, and engaging youth on issues that affect them is one way to mobilize them to become more politically active.**

In 2010, UNDP commissioned a nationwide Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Study on youth civic participation and the media in Cambodia, which showed very low levels of understanding of key facts and concepts necessary for meaningful civic engagement. For example, although around three quarters of Cambodians aged 15 to 24 years old had heard of 'parliament', two thirds of these could not describe what a parliament does. This also reflects the low level of engagement of parliamentarians as well in engaging their constituents.

In response, UNDP engaged BBC Media Action to implement the Multimedia Initiative for Youth Civic Education in Cambodia. Combining the principles of social mobilization and behaviour change

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65. OECD DAC Draft Principles for Electoral Assistance, March 2010

communication through a range of coordinated and re-enforcing media outputs, the initiative is building a platform to increase youth access to information about civic life and opportunities for participation.

On January 15, 2012, the team launched its 18-month multimedia and community outreach campaign. Known to the public as 'Loy9' (left) – a slang term of praise amongst young Cambodians – it combines TV magazine, TV drama, phone-in radio, spots, websites, and live games. And it entertains and informs audiences throughout the country.

Loy9 programmes target civic knowledge, attitudes and skills by presenting vital information and positive examples of youth participation in governance. The programmes aim to reach 3 million young people (aged 15 to 24 years) by July 2013.

The 18-month campaign comprises of two 16-week TV series and a radio show broadcast across the country throughout the campaign period. Web content is updated daily, there are regular trips of the Loy9 van to hold events in provincial towns, and TV and radio public service announcements provide important information about elections and voter registration.

The style and format of Loy9 is quite unlike anything that has been available before in Cambodia. Fast-paced, entertaining, but also educational and inspiring, the shows have been extremely well received by audiences across the country. After just three months on air, audience panel research suggests a significant proportion of young people in Cambodia are watching and listening regularly and that they are picking up on key messages and themes including speaking in public, contributing to their community and interacting with commune councils.

"[Loy9] is good because it helps makes us happy, educates us, and encourages us to be brave." Female student, 20 years old.

Early results in April 2012 indicated that the television show was reaching an average of 35 percent of the prime time viewing audience – around 3 million viewers a week. Another clear indicator of a wide reach and positive reception is data from online content. Videos on the Loy9 YouTube channel were viewed over 100,000 times in the first ten weeks; the Facebook page had over 6,000 'Likes'; and www.loy9.com.kh had been visited more than 5,000 times a week. In a country with under 10 percent Internet access, this is a huge response.

4.12.3 Voters with Disabilities

Many countries that receive electoral assistance have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), of which Article 29 mandates facilitating participation in political and public life. While voter education often includes persons with disabilities, more lessons learned on disabled persons' issues can be gathered in the post-election review by consulting disabled group organizations. UNDP project design should be more explicit in showing how its support will promote rights of people with disabilities as an objective in the work of an EMB in their strategic plan and also by facilitating dialogue between EMB and groups of disabled persons to address issues they face.

In Timor Leste, UNDP supported the Technical Secretariat for Elections (STAE) in organizing voter education sessions for vulnerable groups. These sessions included people with disabilities and informed them about their rights and discussed challenges they faced in having access, receiving information

and getting assistance at polling stations. UNDP, through support to domestic observers, could support disabled observers who would be best placed to monitor whether the provisions have helped disabled voters and provide feedback to the EMB. In Tanzania, UNDP supported the strategic design of voter education aimed at persons with disabilities, including the use of Braille and sign language.

4.12.4 Indigenous Peoples and Minorities

In certain contexts, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities are also considered a vulnerable group. In Cambodia, UNDP supported an innovative community radio outreach programme to indigenous peoples in Rattanakiri province so they can listen to information and issues and interact in their own languages. Asking the community what issues they want to see discussed and listen to and also recruiting volunteers to help run the radio programmes help with the sustainability and impact.

Mexico's electoral institutions, the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) and the Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación (TEPJF), enlisted UNDP's support with the aim of improving the information Mexicans have about their democracy in order to increase the quality of their participation. Project activities included the organization of workshops and seminars, the research and publication of documents, support to civil society (beyond local observation support) and other awareness-raising activities. The programme paid special attention to specific groups, such as women and indigenous populations, and indigenous women in particular.

In Mexico, UNDP has supported CSOs that specifically reach out to indigenous women to ensure they are informed about their civil and political rights.

4.12.5 Civil Society Monitoring

Electoral assistance and observation should be well coordinated, as observation plays a key role in effective electoral support. Electoral processes, and not just electoral events, need watchdogs as a preventative measure to increase transparency as well as to document fraud and irregularities. Monitoring polling and counting is insufficient, though. Legal reform processes and voter registration should also be observed. To offer better support, some CSOs in the case studies suggested that UNDP provide the same funds to their organizations, but over a longer period. CSOs could expand their work with new skills into media monitoring and party finance, but would need capacity development to create a more rigorous methodology and professional approach to enhance their credibility and be taken more seriously by the government and parliament. Domestic and international election observation reports can be key tools in identifying deficiencies that might be addressed by election assistance projects, as well as in keeping pressure on the authorities for positive change. This suggests that assistance to establish or support non-partisan domestic observation organizations can be a constructive element of UNDP assistance projects.

Electoral assistance projects often support EMBs in the invitation and accreditation process, but could encourage EMBs in conducting public relations to be more transparent when dealing with domestic and international observers. In Tanzania, the evaluation recommended that contracts should be signed earlier so that observers can organize themselves and monitor the whole process.

4.13 UNDP Support to Other Areas of Governance

Electoral assistance should be actively integrated into the wider domain of democracy support, especially assistance for political party development, legislative strengthening, media assistance, and civic education programmes.[66] Designing electoral assistance to be comprehensive horizontally across the many domestic institutions and sectors that are involved in an electoral process will ensure better synergies and overall coherence. Electoral assistance providers should actively connect their activities with the wider set of development partner programmes to support accountable governance at all levels.[67]

UNDP specifically can work towards this cohesion by mainstreaming election components into other aspects of its own work in democratic governance. For example, parliamentary projects could include a component on drafting improved election legislation, but this needs to be approached within a broader framework of supporting legal drafting capacity; gender equality projects could include a component on women in politics; assistance to the judiciary could include a component of training on EDR; and anti-corruption projects could look in part at election malfeasance or campaign financing issues as well as free media.[68] Such an approach could create powerful synergies within UNDP country governance portfolios. It could also provide the means for phasing out election-specific assistance over time, while ensuring that particular electoral issues of concern continue to be addressed through other programmes.[69]

Grounding electoral assistance more in democratic governance has been highlighted in many forums and workshops as important, but implementation remains challenging. Likewise, requests for funding from country-level development partners still tend to coalesce around election events despite the policy guidance to look towards a longer-term cyclical engagement. Experience from the 'deepening democracy' programme seems mixed, though there is no real empirical evidence to draw on. A review of UNDP efforts during deepening democracy programmes would highlight what has worked and why and would add fresh impetus to subsequent programming.

The dilemma for UNDP appears to be that, on the one hand, offering comprehensive programming is a way to synergize various components though it runs the risk of compromising effective delivery; and that, on the other hand, dividing components among a set of assistance providers may provide more focus and assure delivery, but it could also run the risk of creating a more fragmented approach that lacks coordination and cooperation. UNDP's engagement in the 'complementary' areas of the electoral cycle approach (e.g., political parties, media, civil society) may put UNDP into competition with other assistance providers, but should be grounded on an assessment of the context and who would be best placed and experienced to support those areas. UNDP has to increase synergies among different areas of governance and present a modus operandi that would help collaboration with other UN agencies such as UN Women or UNESCO, but also with other international assistance providers such as IFES and NDI.

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66. OECD DAC Draft Principles for Electoral Assistance, March 2010

67. Ibid.

68. Key correlates free media and anti-corruption institutions to degree of electoral malpractice, see 'Patterns of Malpractice', Sarah Birch, University of Essex, 2012.

69. The Role of UNDP in Supporting Democratic Elections in Africa (2013)

4.13.1 Support to Local Elections

Local elections can be more complex to organize than national elections and therefore increased emphasis may be needed on providing support to Local Electoral Management Bodies (LEMBs) and subnational electoral processes. Complexity is only part of the story, albeit an important one. In addition, local elections involve fewer votes, therefore typically smaller margins of victory, and therefore smaller margins of error for the EMB, and greater opportunities for a result to be swayed by fraud, vote buying, intimidation, etc. In addition, local politics is sometimes more personalized, with patron/client relationships becoming part of the equation. Development partners and assistance providers should consider complementing their traditional focus on national elections with greater attention to strengthening local elections.[70] Through a NAM, the UN would decide on the risks of being involved in supporting local elections.

On a broader scale, effective election management is a distinct indicator of a country's democratic health and political stability. The capacity of a country to manage its local elections is a precondition for the establishment of public confidence in wider democratic processes.[71] National-level elections are critical in starting or culminating this process, but they are not enough. Local elections play a critical role in democratization.[72]

When looking at the management of local elections and the delivery of technical assistance, single or double interactions, within one or multiple timetables, may have to be considered. National and local elections may be held at the same or different times. Such elections may be run by the same national election management body (NEMB) or by multiple LEMBs. As such, these two axes can interact in different ways:[73]

- *One cycle, one EMB*: One election management body (NEMB) may run all elections at the same time

- *One cycle, multiple bodies*: Multiple authorities (NEMB and LEMB) may run national and local elections at the same time

- *Multiple cycles, multiple bodies*: Multiple authorities (NEMB and LEMB) may run national and local elections at different times

With varying electoral cycles and schedules, those running elections, as well as those providing technical assistance, need to consider the timing and geographical implementation of core electoral elements such as staff training, voter registration and voter/civic education exercises. Will these be implemented nationally or tailored to local scenarios and bodies, or both? Will technical assistance be provided to one national EMB or multiple LEMBs, or both?

UNDP support to local elections could be an extension of a support programme to national elections, but also be linked to a decentralization programme building local democracy and governance.

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70. OECD DAC Draft Principles for Electoral Assistance, March 2010

71. Schmidt – Indonesia's 2009 elections: Performance challenges and negative precedents, p. 101.

72. Ibid.

73. This typology is taken from the UNDP publication Promoting Local Election Management as Part of an Electoral Cycle Approach, 2013.

4.13.2 Support to Media

The quality, character and behaviour of the media have always influenced electoral conduct and outcomes. Independent and professional media play a key role in creating conditions for democratic elections, providing access to full and accurate information to voters. It is critical that parties and candidates be able to use the media equitably to get their messages across to the electorate. As well, the media themselves have a right to report freely and to scrutinize, to investigate problems, to promote transparency and accountability, to analyse issues and to serve as a watchdog over the whole election process. This scrutiny is an important additional safeguard against interference or corruption.[74]

Electoral assistance providers have placed a relatively low priority on support to media over recent years. Media support interventions tend to be conceived and implemented late in the electoral cycle and systematic approaches to understanding and supporting the role of media around elections are rare. In many countries, UNDP has found that training is needed to enable the media to perform their functions effectively and to help ensure professionalism and balance in election reporting. However, UNDP support to media should encompass more than just training journalists to report better. UNDP projects could also include ensuring that the media know the rules, regulations and codes of conduct; creating dialogue between the EMB, the media, journalists' associations and political parties; training editors and journalists in covering elections; tendering competitions for grants to produce voter education spots; supporting CSOs in the methodology of media monitoring; and offering media training for EMBs and politicians.

Where development partners and assistance providers have established media development strategies and programmes, the strategic linkages to electoral assistance have so far been weak. Mechanisms for lesson learning from these programmes are also very limited and the coordination of media support around elections could be improved.

Some resources towards this end do exist, however. UNESCO offers useful training material for journalists reporting on elections, such as the 'Coaching Manual for Media Support during Elections'. UNDP, in the 'Guide on Media and Elections',[75] developed a diagnostic tool to analyse the needs and roles of the media after an election in preparation for the next election, leaving a sufficient period to plan and address deep-rooted issues. The Guide also provides a set of principles on support to media around elections.

If development projects are to focus on media regulation, the following areas should be prioritized: effectively sanctioning hate speech, establishing independent regulatory bodies and making self-regulatory initiatives work. Without a balanced regulatory framework for media on elections, which could act as a conflict-prevention mechanism, a country runs the risk of media further inflaming a volatile situation, as happened in Kenya in 2007. On the other hand, regulatory frameworks should not be used inappropriately to control dissent or silence critical voices. In Cambodia, for instance, many journalists who criticize the government have been arrested on the basis of a defamation clause in the law.[76]

From a gender perspective, UNDP assistance can provide training to promote equitable media coverage of women, as candidates, leaders and voters, portraying them in a positive light and on an equal basis

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74. ACE: Electoral Knowledge Network: Media and Elections
75. Media and Elections: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies (UNDP, 2013)
76. http://guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/25/difficult-plight-journalists-cambodia

with men. Media monitoring should identify through disaggregated statistics how much coverage women and men candidates receive and in what light. Topics considered to be 'women's issues' often receive less coverage. Media should also target women voters. In Indonesia, for example, UNDP conducted a major campaign targeting women voters to encourage the election of more women to the legislatures.[77]

New and emerging social media are increasingly becoming an invaluable source of election-related information and a tool for election monitoring. Much UNDP support to media has tended to be traditional. For example, what are the implications of the shift in newspaper publication from hardcopy to online? Or candidates' use of Facebook to gather support? While the face and use of media are changing rapidly, often there is an urban/rural digital divide that any assistance project would have to consider. UNDP, together with media development partners,[78] could develop strategies for tackling the recent changes in media landscape from regulatory framework to how citizens are using new social media and the impact on democratization and electoral processes.

By using existing studies and by engaging bloggers, youth groups and not just long-established CSOs, UNDP could explore further ways to support efforts, especially by civil society, to use social media effectively to convey information and monitor electoral processes.

UNDP assistance can also provide guidance on how to best uphold international obligations, commitments, and principles and to adapt the relevant best practices and standards to their specific contexts. UNDP's 'Guide on Media and Elections' helps raise this important component in electoral programming.

In the past few years, UNDP has worked with the CSOs in Georgia to ensure qualified and credible monitoring of the media and the balanced and neutral information to the public.

In Cambodia, UNDP support included training in investigative journalism, journalistic independence, balanced reporting on sensitive issues, editorial processes and effective production techniques. UNDP with the Ministry of Information also produced a current affairs programme, *Equity Weekly*, which provides citizens, policy makers and civil society with a platform to discuss current and emerging issues and views; and the Equity News, which gives airtime to all political parties to present their respective political party platform and messages to voters.

77. NDI/UNDP Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties, February 2012
78. Such as Internews, BBC Media Action, or UNESCO, for example.

UNDP Tanzania: Elections and Media Support

Media play a crucial role in providing an environment where voters can make informed choices. UNDP Tanzania's Electoral Support Programme included a component on support to the media for 2010 elections, which was built on lessons learned from the 2005 elections. In late 2009, an assessment of the media environment was conducted and an analysis of the needs for media support completed. The assessment recommended the following areas of support:

- Updating and strengthening the media code of conduct

- Training for journalists in print and electronic media, editors, and media house executives on ethical and objective elections reporting

- Training for journalists in print and electronic media on the media's responsibility to contribute to voter and civic education

- Media monitoring during the months leading to the elections to provide stakeholders with an assessment of the media coverage and an analysis of the coverage of political parties as well as gender issues and attention to women candidates

Lessons learned from this support are that a thorough assessment of the media environment and the needs for media support are essential for designing the component; that the media code of conduct should contain enforcement measures; and that the training of media should be aimed at journalists and management (owners and editors) who have authority over the content and should be engaged to favour an unbiased approach of the media during elections.

4.13.3 Support to Political Parties

There remains a need to further support political parties to engage in constructive dialogue for reform and conflict prevention and to help define the role of opposition. Providing support to political parties can be an especially sensitive aspect of election assistance, but, if carefully managed, can make an important contribution to democratic governance and improved elections.

Promoting dialogue and regular communication between political parties and EMBs can be particularly important in fostering confidence in electoral processes. UNDP has learned through experience in supporting political parties that any support must be non-partisan, transparent and clear, inclusive, equitable, and focused on dialogue and using MDG agendas. The UN has the impartiality of an honest broker and can therefore convene the political parties.

Many political parties could benefit from training in such issues as voter mobilization, issue-based campaigning, transparency, and accountability. Political parties are often also in need of guidance on developing internal party democracy and gender equality, though not all political parties may see this as their priority when fund-raising and membership remain paramount. UNDP can be of assistance in these areas as well, if sufficient support is not being provided by other organizations.[79] Political Party Resource Centres as set up in Timor Leste just before the 2012 elections provide party representatives

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79. NDI, IRI, German *Stiftungen* (foundations) and many others have provided assistance in this area for more than 20 years.

with tangible resources and information such as internet access and photocopiers as well as training in dispute resolution procedures and forms.

A particular area on which political parties should focus, and in which UNDP can also offer assistance, is the promotion of the role of women and marginalized groups in party structures, party leadership, and as party-backed candidates for office, as well as the development of party platforms that take into account the concerns of women, youth and people with disabilities.

In Cambodia, support to political party dialogue has been moderately successful. UNDP has played an important facilitating role by providing a neutral forum in which political parties can come together and discuss issues. This complements rather than duplicates the work of other political party assistance providers who focus more on training on voter mobilization, issue-based campaigning, transparency, and accountability, among others.

In Tanzania, the UNDP evaluation[80] suggested that political parties should have more support in order to be able to contribute to ensuring the transparency of voter registration, the monitoring of the election events, effective election conflict resolution, and support for female candidates.

4.13.4 Support to Parliament

The intersection between electoral assistance and parliamentary development can be found predominantly in electoral law reform, but also in women's empowerment, political parties, CSOs and the media. Parliamentary development programmes that directly follow elections can be especially effective, as they are able to provide capacity-building, especially induction training, at the beginning of the parliamentary term when this assistance would be most beneficial.

Converging electoral and parliamentary support has challenges, though, such as the timing of programmes, implementation strategies, the context of each country, the risk of politicizing programmes, and respecting specific country requests. UNDP's governance and broader development programme is well placed to start incorporating these linkages into its programme design, where appropriate, and should consider it, as it could offer programme continuity and foster a more holistic and coordinated approach to UNDP's democratic governance assistance.[81]

In Indonesia and Liberia, UNDP was able to segue from electoral assistance to parliamentary development. In Bangladesh, UNDP's parliamentary development project paved the way for an electoral assistance programme. In Mozambique, as a follow-up to the 2009 elections and in preparation for the 2013 and 2014 elections, the government established a commission to review possible changes in electoral law. UNDP intends to support this process through a project integrating assistance to the parliament and to the EMB, as both play crucial roles in this process.[82]

4.14   UNDP Role and Relations

4.14.1 Relations with Development Partners

Development partners unanimously expressed that they thought highly of UN/UNDP due to its prestige and impartiality as a lead in coordination. In some cases, a bilateral partner may play a dominant role

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80. Independent External Evaluation of UNDP Elections Support Project 2010

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

due to the amount of funding, political interest or historical relationship, but still see UN/UNDP as an important convener that has the trust of the national stakeholders. High-level ambassadorial steering groups, development partner coordination and technical working groups, all of which UNDP leads, are seen as useful and should be continued between elections. Development partners have expressed their preference for being included in the process and for being able to contribute to substantive discussions on electoral issues, and for not being seen just as funders. Liberia offers a good example of this, according to the EU. In other cases, some felt that UNDP's coordination of international assistance can be too heavy-handed and should take a more inclusive, consultative approach that promotes sharing information in a trustful environment.

While UNDP has an agreement with the government of a country in terms of its programming and resource mobilization, it remains impartial. Some stakeholders, namely opposition political parties and some CSOs, however, perceive UNDP as sometimes too close to the government/executive, which could be seen as supporting the ruling party. Bilateral partners have in some cases wished that UNDP had taken a stronger stance on certain principles.

Some donors and consultants have argued that international assistance for elections may tend to push a country towards more expensive 'international' solutions to problems that could have been addressed locally. However several factors, such as pressure to have the 'best' solution, comparing to regional neighbours, time constraints or a lack of trust between political parties, influence the choice towards selection of a more expensive option. The EC-UNDP JTF has been successful in facilitating and expediting the project formulation process and, through a series of thematic workshops, has helped facilitate a mutual understanding of policy frameworks and advancements in ICT or conflict and elections.[83]

4.14.2 Relations with other Electoral Assistance Providers

While there is need to support political parties, media and CSOs, the UN should recognize other international electoral assistance providers like AEC, the Asia Foundation, EISA, IDEA, IFES, IRI, NDI and many others with a comparative advantage in these areas. In some cases, UNDP should be allowed to take the lead for better coordination of international assistance and good value for money.

On the ground, UNDP coordinates with a number of these electoral assistance providers and, to a lesser extent, party foundations. In countries where a collaborative approach was employed, the EMB had an easier time dealing with the international community as a whole. The BRIDGE partnership is a working-level example of pulling resources together and maximizing strengths (expertise, funds, faster procedures) based on mutual trust and provides a reputable brand through which partners can conduct joint activities.

In some cases, there is natural rivalry among assistance providers to compete for funding, which determines the level of support and strategic positioning each offers.

Electoral assistance providers should build on the progress they have made in creating cooperative mechanisms for electoral assistance by assessing the record of such mechanisms and seeking ways to broaden and deepen communication, cooperation, and coordination among all relevant development partners, including around joint funding mechanisms.[84]

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83. Draft Country Level Evaluation of EC-UNDP Partnership

4.14.3 Relations with EMBs

UNDP supports the EMB's needs mostly on a 'demand-driven', service-oriented basis – when the EMB makes requests, UNDP responds and this process drives programming. This can be frustrating for some international funders, but providing advisory services in this way is based on good practice and comparative experience. It is important, though, to ensure that there is good will involved in any request for assistance and that it is not just an attempt to secure funding or use the UN's partnership as a means for legitimization.

4.15   Programming

4.15.1 Project Design and Measuring Results

When evaluating the impact of electoral assistance projects, UNDP should consider not only the extent to which they contributed to improved capacity, national ownership, sustainability and cost effectiveness, but also whether the resulting election was in line with UN and other international obligations for elections such as strengthening human rights and improving gender equality. Effective implementation of technical processes does not guarantee that the election process is credible or sustainable.

Building on the important learning efforts undertaken in recent years, UNDP should continue to carry out deep-reaching evaluations of the impact of electoral assistance in varied contexts and incorporate the lessons from those evaluations into assistance practice in project design and staff awareness.[85]

A monitoring and evaluation framework should be further detailed and elaborated in the project document and prior to project implementation, especially for big projects with large budgets and expansive objectives. UNDP project staff could be reminded about using the monitoring and evaluation framework effectively and not just at the end of the project to meet report requirements. Often, in past projects, no baseline data was established in the initial stages. Monitoring and evaluation should be better resourced in each project and should be included as a deliverable in project staff terms of reference. Results-based management was applied at the higher levels, but only to a limited extent at the component level, perhaps highlighting the greater awareness of such activities among internal UNDP staff over external consultants.

Electoral projects tend to be focused on implementing activities and completing outputs, such as the number of workshops conducted, which are easier to evaluate quantitatively, but less successful in demonstrating desired results or what progress has been achieved, particularly in longer-term objectives such as capacity development. A project may be implemented well, on time, and with the funds spent, but a more robust assessment on the outcome is required to be able to identify attributable results. Impact is a very long-term proposition and difficult to credibly attribute results to.

UNDP has ongoing initiatives to produce programming guidance on good outcomes and indicators for electoral assistance as well as indicators for self-assessment that electoral management bodies can use to set goals and targets. Conducting pre- and post-election surveys is one useful approach to demonstrate evidence of transformation or reaching outcomes to a certain degree.

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84. Ibid.

85. OECD DAC Draft Principles for Electoral Assistance, March 2010

Electoral assistance projects are still, fundamentally, time-critical. The cycle approach does not imply that donors can expect to be able to hop on and hop off whenever it suits them. In fact, the opposite is the case: it recognizes that critical points come in a discernible order and that people have to be ready to support them in a timely way. The danger with building in too many reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc. is that real assistance may get put on hold while they are proceeding.

UNDP needs to do more, however, to strengthen the links between the policy, learning and approach and implementation at the country level. The real challenge consists in making sure that the recommendations are followed up through the system.

4.16 UNDP Quality Support and Advice

At the global level, UNDP/BDP through GPECS has developed an innovative policy agenda, global knowledge products and tools in cutting-edge areas. At the regional level, GPECS has focused on the exchange of good practices, peer networking, and knowledge creation and dissemination in all regions. According to a recent independent evaluation of UNDP, the GPECS mechanism is a major development in how UNDP can provide assistance to support these processes from a global perspective, demonstrating UNDP responsiveness to evolutions in the field of practice. It is, however, still too early to evaluate the full measure of the GPECS contribution to the concept and UNDP practice of the electoral cycle approach.[86]

UNDP BDP HQ, through GPECS, the EC-UNDP JTF and Regional Advisors, can support more COs by not just having specific electoral expertise, but by linking them to global policy and comparative regional experiences. Specific expertise in the technology of electoral processes, especially civic and voter registration, should continue to be developed at UNDP, as should expertise in the use of tools such as BRIDGE, the setting up of ERCs, and gender sensitization among staff and partners through practical guidance on programming. Core BDP staff could also be supported by consultants in other areas as needed.

UNDP's strength lies not only in its expertise, but also in quality assurance. BDP HQ and Regional Advisors could play a stronger role in assessment and programme design at the country level in order to ensure that current policy and learning are reflected. The resources of effective support services must match demand in order to ensure consistency of performance among COs.

4.17 UNDP Learning and Application: The Way Forward

Recommendations from evaluations, lessons learned exercises, and communities of practice meetings including the Agenda for Organizational Change (AOC) and the new Strategic Plan,[87] need to be acted on with a more integrated approach. Using a cadre of highly experienced staff who have handled electoral assistance adeptly in politically sensitive countries and who can be drawn on as a source of advice would enable a more consistent approach to NAMs and clarification of the normative framework that guides UNDP electoral assistance. A new strategic plan would also help unify policy, strengthen support services, and encourage the greater use of guides, lessons, and tools. Assessing resource requirements and restructuring these components would help to meet increasing demands.

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86. Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes, 2012

87. The UNDP Agenda for Organizational Change (AOC) has identified that all Bureaux are expected to perform new strategic functions in relation to their own direct areas of responsibility and in contribution to the corporate agenda. The AOC aims at positioning UNDP headquarters and Regional Centres to more effectively support country offices to deliver visible, consistent impact on the ground.

4.18 UNDP Communities of Practice, Thematic Trainings & Knowledge Management

The global,[88] regional[89] and thematic[90] Communities of Practice on electoral assistance are a significant step forward in developing a learning culture within UNDP on electoral issues. The case studies and lessons learned from these meetings provide the latest thinking on specific issues and how to tackle them. Sustaining communities online beyond high-cost global or regional meetings remains a challenge, but would add great value to work conducted at the country level. Country offices would benefit from a closed space where frank exchanges can take place and an open space where information and tools can be accessed easily. More consistent templates could be designed for evaluations that could help with comparative analysis. Likewise, a better systematization of all reports and useful thematic and regional information would be a valuable resource for UNDP staff and consultants. A study on the usage of the online internal information and sharing website Teamworks for this purpose could highlight what could be done further in disseminating information effectively.

There appears to be a disconnect between the wealth of information in the form of guides and tools available at global and regional levels and how it is used at the country level. UNDP/BDP, through GPECS and the EC-UNDP JTF, has made a concerted effort to address this disconnect, with the resources available through websites and trainings, but the effort has been fragmented. A comprehensive and cohesive virtual library could be pulled together initially on Teamworks, but would need promotion at the country level.

DPA, UNDP/BDP, and UNDP COs have an abundance of information of varying degrees of confidentiality such as NAMs, project formulations, mid-term reviews and evaluations, post-election reviews, lessons learned exercises, community of practice papers, thematic workshops discussions, case studies, and external documents such as observer reports and political analyses. How all these documents are systematized and shared may help information management and be more accessible to help comparative analysis, project design and lessons learned.

Many UNDP staff interviewed commended the usefulness of the 'UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide' and the electoral assistance trainings, but, with staff turnover and a number of consultants filling electoral project positions, other methods of dissemination need to be explored, such as e-learning, online communities of practice, and possibly alerting consultants on the roster about policy updates and new publications.

GPECS has also provided a significant increase in useful studies and the EC-UNDP JTF has become a valuable forum for thematic trainings on electoral assistance, elections and conflict elections and ICT, procurement, and project formulation.

The ACE Electoral Knowledge Network has evolved since its launch in 2006 and, while far from reaching its potential, it remains an invaluable resource. More knowledge-sharing from ACE could provide improved assessments and project formulation by selected experts from the community.

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88. The first global UNDP Community of Practice (CoP) on electoral assistance with selected guest participants from consultants and EMBs was held in Manila in December 2004 and the second and last one was held in Gaborone in March 2011 through GPECS.

89. Regional Community of Practice on electoral assistance for the Arab Region was held in Cairo in May 2011.

90. JTF organized workshops on Elections and Conflict Prevention in Barcelona in June 2011 and Elections and ICT in Mombasa in March 2012, in addition to the regular workshops on electoral assistance that have been held in Brussels, Dar-es-Salaam and Maputo from 2006 to the present.

UNDP/BDP launched an Online Toolkit for Electoral Assistance in 2012, which is designed to guide UNDP colleagues and other electoral practitioners at different stages of electoral cycle projects, by explaining core concepts at each stage, procedures to be followed, and linking to useful tools that are available in UNDP and outside of UNDP.[91] It also offers a user-friendly way to search policy documents, case studies, lessons learned, guides, summary reports, and PowerPoint presentations by topic. Good examples of institutional and contextual assessments, project design with SMART objectives and indicators, and various checklists could help assessment, formulation and evaluation missions and also technical working groups in monitoring progress and project modification. This toolkit will also link to ACE and BRIDGE websites. Regional Centre initiatives and the EC-UNDP JTF should all be connected to one forum such as this suggested online toolkit.

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91. http://toolkit-elections.unteamworks.org/

Sierra Leoneans take to the polls in Freetown to vote in the third presidential and parliamentary elections since the end of civil war in 2002. 17 November 2012

UN Photo/UNIPSIL

5. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, UNDP has gathered another decade of valuable experience and made considerable progress in capturing this experience, but now needs to apply this knowledge better at the country level. The decentralized nature of the UN system does not lend itself easily to quality assurance. UNDP/BDP has played a significant role with few resources until the GPECS project, 2009-2012, bolstered support through the EC-UNDP JTF, the Regional Centres and selected COs. UNDP remains the key electoral assistance provider most experienced in handling large budgets and procurement, while retaining its role as an impartial broker. The technical expertise that has accumulated over two decades has produced a wealth of experience, but a tighter control on getting projects right and more focus on results will counter criticisms from development partners who still view UN as a key partner.

With the convergence of a corporate evaluation, lessons learned on integration and the longer-term impact of electoral assistance, as well as other initiatives such as gender mainstreaming, an opportunity arises for a reconsideration and recalibration of how UNDP supports its electoral programmes throughout the world. The key issues that have come up in this study are the need for continued support services at HQ and regional levels to coordinate with other agencies to ensure that contextual assessments, project formulation and implementation, and regular and effective monitoring contribute to achieving sharper and more cost-effective programming.

A local resident casts ballots during the senatorial run-off elections in Yamales, Liberia.
14 May 2006

UN Photo/Eric Kanalstein

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   Policy and Analysis

Recommendation 1: Consider complementing existing political analysis on the ground through NAMs with ICA, Peace and Development Advisers or with external consultants at RC's request (as best exemplified in the Bangladesh case study).

Recommendation 1a: Political analysis and identified risks should be better reflected in the UNDP project documents; continued political analysis is needed beyond the initial NAM provided by DPA in the implementation of the project at critical junctures for steering committees to make informed decisions, especially on technical or procedural issues.

Recommendation 1b: Guidance would be useful on modifying an electoral programme or project document appropriately and reallocating funds to meet unforeseen needs such as snap or delayed elections, but without losing the original objectives completely.

Recommendation 2: More explicitly link electoral project outcomes to international obligations and principles with the aim of strengthening civil and political rights and not just of improving elections per se; internal and external assessments should inform new project design to address deficiencies and ensure that the same deficiencies are not being repeated in the following electoral cycle.

6.2   Guiding Principles

Recommendation 3: Guiding principles of electoral assistance and aid effectiveness need to be considered in any programme design, implementation and evaluation. While development partners follow these principles in general for other areas, electoral support differs to developmental programming and sometimes DEX/DIM is required instead of NEX/NIM to guarantee the project implementation and accountability. See lessons learned from the OECD DAC Draft Principles on Electoral Assistance from March 2010.

Recommendation 3a: Long-term strategies for sustainability for CSOs need to be developed either through government funding or donations with the intention of broadening their scope of work and skills to encompass efforts in between elections. The same amount of funding could be given to CSOs earlier and for a longer period than the deluge of funding that is usually provided in the six-month lead-up to an election.

Recommendation 3b: UNDP could provide user-friendly tools for building electoral budgets, including running, event and diffuse costs, to help analyse where high costs lie and which costs will increase over time, stay the same or can be reduced without affecting the integrity of the election. Such a tool could also help place electoral budgets within state budgeting, though the challenge here will be that many countries' finance ministries have their own very prescriptive budgeting rules, so bringing the two together will not necessarily be so easy. For this purpose, UNDP could update its study on the cost of registration and elections (CORE) for comparative benchmarks and provide simple guidelines (and templates) to build capacity of EMBs, CSOs and others in designing and managing budgets and procurement.

Recommendation 3c: Increase the notion of shared national ownership among all key electoral stakeholders, and not just among the executive, through dialogue convened by the UN; create more democratic space for dialogue, consultation and inclusion to create a stronger sense of ownership of the electoral/democratic process for citizens, civil society groups and political entities.

6.3   Electoral Cycle Approach

Recommendation 4: The electoral cycle approach is a useful tool for long-term objectives and broadening the scope of engaging multiple stakeholders, but it should not lose sight of the political elements of the model and should provide clear exit strategies, a national capacity development plan and a gradual reduction of international assistance or dependency on funds. The term 'exit strategy' is a useful aim for a finishing point after long-term assistance to see whether technical assistance is no longer needed, but perhaps the term 'transition' is more appropriate in phasing out assistance according to democratic development indicators. The electoral cycle approach needs to be strategic in heading towards clearly defined goals, not just on repeat or a 'hamster on a wheel', but what should be achieved over two or three cycles. Technical assistance from one cycle to the next needs careful consideration, fresh assessment, updated contextual analysis, and evaluation of its impact. The new programme, project or phase needs to adapt to new challenges, but also to further the developmental progress and avoid a dependency on technical or financial support. Case studies have shown that exit strategies tend to present when donors no longer want to fund UNDP or UN declines to work with the government any longer because it has not shown sufficient democratic progress.

6.4   Capacity Development and Technology

Recommendation 5: A dedicated thematic workshop looking at experiences in capacity development and methods used in a group of case studies should be conducted. In addition, UNDP should adapt capacity development guidelines in line with other areas of assistance with examples of project design, overcoming challenges and specific components such as setting up resource training centres, in addition to developing longer-term evaluation processes. To do so, it could use the available resources from the UNDP Capacity Development Group and BDP and capture these lessons learned. It is important to have selected capacity development specialists in the UN Electoral Experts Roster, who could advise on a needs basis and conduct institutional assessments.

Recommendation 6: UNDP can empower stakeholders to be more aware about technology to understand what is feasible, cost-effective, and sustainable. More research needs to be conducted on new social media. UNDPs thematic workshop 'Information Technology and Elections Management', held in Mombasa, highlighted case studies and ways forward on how best to use new technology in elections suited to a given context and by piloting.

Recommendation 7: UNDP has a clear niche in facilitating more regional thematic workshops and networks, but the participants must be targeted, the objectives made clear and attempts made to measure the impact on their work through surveys a few months after the workshop.

6.5   Gender and Conflict

Recommendation 8: Gender-specific components such as empowering women candidates have value, but structural issues remain critical to achieving gender equality. It is important, therefore, to ensure gender mainstreaming in electoral programme design, implementation and evaluation. Gender audits should be an integral part of an institutional assessment. Devise strategies and incentives for national counterparts such as EMBs, parliaments and political parties to consider gender mainstreaming properly. Capitalize on UNDP/BDP gender advisors' expertise, collaborate with UN Women and use available

tools such as the BRIDGE module on Gender and Elections and recent guidance such as Entry Points for Gender Mainstreaming for EMBs. Disaggregated statistics on literacy, voter registration, polling, and candidates will help identify gender imbalance.

Recommendation 9: Work more closely with UNDP BCPR to seek their advice and expertise. To enhance the conflict prevention dimension of electoral programme design, use the thematic workshop 'Elections, Violence and Conflict Prevention' (held in Barcelona in 2011) and incorporate lessons from the UNDP Guide on Elections and Conflict Prevention and the UNDP Study on Understanding Electoral Violence in Asia as a basis. Identify and plan how to manage risks and have high-level interventions ready or on standby in case the conflict worsens, especially at key moments in the electoral process during the campaign, like high-profile disputes and the announcement of results.

6.6 Specific Areas of Support: Legal Framework, Dispute Resolution, Registration

Recommendation 10: The legal electoral reform process should be consultative, inclusive, participatory and transparent. The UN has a role in facilitating this consultative approach. Effective support can encourage a consistent law that can be operationalized practically, cost-effectively and on time.

Recommendation 11: Institutional assessments need to look at credibility and impartiality as well as capacity issues; areas for support need to be clearly identified based on contextual analysis, institutional assessments, external observer reports, and independent evaluations and not only in response to a request by the government.

Recommendation 12: Generally, more emphasis on EDR (or electoral justice), which tends to be weaker than other areas, is needed in programming in terms of assisting the legal framework, procedures and practice.

Recommendation 13: The EC-UNDP thematic workshop 'Information Technology and Elections Management', held in Mombasa in March 2012, provides the latest thinking from experts and lessons learned from case studies to formulate a guideline on voter registration, the use of technology and links with the civil register. Create guidelines that include assessment, feasibility and cost-effectiveness tools. Also include voter register audits in programming. Monitor trends such as out-of-country internet voting.

6.7 Civil Society and Youth

Recommendation 14: Revise guidelines on engaging with CSOs in elections; integrate more baseline surveys into civic education assistance to measure shifts in knowledge, perceptions or attitudes; better assess the needs of target groups such as youth, people with disabilities and minorities; gender mainstream all civic education activities and materials; link civic participation to accountability mechanisms.

Recommendation 14a: Invest more in youth advocacy using successful multi-media projects targeting youth as a model for other countries but basing any project design on comprehensive research first; look at, for example, a 'Knowledge, Attitudes and Perception Study'. Engage youth in the project to ensure ownership and so they can steer what will have more impact.

Recommendation 14b: Provide more capacity development to national-level, larger CSOs to increase their skills and credibility, to become more rigorous in their methodology using evidence-based statistical analysis, and to cover more phases of the electoral cycle beyond polling or other governance areas. This would not necessarily apply to smaller, grassroots CSOs.

6.8   Political Parties and Parliament

Recommendation 15: The UN is well placed to facilitate political party dialogue that would contribute to the reform process, mutual understanding, and conflict prevention. The UN, through political analysis, can ascertain the risks when dealing with political parties. Party dialogue and high-level interventions are needed to address political/systemic issues. UNDP can use the UN system, Member State ambassadors, respected former heads of state and rapporteurs for this type of support.

Recommendation 16: UNDP/BDP can develop further linkages in programming, especially regarding electoral reform, by using the parliamentary support programme as an entry point for bringing other stakeholders into a consultative process with a legal reform committee.

6.9   Media

Recommendation 17: Draw lessons from the UNDP *Media and Elections Guide* to highlight programmatic entry points and effective strategies; make stronger links between electoral and media support. A lot more thought also needs to be given to the impact of new and social media on electoral regulation and activity.

6.10   Coordination

Recommendation 18: Create guidelines for effective coordination and the management of development partners regarding electoral projects in different settings (e.g., integration policy on peacekeeping or political missions, steering committees and technical working groups, basket fund reporting, etc.). Reiterate the UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide as a reference with periodic updates and continued electoral assistance trainings for UNDP staff.

Recommendation 19: UNDP/BDP could facilitate a discussion with main competitors/collaborators in electoral assistance to ascertain in which countries cooperation works best and why without compromising the UN's position or programming. Personalities should not be the sole determinant of successful collaboration.

Recommendation 20: Reassert UNDP's impartiality by talking to all political parties. Avoiding opposition political parties may increase suspicion that UNDP is inactive or too close to the government.

Recommendation 21: If UNDP advisory services and assistance are requested by the government or an EMB, the EMB should have a commitment to use the support and resources provided; clear objectives and indicators will keep electoral assistance on track and provide clarity on what needs can be supported.

6.11   Knowledge Management

Recommendation 22: In order to maintain and enhance knowledge management, all useful and relevant documents need to be systematized for easy access to inform further programming and enrich the quality of programme design. Better dissemination and awareness are needed for UNDP and others to apply these at the country level; the knowledge resources and tools may be useful in other languages (French, Arabic, Portuguese, Russian) for certain regions and to reach out to different stakeholders; public documents, such as guides and lessons learned, could be linked to existing portals and networks, such as ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, for further dissemination.

Recommendation 23: More independent assessments, mid-term reviews, evaluations, and broader strategic reviews, combined with political or contextual analysis, are needed before embarking on a new large project design. Though evaluations are important, they should not hold up projects, as elections are time-critical and so is electoral assistance. Jointly funded assessments could pool resources, be more cost-effective, and have multiple benefits for development partners unless a specific audit is required.

Polling officers tally votes at a polling station after ballots were cast in Timor-Leste's parliamentary elections. 7 July 2012

UN Photo/Martine Perret

7. CASE STUDIES

BANGLADESH

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1. ELECTIONS FROM INDEPENDENCE TO 2007

Bangladesh has an extensive history of competitive elections dating back to the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971. Regular local and parliamentary elections became particularly institutionalized following a period of military rule from 1975 to 1991. These regular national parliamentary elections, under a single-member constituency first-past-the-post electoral system, have facilitated a regular change in power between Bangladesh's two main political parties, the Awami League (AL), which was founded by the independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1949,[92] and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), founded by Major General Ziaur Rahman, another independence leader, in 1978.[93] While elections have always seen the incumbent party lose since 1991, they have been marked by mutual suspicion between the political parties and violent confrontation.[94]

Following failed elections in February 1996, Bangladesh introduced a caretaker government (CTG) system, under which, as mandated by the constitution, the elected government stepped down after the expiration of its tenure 90 days before parliamentary elections and transferred power to a non-party government. Elections were held under this system in June 1996, 2001 and 2008. The system thought to address political party concerns that free and fair elections could not be held under a partisan government, which was perceived by both political parties to be able to manipulate elections through its control of the state's administrative structure.

1.2. THE COLLAPSE OF THE SCHEDULED 2007 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN BANGLADESH

Political confrontation and pre-election violence came to a climax in late 2006 and early 2007 during preparations for the 9th parliamentary elections. While the AL had many grievances against the electoral process, its main concerns were that the BNP had sought to manipulate the CTG system by amending the constitution to alter the retirement age of supreme court judges, which would have changed who was appointed as chief advisor to the CTG. Its other concerns were the inaccuracy of the voter list and the independence of the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC).[95]

A survey conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in late 2006 found that six percent of names on the voter list were in excess and that seven percent of the names on the voter list were

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92. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975.

93. Ziaur Rahman was assassinated in 1981.

94. Bangladesh has ratified the ICCPR, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Under these standards, amongst other commitments, Bangladesh has obligated itself to allow its citizens: "(a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country" (ICCPR: Article 25). Bangladesh is also party to the SAARC Charter of Democracy, which commits it to "[c]ontinue to strengthen democratic institutions and reinforce democratic practices, including through effective coordination as well as checks and balances among the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary." For more information, please see 'Compendium of International Elections Standards – Second Edition', NEEDS – European Commission.

95. Another demand of the opposition was for the introduction of transparent ballot boxes.

duplicates.[96] Given that the voter list had 93 million names on it, these inaccuracies amounted to over 12 million entries, which were popularly referred to as "ghost voters". In addition, presidential appointments to and out of the BEC failed to give the AL confidence in the neutrality of the commission, which it continued to regard as linked to the BNP.[97] A series of negotiations between the AL and BNP failed to result in the appointment of a chief advisor to the CTG acceptable to both political parties, and, as a result, a final and "highly controversial"[98] constitutional option was exercised: the appointment of the president as chief advisor. Due to their lack of confidence in the electoral process, the AL and its allies announced on 3 January 2007 that they would not contest the upcoming polls and accordingly withdrew their 2,370 candidates.

Despite continuous and escalating street violence, the election date remained to be set for 22 January 2007. In response to the escalating political crisis, domestic and international election observers announced that they would not observe the upcoming polls. In addition, the United States Ambassador, the United Kingdom's High Commissioner and the Secretary-General of the UN issued statements expressing concerns about the deteriorating political situation. The UN also suspended its technical assistance to the electoral process.[99]

In response to the political crisis and pressure from Bangladesh's armed forces, the president declared his resignation as chief advisor to the CTG, announced the declaration of a state of emergency, and indefinitely postponed the elections scheduled for 22 January. There was a general public acknowledgement that the armed forces of Bangladesh were involved with the postponement of these elections, the declaration of the state of emergency and the appointment of a new CTG.[100]

1.3 ELECTORAL REFORMS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD

The state of emergency lasted for almost two years. At the start of this period, a new CTG, led by Chief Advisor Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, and a new BEC, led by Chief Election Commissioner Dr. A.T.M. Shamshul Huda, were appointed. The newly appointed bodies introduced a number of significant electoral reforms, which included the preparation of a new electronic voter list with photographs, constituency delimitation, and broad legal reforms to the electoral process. The BEC outlined these comprehensive reforms and set the election date for late 2008 in its 'electoral roadmap', which it released in April 2007.

The most significant of the BEC's reforms was the creation of a new voter list. The registration methodology, which was pilot-tested before full-fledged registration began, involved civil society organizations (CSO) raising awareness about registration procedures in specific geographical areas.[101] After CSOs had conducted voter education activities on the registration process, enumerators, usually local teachers, went door to door to fill out registration forms and provide registrants with a time and place when and where they should present themselves at a local registration centre to have their photos taken and fingerprints scanned. After voters had come to a registration centre and data centre operators had entered registration data into a localized database, voters were issued a National Identity Card (NID). Though the cards were not required to be presented at polling stations, as key biometric data was stored

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96. 'Second Survey on the Integrity of the Voters' List,' The National Democratic Institute, 2006

97. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 34

98. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 35

99. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 39

100. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 55

101. The BEC's methodology for pilot testing new initiatives was also applied to the voter registration update process and to introduction of new voting technology, such as electronic voting machines.

for each individual at the time of registration, these cards were part of a larger push by the government to develop a national registry that would increase access to essential services. The NID, therefore, served as a major incentive for voters to register.[102] The BEC also enlisted support from religious leaders to ensure that women voters did not believe that being photographed violated religious principles.

With a budget far below those of the other organizations and a clear organizational, technical and logistical capacity to reach all corners of Bangladesh, as well as high public confidence, the army was chosen as BEC's major partner to conduct voter registration.[103] The army was primarily involved in providing logistical and technical support to the registration process, but was also involved at the early stages of designing the voter registration software.

Voter registration began only two days after a new enabling voter legal framework was promulgated by the president on 9 August 2007 and continued through June 2008. In this period, over 81 million voters were registered, photographed, had their fingerprints and personal data entered into a database, and were issued NIDs. At one point, approximately 217,000 voters were registered each day. The project required the mobilization of 15,000 members of the armed forces, 2,500 BEC staff, over 480,000 enumerators and over 100,000 technical staff (including data entry operators).[104] A survey conducted by the International Foundation for Elections System (IFES) found the voter list to be extremely accurate, with 99 percent of eligible voters found on the list and 98 percent of the voters on the list found at their recorded address.[105]

Other electoral reforms during the 2007-2008 CTG period included a major overhaul of the basic elections law, the Representation of the People Order (RPO), constituency delimitation and the introduction of translucent ballot boxes. Prior to the scheduled 2007 elections, there was a variance of over 500 percent between the largest and smallest of Bangladesh's 300 geographical constituencies.[106] To tackle this deficiency, the BEC delimited constituencies in early 2008 and published a list of 133 redrawn constituencies on 29 April 2008.[107] In addition, the BEC proposed a number of amendments to the RPO regarding the registration of political parties, the nomination of candidates, campaign practices and campaign financing. The BEC also put forward a new law that delinked the BEC from the prime minister's office. In order to make the electoral reform process 'transparent and inclusive',[108] the BEC engaged with a range of stakeholders, including political parties, before proposing relevant legal reforms.

1.4 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD

While the 2007-2008 CTG period was characterized by the far-reaching electoral reforms undertaken by the BEC, significant political developments also took place during this period, most notably the arrest of many senior political leaders on corruption charges. This included the arrest and detention of the leader of the AL and the leader of the BNP and the two former prime ministers, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. The arrests of Bangladesh's political leadership "indicated an intention to reform the political system in part by excluding the participation of the leaders of the two political parties that were

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102. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010 p. 84

103. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 78

104. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 85

105. 'Assessment of the Photo Voter List in Bangladesh – Final Report', IFES, 30 November 2008, pp. 3-9

106. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 96

107. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 96

108. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 58

deemed responsible for leading Bangladesh into a political crisis in early 2007" and became known as the "minus two" solution.[109]

However, over time, the CTG scaled down its anti-corruption activities and released both party leaders in advance of the 2008 elections. In fact, public opinion surveys conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI) during the interim period showed a steady decline in public confidence in the CTG leading to the 2008 polling dates, while public confidence in the political parties increased dramatically.[110] Accordingly, from early 2008 forward, the "primary goal of the CTG became ensuring that the two major political parties agreed to participate in elections, while salvaging as many of the CTG's reforms as possible."[111]

1.5 2008 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The 9th parliamentary elections, held on 29 December 2008, were widely considered to be credible and relatively violence-free. The EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) noted that the elections were "in line with international standards and best practice for democratic elections."[112] In addition to the new voter registry and legal reforms, translucent ballot boxes were introduced during the 2008 elections. Over 500,000 polling officials as well as an approximately equal number of security officials were deployed for the elections.[113] The result of the election was an overwhelming victory for the AL, which won 76 percent of the seats in parliament (with just over 48 percent of the popular vote). The BNP, while winning over 32 percent of the popular vote, won only 10 percent of the seats in parliament.[114]

1.6 POST-2008 DEVELOPMENTS

After the elections, the AL government moved quickly to institutionalize most of the electoral reforms of the CTG period. Ordinances promulgated under the CTG were required to be confirmed by the new parliament within 30 days, and the new parliament confirmed most of the amendments to the RPO, the new voter registration law and the law separating the BEC from the prime minister's office within the required time line. Later on, in 2011, after the BEC had developed a five-year strategic plan (as well as a two-year action plan), the AL government approved a major reorganization of the BEC, under which 1,683 positions were added to the commission.[115] The annual budget of the BEC was also expanded from US$48 million in 2010/2011 to approximately US$56 million in 2011/2012.

The new organizational structure of the BEC established a "Wing for National Identity Registration", which will manage the voter registry. The National Identity Registration Act of 2010 put the BEC in charge of administering "registration activities of the national identity and of preparing and distributing NIDs".[116] The Act also stated that any citizen who was eligible to be a voter was entitled to receive a NID from the BEC. Additionally, the Act established that "any person or institution may apply for obtaining the

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109. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 60

110. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 66

111. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 - 2009 – Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 63

112. 'Parliamentary Elections, December 29, 2009 – European Union Election Observation Mission Final Report', 24 March 2009, p. 4

113. 'Facts on the 9th Parliamentary Elections', Bangladesh Election Commission

114. Bangladesh Election Commission website: http://www.ecs.gov.bd

115. Under the previous organizational chart, there were 206 positions in the BEC Secretariat, 833 positions in the field offices, and 22 positions in the ETI. Under the revised organizational chart there are 321 positions in the BEC Secretariat, 2370 positions in the field offices, and 53 positions in the ETI.

116. Article 6, National Identities Registration Act, 2010 (unofficial translation)

information or data" from the BEC.[117] The World Bank created a project that could give the Government of Bangladesh a US$195 million credit to finance the printing of NIDs and to integrate the NID database (the voter database) in order to "establish a secure, accurate and reliable national ID system in Bangladesh that serves as the basis for more efficient and transparent service delivery".[118] The BEC is set to be the World Bank's primary partner for this project.

The database would be linked with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives, which is building a database for registration of births and deaths, and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, which is planning to compile a national population registry based on existing sets of databases.[119] BEC officials also described current benefits of the NIDs, such as allowing the police to identify crime victims by their fingerprints.

Since the 2008 elections, the BEC conducted one nationwide voter registration update. This update was conducted from July to November 2009 and aimed at registering voters who had become eligible since the 2008 update, registering voters who had been eligible in the previous registration exercise but were missed, and removing deceased voters from the voter list. In this update, the BEC added 4.69 million voters to the database. In order to conduct the update process, the previous registration methodology was followed. A statistical survey conducted by Survey and Research Systems found the updated voter list to be 99.3 percent accurate. The survey, however, also noted that five percent of eligible voters nationwide were missed in the update process (this rate was 9 percent in urban areas).[120] According to a BEC official, the commission is subsequently field-testing a revised registration process.

Another registration update was planned for March 2012. The BEC is also moving towards establishing a voter-initiated registration process by making its Upazila 486 and Thana 27 offices capable of updating the voter registration database from remote locations by integrating the registration network.

Since the 2008 elections, the BEC has run multiple local elections successfully, using the new voter lists.[121] Domestic observers found, for example, the 2011 Union Parishad elections to have been "free, fair and peaceful in general".[122] A few of the city corporation and municipality elections used Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), which are developed and produced in Bangladesh. While the AL is generally supportive of the introduction of this technology, the BNP remains highly sceptical of the EVMs.

Political confrontation between the AL and the BNP continued in Bangladesh following the 2008 elections. On 30 June 2011, the AL parliamentary majority passed the 15th constitutional amendment, which eliminated the CTG system. The BNP and its allies did not vote on the amendment, as these political parties were boycotting parliamentary sessions. The removal of the CTG system came shortly after the Supreme Court had issued a preliminary ruling declaring the CTG unconstitutional, but recommending that it be used for two more elections because continuity was in the interest of public safety.[123] The AL's final stance to remove the CTG went against a parliamentary committee's proposal, which included

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117. Article 13, National Identities Registration Act, 2010 (unofficial translation)

118. 'Project Appraisal Document - Identification System For Enhancing Access To Services (IDEA) Project', The World Bank, April 14, 2011, p. 3

119. 'Project Appraisal Document - Identification System For Enhancing Access To Services (IDEA) Project', The World Bank, April 14, 2011, p. 3

120. 'Report on Survey of 2010 Updated Voter List', Survey Research System, 2010, pp. v-vii

121. Local Elections implemented by the BEC since the 2008 9th Parliamentary Elections include nationwide Upazila Parishad elections in January 2009, nationwide Union Parishad elections in mid-2011, and localized city-corporation and municipal elections. This includes the 2010 Chittagong City Corporation elections, where the mayoral candidate from the BNP won the elections.

122. 'Union Parishad Elections in Bangladesh, 2011 – Final Observation Report', Election Working Group, p. 2

123. Supreme Court Appellate Division Short Order of 10 May 2011 on civil petition 596/05

members of the AL, for two alternative CTG structures.[124] In late 2011, the BNP stated that it would not participate in national elections without a CTG in place. Additionally, a number of prominent CSOs commented that credible elections were at this point not possible without a CTG in place.

Another issue impacting the conduct of elections in Bangladesh is the appointment of new BEC commissioners, as the term of those commissioners appointed under the CTG expired in February 2012. The appointment of credible, independent and competent commissioners, acceptable to the AL and BNP, is crucial to carrying forward and cementing the electoral reforms initiated during and after the CTG period. The BEC even proposed a formal mechanism for finding appropriate commissioners to the government. Considering these recommendations, and following consultations with the political parties, the president formed a search committee composed of two judges appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court, the chairman of the Public Services Commission, and the comptroller and auditor general. The president appointed a new five-member election commission a few weeks after the formation of the search committee. The BNP immediately issued a statement declaring that it would not participate in elections under the new commission.

1.7 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Politics in Bangladesh are characterized by "a culture of political confrontation, in which the country's major political parties frequently used inflammatory rhetoric, questioned the legitimacy of the other's hold on power and opted for street agitation or violence in lieu of discourse and accommodation."[125] While national elections in Bangladesh were generally considered to have been credible, politics in Bangladesh remain confrontational. After losing the 1991 elections, the AL boycotted parliament. The practice of parliamentary boycott by the opposition has continued into the present with the BNP's current boycott of parliamentary sessions. Additionally, power in the political parties is highly centralized. According to Article 70 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, members of parliament are required to vote along party lines. This further institutionalizes the power of the party leadership – Sheik Hasina, the daughter of the assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman and Khaleda Zia, widow of the assassinated Ziaur Rahman.

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1 ACTIVITIES

UNDP has provided electoral assistance in Bangladesh since 1996 through seven separate projects. UNDP's support projects ranged from the large-scale voter registration project, as well as follow-up projects after the 2008 elections, to procurement-specific projects, to projects designed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the commission, to bridging projects designed to ensure uninterrupted electoral support. The only interruption to UNDP's electoral support came in early 2008, when its support to the BEC was suspended in response to the escalating political crisis. In addition to the technical assistance provided by UNDP, the UN engaged with Bangladeshi stakeholders on a political level – before, during and after the collapse of the 2007 parliamentary elections, as well as during the subsequent reform process and after the 2008 elections. The DPA, working closely with the UN Country Team, advocated for national commitment to electoral reform and sustained democratic processes. The

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124. Bangladesh: Opposition calls 36-hour strike from June 12', Asian Correspondents, 11 June 2011
125. 'Elections in Bangladesh 2006 -2009 –Transforming Failure into Success', UNDP, 2010, p. 29

UN's political engagement was intended to promote an environment conducive to holding the 2008 elections credibly and on time.

2.1.1 UNDP support to elections in Bangladesh before January 2007

UNDP's support to the electoral process falls within three distinct periods. The first is its support to the BEC before the collapse of the 2006/2007 electoral process. The second period is UNDP's support to the 2007/2008 electoral reforms under the CTG. The third period is UNDP's support to the BEC after the 9th parliamentary elections, during which UNDP supported the BEC to institutionalize and further strengthen reforms initiated during the CTG period.

Prior to UNDP's suspension of electoral support in early 2007, its support to the electoral process was implemented primarily through the Strengthening the Election Commission for Improvements in Electoral Processes (SECIEP) and Support to the Electoral Process in Bangladesh (SEPB) Programmes. Both projects targeted enhancing the Election Commission's institutional and technical capacity for greater operational efficiency, transparency and oversight, as well as improving the maintenance of the electronic voter list and capacity of the Electoral Training Institute (ETI). Given the highly charged political atmosphere and controversies surrounding the BEC and the voter list in 2006 and early 2007, UNDP's support for the electoral process was smaller in scale than after the establishment of the new and independent commission. The assistance provided through SECIEP and SEPB was crucial to identify gaps in the electoral process that needed remedy and served as a foundation for larger support in 2006 and 2007. UNDP's long-term engagement with the BEC strategically positioned the organization to ramp up its support for electoral reforms and be deemed a trusted partner to assist – once the conditions and national commitment for wide-scale electoral reforms were in place.

2.1.2. UNDP support to the electoral reform process in 2007 and 2008

While UNDP's support to the electoral process before the 2007 declaration of a state of emergency was smaller in scale, its support in the subsequent reform period expanded significantly to meet the country's priorities. UNDP was, in fact, able to draw on its existing support projects to quickly and flexibly respond to the reform agenda of the newly appointed CTG and BEC. An external evaluation report states:

The changes in caretaker governments enabled the SEPB [project] to undertake the substantive work that it and its earlier SECIEP project had been unable to do. UNDP was able to use the existing SEPB project, as a spring board to assist the new Commissioners implement their electoral reform vision where asked, and in particular to provide support to replace the highly contested voter roll so that the elections could take place.[126]

The re-launching of the SEPB project allowed UNDP to provide critical assistance in the early stages of the voter registration process – before Preparation of the Electoral Roll with Photographs Project (PERP), the full-fledged voter registration support project could be launched. The PERP project itself did not come on line until after the start of the voter registration process, even though its project document was signed "in record time".[127] As the BEC had committed itself to holding the 9th parliamentary elections by the end of 2008, a necessary timeline given the difficulties of preparing a photo-voter list of over 80 million voters, it was essential that voter registration stay on track or risk delaying the elections and a return to electoral democracy in Bangladesh. This meant that UNDP had to jump in immediately to support the voter registration process.

126. 'UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation', December 2009, p. 24

UNDP provided initial support to the BEC for voter registration by providing IT consultants to help develop the voter registration systems and software. The SEPB project was also instrumental in making initial procurements for the voter registration pilot test. To make these initial procurements UNDP in fact raised its contribution to the SEPB budget by US$3 million.[128] The SEPB also provided support to the BEC by providing technical consultants for its constituency delimitation process.

The US$84 million PERP project stands at the heart of UNDP's electoral assistance in Bangladesh and is generally considered to have been a tremendously successful project.[129] Under the project, the bulk of the procurement activities for the voter registration drive (including the procurement of 12,000 laptop computers) took place. The PERP project also covered payments to enumerators, technical staff and project managers. While the PERP project was designed as a nationally implemented (NEX) project,[130] the BEC approached UNDP to procure much of the voter registration equipment – as the procurement process of the Government of Bangladesh was too time-consuming for the extremely compressed registration timeline. An external evaluation of UNDP's election work noted that UNDP Bangladesh stepped up to the plate and "with a major institutional effort that included its regional offices in Bangkok and Copenhagen, was able to deliver the needed commodities on time".[131] As a result, the bulk of the technical equipment for voter registration was deployed to the field in November 2007 (only three months after the PERP Project Document was signed), when the monthly registration rate jumped from over six million voters per month to over 10 million voters per month.[132]

UNDP and the UN RC´s office made an enormous effort to ensure that the procurement of critical materials went smoothly. According to one UNDP official, the UN RC made efforts to alert UNDP authorities at various levels of upcoming procurement actions – and the high stakes of delivering the materials on time (delaying voter registration was likely to delay the entire election time line). In the end, 81 million voters were registered to a high level of accuracy by June 2008, allowing the BEC to use the new voter lists in 11 local government elections in August 2008, as well as in subsequent local elections.

2.1.3 UNDP support to institutionalizing electoral reforms

After the successful December 2008 elections, UNDP continued to support the BEC through the SEPB and PERP projects. While both projects were phased out by late 2010, long-term support to the BEC was implemented through the new Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) project, which was launched in 2011. In addition, UNDP supported the institutionalization of the voter registration process through the Construction of Server Stations for the Electoral Database (CSSED) project, under which permanent local election offices were constructed.

During this period, UNDP's work with the BEC focused on institutionalizing the gains made during the CTG period and further enhancing the institutional and professional capacities of the BEC. For the voter registry, this meant creating a permanent physical infrastructure for the computers and computer

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127. The PERP project was launched on July 1 2007, after the voter registration system had been already pilot tested. PERP began as full-fledged voter registration started in July 2007. See: Study: pp. 81 and 110.

128. 'UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation', December 2009, p. 20

129. Monitoring and Evaluation reports by DFID, the EU and UNDP have given the PERP project very positive assessments.

130. In a NEX project, the host government is typically responsible for carrying out procurement activities using its own systems. NEX implemented projects can be can be useful for promoting national ownership of election assistance. This was the case in Bangladesh. The SEMB project document was linked with the strategic vision of the BEC and aligned with the commission's strategic plan.

131. 'UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation', December 2009, p. 27

132. See: UNDP Study, p. 85 and 'UNDP Bangladesh - Electoral Reform Programme Evaluation', December 2009, p. 19

network necessary for maintaining the system on a decentralized level. It also meant migrating technical expertise from the Bangladesh Armed Forces to the BEC's technical staff and migrating the voter list to a stronger database and central server.[133] UNDP hired a consultant in August 2010 to provide the BEC with a 'blueprint' for maintaining the voter list in a decentralized fashion and for replacing the NIDs with more smart cards with better security features. The consultant's Decentralized Electoral Voter Identity System Master Plan (DEVIS) was the main framework for institutionalizing the voter registration system and was the foundation from which aspects of other projects, such as SEMB and the World Bank's support to the NID system, were developed. In fact, while UNDP's role in the PERP project ended in December 2010, the Government of Bangladesh continued its support for the project through June 2012, which has allowed continuity as the BEC begins to integrate voter registration functions into its NIRD wing, and will need to manage almost US$200 million in World Bank funding for replacing NIDs.

The Strengthening Election Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) project also continued to support the BEC's broader institutional reform and was designed to provide long-term capacity development support beyond any specific election. This support included assistance in developing the BEC's five-year strategic plan and two-year action plan,[134] further strengthening the ETI, supporting the development of stronger external communications capacity, and building the capacity of BEC departments (such as finance and IT). UNDP also supported the BEC to play a leadership role in creating a regional, SAARC-level[135] forum for EMBs from participating countries to exchange best practices and share experiences.

2.1.4 UN political engagement and coordination

The UN worked with others in the international community to encourage a peaceful outcome to the 2008 polls, which many in Bangladesh and abroad had feared could degenerate into violence.

High-level missions, including by the Secretary-General, conveyed timely messages to the political parties and the nation as a whole in the run-up to the voting and in the aftermath, while UNDP technical electoral assistance helped build confidence in the integrity of the process and the RC worked to enhance coordination within the international community.

After the UN Secretary-General visited Bangladesh in November 2008 to encourage peaceful elections, he appointed a high-level panel to continue this engagement immediately before, during and after the December 2008 elections. The panel's role was to encourage the smooth and peaceful conduct of the elections, delivering political messages that encouraged civility and respect for the democratic process. The Secretary-General, accompanied by the Under-Secretary-General,[136] returned to Bangladesh in November 2011 and met Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia. The Secretary-General also encouraged stakeholders to work towards peaceful and credible elections in the future, although this was not the main purpose of his visit.

The RC created a regular platform for information exchange and donor coordination. This coordination was most pronounced for the large-scale registration of voters, as this required the BEC to bring together a wide range of partners. As a neutral and trusted broker, the UN and the RC provided a

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133. According to a SEMB official, issues of sustainability of the voter database were not addressed until after 2009. After 2009 the voter database was migrated to a new, updated database – housed on two new servers. The database software was also updated.

134. UNDP recruited one international and one national consultant to assist with this effort.

135. SAARC is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Participating countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

136. USG Lyn Pascoe

platform for all partners – including the Bangladesh Army, civil society and the international community – to constructively contribute in their area of expertise. Many interlocutors interviewed for this report positively flagged this coordination role of the UN. The RC also frequently met with ambassadors and development partners to coordinate a common stance in the face of the escalating political crisis in 2006/2007 and throughout the CTG period.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1. Capacity building of BEC and an accurate voters' list

UNDP supported the BEC in institutionalizing much-needed reforms after the December 2008 elections and in enhancing its institutional and professional capacity. The Commission's ability to maintain and update the biometric voter list to ensure its continued credibility was improved. Notably, the 2012 nationwide update of the roll was undertaken under the full management and implementation of the Commission, signalling marked progress from the 2007 voter registration process. The BEC has also taken a great amount of ownership over UNDP projects and was actively engaged in developing the relevant project documents.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 UNDP's support should respond to the operational environment

UNDP's success in Bangladesh shows that electoral assistance can be delivered effectively when national counterpart institutions and national governments support the strengthening or reform of the electoral process. The Bangladesh experience also demonstrates that the UN may deem it necessary to suspend electoral assistance when these factors do not exist. UNDP and the UN in general should carefully consider the conditions under which they engage in electoral assistance and should stand prepared to either downscale or upscale support according to the prevailing national political and institutional conditions. In Bangladesh, UNDP was able to use an existing project to rapidly upscale electoral support when the country context changed rapidly. The Bangladesh experience also shows that the UN's role may not be limited to 'technical assistance' and that a good understanding of the political factors hampering the electoral process can allow it to play a wider role in resolving crisis situations. In Bangladesh, DPA, EAD and APD supported UNDP's wider role with coordination.

2.3.2 Statistical audits of voter registries are effective tools

The Bangladesh experience demonstrated the power of statistical evaluations of a voter registry. In late 2006, a statistical audit of the voter list confirmed the widespread perception that the voter list was inflated and inaccurate and the data fuelled opposition concerns about the upcoming (later postponed) elections. Statistical surveys were later commissioned by UNDP to gauge the accuracy of the new voter list, which created confidence in this electoral reform, and later allowed the BEC to adjust its methodology in updating the voter registry. Statistical audits of the voter list are a powerful tool, but can be rousing and confidence-building. Due consideration should be given to the appropriate time for conducting this level of analysis and releasing results.

2.3.3 Use of core funds allows needed flexibility

In Bangladesh, UNDP used its core funding flexibly to ensure that electoral support continued uninterrupted when necessary and to make sure that crucial, time-bound activities could take place when needed. UNDP's allocation of core funds to the SEPB project at the beginning of voter registration was a critical component to ensuring that voter registration was started in due time. Similarly, UNDP's creation of bridging projects using core funds allowed it to continue its support to the electoral process in the absence of large-scale development partner funded projects and gave it the opportunity to be very flexible in its support.

2.3.4 NIDs are effective incentives for voter registry, but relegate vast power to the BEC

The BEC and its partners decided to introduce NIDs to the voter registration system in early 2007. The enormous popularity of the NID cards, along with a general acknowledgment that the BEC now maintains the only de facto national civil registry in Bangladesh, has placed the BEC in an empowered position, which is supported by national legislation. There are benefits and risks to the BEC's new role as manager of the national voter/citizens' database. On the one hand, the BEC gains technical capacity and institutional clout. On the other hand, managing the citizens' database, issuing NIDs and providing data to other government institutions could distract the BEC from executing its core function or make it vulnerable to political influence or corruption. While it is clear that issuing the NIDs provided a powerful incentive for voters to register and that such a project had other strong external benefits, UNDP should consider the institutional implications of taking such a step in other projects.

2.3.5 Government buy-in is crucial for project success

UNDP's election support projects from the CTG period forward were in part successful because there was a strong national ownership over the processes supported by UNDP. This was particularly the case for the voter registration process – the PERP project – where the BEC, CTG, CSOs, the armed forces, local government bodies, international development partners and UNDP came together to implement the enormous task of registering 81 million voters. UNDP effectively managed this national ownership by being responsive to the needs and preferences of its national counterparts. The RC played an active role in fostering coordination and cooperation, frequently meeting with national and international partners and providing encouragement and support to the electoral reform process.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UNDP's programmatic and resource flexibility coupled with the government's involvement and commitment to electoral reform were keys to the success of UNDP's work in Bangladesh. Some challenges remain, however. In order to address them, the following should be considered.

Recommendation 1: Continued political analysis should inform future project design.

Before the collapse of the electoral process in early 2007, the obstacles to holding credible elections were technical and political. In fact, it was not until after a new CTG and BEC were appointed that a window of opportunity opened up for UNDP to provide real and substantive technical assistance to the electoral process. The RC was cognizant of the political obstacles and realities and was, through the deployment of an expert team of election analysts, very well informed. With technical and political issues closely interlinked, it is important for the UN to have a comprehensive picture and coordinated response to addressing political and technical issues.

Recommendation 2: Building a sustainable registration mechanism should be prioritized.

Ensuring that adequate mechanisms for sustaining the voter list are built into the design and implementation of the voter registration process is considered to be a best practice. In Bangladesh, the implementation of mechanisms for ensuring the sustainability of the newly created voter list, such as a permanent IT structures, was not fully formalized until after the registration process was completed, given the immediate need to create an accurate voter list following the collapse of the electoral process. Mechanisms for sustainability were, however, conceptualized during the planning stage and implemented later after the initial electoral crisis was subverted.

CAMBODIA

1. POLITICAL ENVIRNOMENT AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 CAMBODIA FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE FIRST ELECTIONS

In 1953, Cambodia became an independent nation, no longer a French protectorate, but ruled by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. His reign ended, however, in 1970 when he was overthrown in a coup by Lon Nol. Control of the country changed hands yet again when the Khmer Rouge forcibly took power in 1975 and then destroyed the country's legal and political system and replaced it with Marxist agrarian communism and a centrally planned economy. The Khmer Rouge era, which lasted until 1979 and resulted in the death of nearly 1.7 million people, was followed by a decade of rule by the State of Cambodia with strong backing from the Vietnamese government and a strong presence of Vietnamese troops. During this time, Soviet-influenced central planning was introduced, but, towards the end of the 1980s, the country started moving towards a more liberal economy with greater individual freedom.

In October 1991, the Paris Peace Agreements were signed, ending Cambodia's 21-year unrest. As a result, the following March, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) arrived with a mandate that included the organization of elections. In September 1993, a constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly, establishing a multi-party liberal democratic state named the Kingdom of Cambodia.[137]

Despite the fact that the constitution established a multi-party state, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has been the de facto ruling party since before the UNTAC-administered elections, with Prime Minister Hun Sen at the helm since the Vietnamese troops entered the country in 1979 until the present day.

1.2 ELECTIONS FROM 1993 TO THE PRESENT

After the 1993 election results were announced, the CPP was able to negotiate a power-sharing deal with the FUNCINPEC party, which won the elections by disputing the results and claiming irregularities in the vote counting. Prince Ranariddh of FUNCINPEC was appointed the first prime minister and Hun Sen held the position of the second prime minister until 1997 when he became the sole premier after violence broke out in the country and the first premier went into exile in Paris. In the 1998 elections, the CPP received 40 percent of the vote, but still needed to partner with FUNCINPEC, which had received 32 percent of the vote, to form a majority government with Hun Sen acting as the prime minister. The 1998 elections witnessed the emergence of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), which received 14 percent of the vote and is today the second biggest political party and the most significant opposition party.

Cambodia's four-tiered governance system, consisting from the lowest level of commune councils, district administration, provincial administration and the central government, saw its first commune council elections in 2002. The CPP obtained more than 60 percent of the vote in these elections and obtained 68 percent of the commune council seats and almost 99 percent of the village chiefs' seats.

In the 2003 national elections, the CPP obtained almost half of the vote and again formed a coalition government with FUNCINPEC. In the 2007 commune council elections, the CPP further consolidated its position in power and obtained an overwhelming two-thirds majority in the 2008 national elections.

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137. Cambodian Constitution, Art. 1

Observers have highlighted some of the shortcomings of the 2003 and 2008 elections, including: low voter registration, limited access to media, weak electoral dispute resolution, as well as civil society's inability to hold elected representatives accountable.

The World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) show that, since 1996, political stability and the absence of violence have seen improvement in Cambodia. The country's performance on voice and accountability, rule of law, and government effectiveness, however, has weakened.[138] The National Elections Committee (NEC) is seen to have the necessary capacity, so issues impeding the fairness of elections are more political than technical.

1.3 POLITICAL PARTIES

Over the last decade, the CPP has remained the strongest and most dominant political party. The SRP, FUNCINPEC, and other opposition political parties have proven to be much weaker in their ability to mobilize and make gains on the CPP.

The CPP has excellent capacity to collect resources and it finances development projects through the party mechanism. Observers were told about and shown examples of how communes or villages led by individuals affiliated with the opposition did not receive similar levels of government investments and how people presumed to be affiliated with these parties were intimidated and regularly threatened.[139] Often, the projects implemented by the CPP complement projects implemented by the commune councils and allow the CPP as a party to take full credit for all development projects implemented at local levels. The areas where CPP is not in power receive fewer or none of the party-financed development projects.

Commune chiefs are generally respected by local people and selected because of their skills from among the ranks of the CPP, rather than appointed because of their connections. This increases their legitimacy. They are, however, held accountable by the party for losing votes. Other political parties have neither the resources nor the organization to do anything similar. Observer reports indicated that public servants are used equally to carry out state business and party business for the CPP during and between elections.[140]

1.4 CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society in Cambodia is relatively weak and faces challenges in its role of keeping checks and balances on the state. Vote-buying is common practice during elections and is an example of such a challenge and signifies the limited influence that civil society may have in deciding who is elected.[141] Though some CSOs appear to focus on issues determined by international development agencies, others do play a role of pushing local agendas and holding authorities accountable for their actions.

1.5 FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Cambodia's press is not free according to Freedom House.[142] Laws regulating freedom of the press are vague and their application is uneven. The 1993 constitution guarantees the right to free expression and

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138. 'Country Data Report for Cambodia, 1996 – 2010', The World Bank, http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/ pdf/c118.pdf

139. EUEOM, Cambodia, July 2008. Final Report on the National Assembly Elections, p. 23, Background to Campaign Environment

140. EUEOM Cambodia, July 2008. Final Report on the National Assembly Elections, p. 27, Use of State Resources

141. EUEOM Cambodia, July 2008. Final Report on the National Assembly Elections

142. http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/cambodia

a free press, though media personnel are often prosecuted under the defunct criminal code of UNTAC or amended provisions of the 1995 press law prohibiting reporting deemed threatening to political stability.[143] A number of journalists critical of the government have been arrested and put on trial for secession.

1.6 RECURRING CHALLENGES FROM THE LAST TEN YEARS

Key issues have undermined progress towards a healthy democracy since the elections in 1993. Despite development partner programming, these problems have been perpetual:

1.6.1 Loopholes in the voter registration process allow for manipulation

Deletion of names, unclear procedures, and a lack of ID distribution are common. Voter registration has been a development programme focus since the 1998 elections, but there are still numerous shortcomings in the process. A long-term sustainable solution will not be possible without government buy-in. The government and development partners have contributed to the problems in voter registration by delaying work on the civil registry.

1.6.2 Lack of equal access to media for all political parties

The state media and private media are controlled by the CPP or people loyal to the CPP and opposition political parties have very little or no access at all to the media. As well, the opposition often fails to capitalize on the few opportunities that they are given because of their limited capacity to use these media as effective tools of communication. The European Union Election Observation Mission´s (EUEOM) observation report of the 2008 election shows that there was a notable imbalance in the mass media. Coverage of the elections was dominated by the ruling party to a degree that was not consistent with international standards on free and equal access to the media for all electoral contestants.[144]

1.6.3 The National Elections Committee is still not seen as independent

A recurring allegation from opposition political parties, independent CSOs and development partners is that the NEC lacks full independence. The NEC lacks an organic law of its own, receives its budget from the Ministry of Commerce, and is located within the compound of the MoI. As well, critics have highlighted occurrences of violence, intimidation, corrupt campaign practices, abuses of power to influence voter behaviour, and technical inconsistencies as continued issues.

1.6.4 Manipulation of the electoral process continues

Irregularities during the electoral process include: vote-buying by all political parties,[145] polling stations changing the voting timetable, and some eligible voters being asked to pay for photographs that were needed for registration.

1.6.5 Resolving electoral disputes is still a challenge

While the number of complaints has declined, the system to address them is not considered to be independent and transparent. The judiciary, which should be considered the ultimate grievance mechanism, is seen as weak and not fully independent.

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143. http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2011/cambodia

144. EUEOM Final Report, 2008, p. 30, based on media monitoring during the campaign period

145. EUEOM, Cambodia, July 2008. Final Report on the National Assembly Elections

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1 ACTIVITIES

The 1993 elections, which were managed by UNTAC, were regarded by the international community as acceptable, given Cambodia's recent history. UNDP has provided support for all direct elections following the UNTAC elections and, as a result, the implementation of elections has improved, the process has become more transparent, and response to election results has become less violent. In 1998, the national elections were administered by the NEC with technical assistance from UNDP, which emphasized the coordination of international electoral observers. Throughout the next several election cycles, UNDP continued to implement electoral assistance programmes with activities ranging from capacity-building of the NEC, to providing a platform for political dialogue, to strengthening the voter registration system.

2.1.1 UNDP's role leading up to the 2004 elections

In 2003, the NEC continued to receive technical assistance as the country neared national elections. UNDP was in charge of coordinating development partners' contributions, which totalled US$4.2 million. UNDP's role was not limited to coordination, however. A well-received initiative that was introduced by UNDP was Equity News, which provided access to airtime on TV for all political parties prior to elections. UNDP continued its support after the election with activities focused on strengthening the permanent voter registration system and building the NEC's capacity to liaise with political parties and provide training. The extension of this programme started the move toward inter-election support.

2.1.2 UNDP'S participation from 2007-2011

A new UNDP programme, Strengthening Democracy and Electoral Processes in Cambodia (SDEP), was designed to help build a foundation for the 2007 Commune Council elections and the 2008 national elections. Its aim was to increase the capacity and leadership of the NEC; enhance the normative electoral framework and processes; improve civic engagement, participation, and democratic culture; as well as provide support during the national elections. Due to delays, however, the project started moving towards the initial objectives only after the mid-term review in 2007.

Though the project was quite successful in increasing the NEC's capacity together with other programmes, it was unable to address key issues related to the independence of NEC.

UNDP helped strengthen the voter registration system by providing assistance in carrying out audits on the voter registry and working on issuing IDs. The Voter Registration Audit, which was contracted out to the National Democratic Institute (NDI), was conducted in order to improve the quality of the voter registration under current practices.

The project also helped facilitate meetings between civil society, political parties and the government. As well, it continued its Equity News programme, enabling all political parties to have equal access to the media. UNDP simultaneously introduced Equity Weekly, a programme that promoted issue-based reporting and acted as a forum for different members of society to present their views on these issues.

Together with UNFPA, UNDP provided support to the Committee to Promote Women's Political Participation (CPWP) and was successful in mobilizing women and increasing their participation in politics. Additional assistance was given to CSOs to target other vulnerable groups for civic participation.

While the numbers might not have been very large, such support by UNDP was considered to be valued by CSOs and the target groups.

UNDP continued to implement SDEP until the end of 2010, when its five-year programme cycle ended. In 2011, UNDP introduced a new Strengthening Democracy Programme that focused greater attention on civil society engagement; formal and informal mechanisms for dialogues among elected bodies, authorities, and citizens, and between political parties; and media access and civic education with special emphasis on targeting young people.

As a result of UNDP's 2010 study on youth civic participation, they developed, in collaboration with BBC Media Action, a community outreach campaign, Loy9, that promotes youth participation in governance. Through TV, radio, websites, and games, the programme—the first of its kind in Cambodia—sought to to engage the growing voting-age population ahead of local elections in June 2012 and national elections in 2013 and encourage civic engagement and participation. Initial reports indicate that the programme is reaching a wide audience—nearly three million viewers a week.

2.1.3 UNDP's democratic governance programming

In addition to projects specifically supporting electoral processes, UNDP has implemented other programmes that aid democratic governance and link closely to the electoral assistance programmes. UNDP programming should be seen holistically and the synergies between different programmes should be well managed under UNDP's country programme. Electoral projects tend to be viewed separately, though they are an integral part of governance programming. Below are major programmes that have supported institutionalization of democratic practices and that could be linked to electoral support:

- **Programme to Support Capacity Development of Cambodian Government (June 2003 – December 2005):** The programme aimed at strengthening the administrative capacity of the secretariats of the National Assembly prior to the 2003 elections. Following the elections, the programme focused on strengthening the capacities of members of parliament in their roles and responsibilities related to the legislative and oversight process. According to the evaluation, progress was made specifically in terms of increasing the MPs' capacities in fulfilling their roles as constituency representatives.

- **Legislature Assistance Project (LEAP) (July 2006 – December 2010):** LEAP was developed as a follow-up to the above-mentioned project and aimed to improve checks and balances on the executive branch of government by providing capacity development support to the Cambodian Parliament. The programme was considered unable to achieve one of its intended outcomes: an increase in civil society's capacity to hold the executive accountable. However, it was able to build capacity of the Technical Coordination Secretariat of the two chambers as well as to increase the capacity of the parliamentarians to raise questions in the parliament and perform their duties in the oversight committees.

- **Strengthening Democratic and Decentralized Local Governance in Cambodia (DDLG) (2006-2010):** The project aimed at reducing poverty through strengthening institutions and processes at the local level to achieve more effective and responsive local governance policies and greater local ownership, participation, civic engagement and implementation of pro-poor projects. The project has achieved some increased capacities and has contributed to the strengthening of the local government association.

- **Project to Support Democratic Development through Decentralization and Deconcentration (PSDD) (2007 – 2010):** PSDD was developed when the organic law establishing the District and Provincial Council was expected to be approved and a national programme was envisioned for promoting subnational democratic development and decentralization. The project sought to facilitate the move from a pre-law situation to the existence of a national programme by supporting the development of the new local governance environment. It contributed very strongly to the development of the legal and regulatory framework for local governance and laid foundations for forthcoming decentralized service delivery.

2.2. ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 Capacity-building of the NEC

Because of ongoing capacity-building by UNDP, the NEC has the technical capacity to fully plan and manage elections without the support of development partners.

2.2.2 Facilitating equal access to media and a forum for political dialogue

Equity News, which provided access to media to all political parties immediately prior to the elections, has proved to be very effective and is considered by all political parties as a good modality of support that should be continued. As well, Equity Weekly, the issue-based programme that aires each week, is considered an equally successful component of UNDP's work. It is one of the few programmes that offer members from all aspects of society, including the opposition political parties, an opportunity to provide opinions on current issues.

2.2.3 Coordination

UNDP has played an important role as coordinator among development partners and national stakeholders. This has been acknowledged throughout their tenure in Cambodia and was confirmed by interviews carried out for this study. It is clearly an area of work in which UNDP has expertise and therefore should continue to be a priority for the future.

2.2.4 Engaging youth

One of UNDP's most recent programmes, Multimedia Initiative for Youth Civic Education in Cambodia, has found an engaged audience—nearly three million viewers a week—as a result of innovative approaches to promoting youth participation in governance through TV, radio, website, and games. Though it is still in its early stages, UNDP expects the programme's reach to continue to grow, particularly as elections near.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 Political issues continue to impede fair and transparent election administration

Development partners have realized that technical assistance has helped to increase the technical capacities of the NEC to plan and administer elections, but that there are political issues that cannot be addressed by providing technical assistance alone. Issues that have not been resolved over the past decade include the legal framework reform beyond the present Law on Elections of Members of the

National Assembly (LEMNA) to ensure a complete independence of the NEC and the introduction of a functioning transparent voter registration system, which are both key factors for ensuring democratic elections.

2.3.2 Capacity-building of CSOs is still needed

Building the capacity of CSOs to better hold the government accountable is still needed – though this assumes that CSOs' natural role is to hold the state accountable, an assumption that raises many questions about observational and ideological bias.

Even in places where CSOs perform certain counterbalancing functions vis-à-vis the power of the state, questions remain about their democratic legitimacy. To date, UNDP and UNDEF have provided limited funding to CSOs. This support should be more comprehensive and, rather than use CSOs to implement certain defined tasks, UNDP should provide internal capacity development that would allow the CSOs to focus on issues that are important to them.

2.3.3 Support to political parties has been well received

Support to political party dialogue has proven to be moderately successful[146] and UNDP has played an important role in facilitation and providing a neutral forum in which political parties can convene and discuss issues. Political parties have also welcomed support in establishing their women contingents and strengthening their internal democracy. As long as this support is provided to all political parties, it seems to be working well. The smaller political parties, in particular, expressed their appreciation for the aid. Furthermore, political parties could be seen as a channel to provide capacity development support to the local-level elected councillors to complement support provided under the national programme on subnational democratic development that is coordinated by the National Committee for Subnational Democratic Development (NCDD).

2.3.4 Mass media that targets youth is important for a country with a young population

The current programme being implemented by UNDP includes a civic education component that uses mass media and specifically targets youth. This is an important element of the programme because, each year, nearly 300,000 youth reach voting age. The national elections in 2013 will have 1.5 to 2 million first-time voters—and these youth can be a motor of change.

2.3.5 Leadership changes have caused programmatic setbacks

According to stakeholder interviews, UNDP's electoral assistance projects have been dependent on the CTA to implement them. Changes in leadership, however, have caused interruptions to projects and have affected perceived quality. Continuity or more strategic guidance during leadership changes should be provided by the CO.

2.3.6 Effective long-term engagement requires innovation

Staying engaged in the democratic process is essential, though more contextual analysis is needed, as is the identification of fresh approaches for progress with all key electoral stakeholders. The electoral system in Cambodia has been deemed technically sound, but the enabling environment still needs

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146. Based on interviews with opposition political parties at least.

continued support. In pursuing a long-term agenda, however, UNDP must be proactive in finding innovative ways to promote reform, to strengthen governance, and to avoid routine support. Staying engaged with slow progress and poor results leads to frustration and development partner fatigue and can harm UNDP's credibility.

2.3.7 UNDP's relationship with the government perceived to be too close

UNDP has increasingly been seen as a trusted partner in coordinating and promoting democratic elections. However, the perception among some stakeholders is that UNDP's connection to the government has been too close and, together with other agencies, has helped legitimize elections that are not deemed democratic by international observers.

2.3.8 Civil and voter registration still needs support

A fundamental principle of democracy is universal suffrage, or the equal right for every eligible citizen to vote and have access to register to vote. UNDP, development partners and the government have invested time and energy in voter registration since the 1998 elections. After 13 years, however, it is still insufficient, undermining the credibility of elections with inflated and inaccurate data.

The civil registry and ID card system is also inadequate—two million people remain without IDs and five million have IDs that have expired (though the government issued a subdecree in June 2011 to extend the validity of expiring IDs until the end of 2013). From the beginning, the issue of collecting data and maintaining data should have been envisioned with a long-term lens and should have included a cost-effective and efficient way to update the civil and voter registries. As well, safeguards should have been put in place to protect privacy so that only relevant data is provided to the relevant authority. User-friendly, appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable forms of technology should be considered and reflect the needs and usability of the system. Capacity development and technical training are needed at all levels to make the system work.

2.3.9 Development partners are experiencing fatigue

Despite 20 years of support to the electoral processes in Cambodia, observer reports and the organization Freedom House still consider Cambodia "not free".[147] The full independence of the NEC and problems with voter registration continue to be points of concern. Unable to make significant progress on these issues, development partners are fatigued and less eager to continue to contribute funding to elections over many other competing priorities. It is important to stay engaged with the electoral process to prevent backsliding, but, with donors looking to reallocate funds away from electoral assistance, UNDP faces a challenge in sustaining achievements and facilitating new gains.

2.3.10 Decreased political will for election reform

UNDP's outcome evaluation for 2006-2010 concluded that there has been decreased political will to reform the voter registration process and related systems. The governing CPP appears to regard electoral reform as a secondary issue and has no strong incentive to change the electoral process. UNDP and other development partners must therefore consider the risks and possible impact of disengagement in the areas of electoral assistance. Such risks could include regression of transparency standards, less accountability to correct deficiencies, and less pressure to reform. Further, lack of support to media

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147. http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2011/cambodia

would reduce the already limited space for opposition political parties on TV. Lack of support to CSOs would reduce their role in educating citizens or preparing women candidates. One could argue that, after 20 years, the UN should no longer be supporting Cambodia's elections. But, even though the NEC is technically proficient, the enabling environment is still underdeveloped and therefore unsupported elections may be well run, but not necessarily be fair.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Technical assistance can take democratic reform forward only as far as the political will allows. Key issues limiting Cambodia's democratic progress have been recurring since the first elections in 1993.

Though the NEC has the capacity to plan and manage elections, a need to tackle credibility remains due to a perceived lack of impartiality, flawed voter registration and a weak grievance mechanism. Though improvements have been made to political party dialogue, access to media, and youth and women engagement, these areas could be further strengthened. The same is true of civic engagement and outreach to other disadvantaged groups.

In order to address these remaining issues and continue to make progress toward improving the integrity and value of electoral processes beyond their efficient organization, several recommendations are offered.

Recommendation 1: Review findings to inform future programme planning.

Considering deficiencies and recommendations identified in observer reports, post-election consultations with stakeholders and an EMB internal review should all contribute to a future strategic plan and programme support development.

Recommendation 2: The national government should assume responsibility for financing the fourth electoral cycle.

The government should assume full responsibility for funding the fourth electoral cycle. As well, it should manage the organization of the electoral event (e.g., voter education, training materials, printing of forms, etc.). Though the government requested technical and financial support for commune and national elections in 2012 and 2013, many development partners and stakeholders felt the support would be more beneficial to the enabling environment, including civic education, domestic monitoring, target groups (youth, vulnerable peoples), and opening more spaces in local media while continuing and even expanding the Equity News initiative.

Recommendation 3: Refocus energy on strengthening voter registration.

There is a need to convene a working group on civil and voter registries. This group should include representatives from the MoI, the NEC, the police, the Commune Council, political parties and CSOs in order to identify all existing issues and develop a long-term strategic plan for improving all data sets, as well as efficient and cost-effective ways to implement and maintain this system. Whether UNDP, assistance providers and development partners participate and support such an initiative has to be considered carefully. Without a comprehensive and coordinated strategy, the problems with civil and voter registries will deteriorate.

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148. COMFREL (Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia) in an interview suggested this approach. Other CSOs interviewed highlighted sustainability of funding as an issue.

149. These suggestions came from other international assistance providers.

Recommendation 4: Provide increased support to CSOs.

Support to CSOs is vital to ensure government monitoring. Providing civic education to various groups is crucial and strategies for sustainability need to be developed. For example, one prominent CSO[148] suggested providing the same amount of funding, but over a longer period throughout the electoral cycle. As suggested by some interviewees,[149] UNDP could focus more on developing CSOs' professionalism and credibility by providing training on a more rigorous, evidence-based and statistical approaches to reporting. CSOs, if funded, could also monitor beyond polling and counting phases on election day through other areas in the electoral cycle, such as voter registration, media monitoring, legal reform in parliament and political finance. UNDP has also funded the same CSOs for years. While they may have experience, the work of these CSOs should be evaluated properly in terms of impact and this should not limit opportunities to fund new or emerging grassroots organizations.

Recommendation 5: Continue to improve equal access to media.

UNDP's support for Equity News and Equity Weekly has been praised for providing a space where all political parties can have some airtime to put forward their views and raise issues. UNDP's youth programme may also pilot community radio programmes in order to offer a voice to certain groups, such as indigenous peoples in the northeast. These initiatives could be developed further with much-needed reform on the media regulatory framework to engender more freedom. This niche has been a relatively small component of electoral support in the past, but could possibly be expanded in the governance programme following negotiations with the Ministry of Information. Elections without free media cannot be considered fair.

Recommendation 6: Continue to engage citizens and stakeholders at the local level.

Engaging citizens and stakeholders at the local level remains important to building democracy from the bottom up in the long term. As the stakes can be lower at that level, there may be more opportunity for alternation of power, gender balance, and citizens holding their locally elected leaders accountable.

GEORGIA

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 HISTORY OF ELECTIONS

Georgia became independent in 1991 with the breakup of the Soviet Union. Its two decades of independence have been politically tumultuous, including the overthrows of two presidents, civil wars, a war with Russia, and continuing internal political polarization.

The first post-independence president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was elected in May 1991, but fled during a 1992 insurrection. He was replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze, the former foreign minister of the Soviet Union, who led Georgia first as the elected speaker of parliament and then was elected president in 1995. Shevardnadze was re-elected in 2000, but resigned in 2003 in the face of the 'Rose Revolution', which was sparked by seriously flawed parliamentary elections. New presidential elections in 2004 brought Mikheil Saakashvili to power. Saakashvili submitted his resignation and stepped down amid protests in 2007, but was re-elected as president in early 2008. His second term will expire in 2013. Under the constitution, he is not eligible for a third term. Most political power is vested in the president, but constitutional amendments that will create the position of prime minister and devolve some power from the presidency to the prime minister are scheduled to be implemented after the next presidential elections.

Parliamentary elections should be held every four years. The Rose Revolution resulted in a rerun of the 2003 elections, with new parliamentary elections held in 2004. In the current parliament, which was elected in 2008, the ruling United National Movement (UNM) holds an overwhelming majority.[150] About half of the elected opposition members boycotted the session to protest what they consider rigged elections. The next parliamentary elections are scheduled for late 2012. Georgia has also held local self-government elections every four years since 1998; the last were held in 2010.

According to estimates by the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the population of the country was 4,469,200 in January 2011.[151] Of these, 3,544,770 were registered as voters for the last elections, in 2010.[152]

1.2 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The political atmosphere in Georgia is generally polarized and confrontational. There are a large number of opposition political parties that for the most part have been small and fragmented, with frequently changing coalitions. Opposition groups have often resorted to protests, boycotts, and street action to make their views heard. Government reaction to such protests has sometimes been disproportionately severe.

Since independence, political events in Georgia have been overshadowed by a continuing problem of separatism. In the immediate post-independence period, war broke out with secessionist enclaves in South Ossetia (1992) and Abkhazia (1994), which have remained outside the control of the Georgian government since that time. In 2008, tensions with South Ossetia led to war and Russian intervention in support of the separatists, following which Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russian troops remain stationed in both enclaves. The war was characterized by violations

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150. 119 of the 150 members of parliament elected in 2008, including 71 of the 75 members elected in single-member constituencies and 48 of 75 members elected through proportional representation.

151. National Statistics Office of Georgia, http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=0&lang=eng

152. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report, Municipal Elections 30 May 2010

of human rights and humanitarian law[153] and resulted in substantial numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In 2011, UNHCR continued to provide assistance for 273,000 individuals, the vast majority of whom are IDPs, although it reported that many of these were close to achieving a permanent solution.[154]

From a policy perspective, the government in power since 2004 has been reform-oriented and has undertaken economic, legal and political initiatives aimed at modernizing the country. Reasonably brisk economic growth has resumed following the 2008 war with Russia. Combating corruption has been a priority for the government; Transparency International reports that Georgia's corruption perception index is far better than that of most other countries in the region.[155] Internationally, the government has pursued policies aimed at membership in NATO and declared its desire to eventually join the EU. Georgia's progressive policies have led to substantial international assistance.

The NGO Freedom House characterizes Georgia as "partly free", citing a variety of specific problems with human rights while also noting some improvements. Georgia lost its Freedom House status as an "electoral democracy" following the organization's assessment that the elections of 2008 were problematic and it has not yet regained "electoral democracy" status.[156] Human Rights Watch has expressed concern about government interference with freedom of assembly and lack of full respect for due legal process.[157] The U.S. State Department's human rights report for 2011 cites continued problems of arbitrary arrest and detention, selective application of the law targeting the opposition, and harassment of the opposition and non-governmental organizations.[158]

Few women hold elective office in Georgia. Just 6 percent of members of parliament are women (a total of nine members), the lowest proportion in the OSCE region and a decrease from the previous parliament. The number of women elected to local government is slightly larger at 10 percent, which is marginally smaller than the number elected at the 2006 municipal elections.

Much Georgian broadcast news is reported to be sharply biased in favour of the government. Print media is more diverse, but less influential and suffers from low professional standards. Opposition political parties sometimes have difficulty in gaining access to the media. Self-censorship is said to be exercised. Human Rights Watch reports allegations of government harassment of media carrying critical reports.[159]

Georgia benefits from an active civil society, including a number of NGOs that have been involved in domestic election observation.

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153. See, for example, 'Human Rights in the War-Affected Areas Following the Conflict in Georgia', OSCE/ODIHR, 27 November 2008, http://www.osce.org/odihr/35578, and the Report of the Council of the European Union's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia ("the Tagliavini report"), September 2009, http://www.ceiig.ch/pdf/IIFMCG_Volume_I.pdf

154. UNHCR Georgia webpage, http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e48d2e6

155. Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2011, http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/

156. Freedom House, 'Georgia remains 'Partly Free' in Freedom House Survey,' http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=24367

157. Human Rights Watch, Georgia Country Summary 2012, http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-georgia.=

158. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Georgia*, U.S. Department of State, http://georgia.usembassy.gov/officialreports/hrr2010_georgia.html

159. Human Rights Watch, Georgia Country Summary 2012, http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-georgia

1.4 RECURRING CHALLENGES

1.4.1 Constituency size

The size of single-mandate constituencies in Georgia ranges from as little as 6,000 to as much as 140,000. This seriously undermines the principle of the equality of the vote and the democratic character of Georgia's elections.

1.4.2 Absence of a level playing field

The incumbent party has consistently used state and public resources unfairly to further its election campaign. This use of 'administrative resources', such as access to government offices, equipment, transportation and civil servants, has been prevalent and blurs the distinction between the political party and the state. Some use of administrative resources is even protected by law.

1.4.3 Intimidation and pressure

The opposition and persons inclined to support the opposition have been subject to unacceptable intimidation and pressure from the government.

1.4.4 Problems with counting and tabulation

Although election officials are reported to usually follow procedures correctly during voting, there have been persistent problems documented about counting and tabulation.

1.4.5 Gender

Women have been consistently underrepresented as candidates and elected officials, with no notable upward trend over the past decade.

1.4.6 Dispute resolution

The process of resolving election complaints and disputes has been problematic, effective remedies have not been available to complainants, and persons involved in election irregularities have not been systematically prosecuted.

1.4.7 Voter lists

Although voter lists have improved, there are concerns that the quality is still inadequate.

1.4.8 The election law

Despite repeated revisions of and improvement to the UEC, every observer report calls for further improvements to remedy serious deficiencies.

1.4.9. Low opposition confidence

Because of the problems cited above, the opposition has lacked confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the election process.

2. UNDP CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ELECTIONS

2.1 ACTIVITIES

UNDP has provided election assistance to Georgia since 2003. There were 10 separate projects from 2003 to 2011 focused specifically on elections.[160] In the broadest sense, most of these were aimed at promoting free, fair and transparent elections. Almost all of the projects were short-term and event-driven, targeting a specific election, although recent projects have been of longer duration and have sought to address the electoral cycle. Until 2008, projects ranged from a few months to slightly over a year. The total value of funds expended on UNDP electoral projects through 2011 was about US$7.7 million.[161] A number of other projects have also sought to contribute to improved elections, including two projects on women in politics and one on media monitoring. In addition to direct assistance, UNDP has played an important coordination role among development partners and other election stakeholders.

Planning and implementing election assistance in Georgia has been complicated by political developments that have disrupted the normal election schedule. The Rose Revolution of 2003 led to repeat parliamentary elections and early presidential elections in 2004. Early presidential elections were held again in 2008. As a result, some project elements had to be condensed or curtailed, while others were designed and implemented rapidly.

UNDP's principal partner for election assistance has been the Central Election Commission (CEC), although CSOs have also been regular partners. In an interview for this case study, the current CEC chairman expressed great satisfaction with UNDP assistance, commenting that it was tailored to the CEC's needs and was more flexible than assistance from other development partners. Over the past decade, UNDP election assistance projects have centred on the same areas of emphasis, in particular the training of election administrations, voter education/awareness, revision of the election law, and women in elections.

UNDP plans to phase out election assistance with the end of its current assistance project, which runs through the 2012 parliamentary elections and the 2013 presidential election.

2.1.1 Training

In many instances, the largest element of the training component of projects has been cascade training on pre-election, election day, and post-election procedures for members of District Election Commissions (DECs) and Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). This has been conducted through a training-the-trainers methodology and the production and distribution of training manuals. In at least one instance, the training was conducted in cooperation with the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). Georgia has an unusually large number of election administrators for a country its size (13 for each polling station, for a total of about 45,000),[162] so training is a formidable task. Cascade training was included as part of separate UNDP electoral assistance projects for the elections of 2003, 2006, 2008 and 2010, as well as for the 2004 elections in the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. In some instances,

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160. An internal UNDP document, a spreadsheet prepared by the Country Office of governance projects since 2004, lists nine election projects, to which is added the project conducted in 2003. Because some projects were extended or included different elements funded different development partners, the number 10 is not necessarily absolute.

161. Internal UNDP document, ibid.

162. Various documents contain different figures for the number of election officials, which may reflect variations over different elections. The figure of 45,000 was provided by the chairman of the CEC.

training had to be rushed or the planned programme activities could not be completed because early elections were called.

Professional capacity development training for members of the election administration through the BRIDGE programme was introduced in a project beginning in 2008 and was continued in subsequent projects through 2012. In interviews for this case study, the chairman of the CEC and senior CEC staff assessed BRIDGE training as interesting and useful, saying that it helped build the professional capacity of personnel within the election administration. Later, BRIDGE was also used to train other electoral actors including observers.

After more than 10 years of assistance for training from UNDP and other organizations, the CEC now has the capacity to conduct training without international assistance. A new training institution, the Centre for Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training, was created in 2010 under the auspices of the CEC. UNDP cooperated with the Centre in developing materials and providing training for the 2010 local self-government elections. The Centre has 12 full-time staff and an annual budget of 2 million lari (about US$1.2 million). It expects to provide training not only for election officials, but also for political parties, observers, NGOs and others, as well as civic and voter education. UNDP is expected to maintain a monitoring and advisory role on training until it phases out election assistance in May 2014.

In addition to training for election administrators, training for domestic observers was included in projects in 2003 and in 2008-2010, training for party agents was included in 2008-2009, and training sessions for media were held in 2008 and 2010.

2.1.2 Public awareness

Public awareness and voter education have been major components of every large UNDP election project for the past decade. Typically, the projects have included broad campaigns that use television and radio spots, posters, bus tours, and the distribution of leaflets, brochures and tee shirts. In some instances, the campaigns involved up to 100 field staff.[163] Parts of the campaigns have targeted rural and disadvantaged communities. Training of media was included in at least two projects.[164] The public information campaigns have typically been implemented through partner organizations. For example, IFES conducted the campaign with UNDP funding in 2004, while the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy was an implementing partner in 2010.

Various other activities have also been included as elements of the public awareness component of UNDP election assistance projects in Georgia. For example, a good practice begun as early as 2003 was the establishment of a media centre at the CEC for election day. The most recent project, in anticipation of the 2010 local elections, included a civic education component for schools on elections, which was subsequently incorporated into the permanent school curriculum.

Specific gender components were included in UNDP election assistance projects in 2003 and 2004, aimed at promoting women's participation, voter education and raising awareness of women's issues among journalists. Subsequently, gender elements were no longer specifically included in election assistance projects, but, from 2005-2010, UNDP implemented separate projects on women and politics. There has not been an effort to mainstream gender considerations into all aspects of election assistance projects.

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162. For the 2004 presidential and repeat parliamentary elections.

163. For the 2008 parliamentary elections and the 2010 local self-government elections.

164. For the 2008 parliamentary elections and the 2010 local self-government elections.

2.1.3 Election legislation

At least three UNDP election assistance projects (2003, 2008 and 2009) sought to address problems with Georgia's legal framework for elections and in particular the Unified Electoral Code (UEC), which has frequently been cited as a weak point of the election process. The UEC has been revised repeatedly, often shortly before elections, but remains flawed despite assistance from UNDP and a number of other international organizations.[165]

While the legal framework remains flawed, there were certain improvements and some of the OSCE/ODIHR and Venice Commission recommendations were taken into consideration. According to the VC and OSCE/ODIHR Opinion issued in 2011, the draft Code is generally a complete and methodical law conducive to the conduct of democratic elections. The draft Code includes the necessary elements for organizing and administering elections and addresses some previous recommendations.

UNDP projects have aimed at identifying gaps in the legislation and using international experts to provide recommendations for improvement. In its most recent election project, UNDP worked to develop public consultations on aspects of the election legislation, including by sponsoring public debates on electoral reform. UNDP personnel also attended meetings of the Election Code Working Group (ECWG), a group of political party representatives and others that gathered to discuss improvements to the UEC. While the ECWG provided a useful forum for discussions and led to some improvements in the law, most opposition political parties eventually began to boycott the ECWG because of what they perceived as intransigence on the part of the governing UNM.

An innovative element included in the 2010 UNDP project on electoral legislation was support for the drafting and signing of a Code of Conduct by national electoral subjects, accredited local observers and the media.[166] This provided an open, consultative process for reaching agreements on electoral issues among sharply polarized contestants, as well as offering the opportunity to address concerns over problems with the election process.

2.1.4 Coordination

Beyond project assistance, UNDP has played a leading role in coordinating international election assistance through its co-chairmanship of the Technical Working Group (TWG), a gathering of international organizations, embassies, international and domestic CSOs and the CEC that meets regularly to discuss election issues, share information and coordinate international assistance. UNDP co-chaired the TWG with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) until the OSCE Mission in Georgia was closed in 2009. Since then, UNDP has co-chaired the group with the EU. In interviews for this case study, many participants in the TWG underscored the value of the group and praised UNDP's role.

In addition to the TWG, the UNDP Resident Representative also co-chairs with the Council of Europe (CoE), an Ambassadorial Working Group (AWG) that provides a forum for high-level consultations and coordination related to broader democratic development in Georgia, addressing cross-cutting issues concerning media, human rights, gender, and minorities. During election periods, much of the AWG's focus is on elections. A range of persons interviewed for this study had mixed views on whether adequate

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165. 'Joint Opinion on the Electoral Code of Georgia', by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR, 22 December 2011, http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2011/CDL-AD(2011)044rev-e.pdf

166. http://www.undp.org.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=22&info_id=942

mechanisms existed to ensure that the TWG's concerns on elections were considered and acted upon by the AWG. Many commented that the AWG holds great influence and could have been more effective in intervening with the Georgian government to resolve election problems.

2.1.5 Other project activities

In 2003 and 2004, additional activities included provision of equipment and payment of direct operating costs of the CEC (including for gas and electricity and for internal travel by members of the CEC). Such budgetary support was phased out after the 2004 elections. Also in 2004, UNDP was instrumental in establishing the CEC's Information Centre, which publicized election results on election night. UNDP provided support for domestic observer organizations in 2004, 2009 and 2010. In 2008, UNDP organized training for political party-appointed commissioners.

Aside from election-specific projects, the only other UNDP projects that have addressed election issues as part of their implementation are two projects on women in politics and an ongoing project on media monitoring.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

International election assistance to Georgia over the past decade has had a number of positive results and UNDP projects have contributed to a number of notable achievements.

2.2.1 Increased capacity of the CEC

Most importantly, the professional capacity of the CEC and of lower-level election administrations (DECs) is reported to have improved markedly as a result of training. There is little doubt that the CEC now has the technical capacity to manage elections effectively. CEC officials attribute this increased capacity at least in part to successful UNDP training programmes. In addition, the CEC has established its own capacity to train lower-level election officials through the creation in 2010 of the Centre for Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training. Assuming the Centre can now successfully take on the job of providing effective training for some 45,000 polling workers, as well as professional development training for higher-level officials, this will mark a very substantial achievement and a primary example of building domestic capacity.[167]

2.2.2 Strengthened legal framework for elections

It is widely acknowledged that the legal framework for elections in Georgia, and in particular the UEC, has improved a great deal as a result of repeated revisions over the past decade. Many of the positive amendments to the law were made as a result of guidance provided by UNDP. The latest round of changes was undertaken in part through a consultative process involving opposition political parties, which is a good practice. Many persons interviewed for this case study commented on the value of UNDP's role as an advocate for positive change in the legal framework for elections. Despite improvements, though, certain shortcomings remain. Parts of the UEC remain problematic despite years of international advice and recommendations for changes. Moreover, some recent changes to the legal framework for elections are broadly regarded as steps backward rather than as progress.[168]

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167. Despite the increased professionalism and capacity of the CEC, a recent survey found that the public view of the CEC was just 46 percent favourable, ranking it 15th of the 17 institutions included on the survey. 'Georgia National Study, October 27 – November 11, 2011', International Republican Institute, http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2012 January 5 Survey of Georgian Public Opinion, October 27-November 11, 2011.pdf

2.2.3 Adoption of best practices

UNDP projects also deserve a measure of credit for specific, important improvements in election practices. It was a UNDP project in 2004, for example, that set up the CEC Information Centre, which publicizes election results by polling station following election day, providing an important element of transparency and accountability of election results.[169] An early UNDP project also helped establish a CEC media centre for election and post-election liaison with the media, another important element of transparency. In addition, UNDP also supported the introduction of electronic certification for election administration officials. The certification is now a legal requirement for election administration membership at CEC and DEC levels, as well as for CEC staff.

2.2.4 Fostering national takeover of budgetary responsibilities

UNDP's earliest election projects included budgetary support for CEC operations. Later projects focused on technical support, demonstrating clear progress, as well as an essential commitment by the Georgian government to assume its responsibility for funding elections. The Georgian budget now provides adequately for election activities.

2.2.5 Sustainability

Sustainability was a strong point of UNDP election assistance to the election administration of Georgia. The technical capacity of the CEC is strong and it is now poised to conduct training for DECs and PECs without further international assistance. In addition, the CEC is in the process of establishing six regional resource centres – a project financed by the CEC, but for which it has hired UNDP to implement it – that will expand training infrastructure to the regions. Other UNDP initiatives have also been taken over by the CEC, including the Information Centre, which publicizes election results by polling station following elections.

UNDP's plan to phase out its direct election assistance by 2014 following the 2013 presidential election is another indication of the sustainability of its project achievements.

UNDP's support has also built the capacity of CSOs to undertake important electoral activities.

2.2.6 Cost effectiveness

UNDP has implemented 10 election-specific projects in Georgia since 2003 with a total expenditure of about US$7.7 million. This cost per project is quite small compared to UNDP election projects worldwide. Investment per eligible voter came to just pennies per election. Most of the costs of elections have been paid through the regular budget of the Georgian Government rather than by development partners. UNDP projects did not include large or expensive purchases of equipment. The fact that the CEC, at its own expense, has hired UNDP to implement a project to establish regional resource centres is another unusual indication of how cost-effective elements of UNDP assistance have become. By all these measures, UNDP election projects can be considered to have delivered positive results for limited costs.

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168. See, for example, 'Joint Opinion on the Electoral Code of Georgia', by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR, including paragraphs 61-62 on the use of administrative resources, 22 December 2011, http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2011/CDL-AD(2011)044rev-e.pdf. In addition, the December 2011 amendments to the Law of Georgia on Political Unions have drawn sharp protests from non-governmental organizations involved in elections; see, for example, 'Petition of Georgian NGOs and Media Organizations', at http://gyla.ge/index.php

169. The Information Centre was established as part of the UNDP project 'Technical Assistance to Electoral Systems/Processes in Georgia', implemented in 2004. See UNDP Project Document GEO 03/004, 5 December 2003.

2.2.7 National ownership

There are many positive indicators that the CEC has taken ownership of project activities sponsored by UNDP. Most notable is the establishment of the Centre for Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training, through which CEC has taken on responsibility for training of all levels of the election administration and is mandated to expand even into training of other election stakeholders, including political parties and NGOs. The development of regional resource centres is another sign of national ownership, as is the integration of UNDP's civic education materials into regular school curriculum.

The process of amending the UEC through ECWG over the past several years also demonstrated some hopeful signs of national ownership. The establishment of an open, consultative process – including opposition political parties and a role for civil society – was a good practice that may have created a strong sense of shared ownership of election legislation. The physical move of the ECWG negotiations from their original venue at the offices of an international NGO, the NDI, to the parliament and within the CEC building, was an important step toward national ownership. In the end, however, only a limited consensus was achieved and most opposition political parties remain alienated from the law. The governing party, for its part, sometimes gave the impression that changes to the UEC were made only under international pressure or to satisfy international concerns, rather than from their own desire to adopt the best possible legislation.

2.3. LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 Long-term assistance promotes greater electoral capacity

Long-term electoral assistance enhances the professionalism and capacity of election management bodies and can lead to significant improvements in the technical implementation of the election process.

2.3.2 Election observation reports are useful tools for project design

Domestic and international election observation reports can be key tools in identifying deficiencies to be addressed by election assistance projects, as well as in keeping pressure on the authorities for positive change. This suggests that assistance to establish or support non-partisan domestic observation organizations can be a constructive element of UNDP assistance projects in the future.

2.3.3 Continued electoral support has not resulted in meeting international standards

Despite substantial international assistance on elections in Georgia over the past decade, the overall quality of Georgia's elections has not shown steady improvement towards meeting international obligations and other standards for democratic elections. Elections have been undermined by consistent problems, including the lack of a level playing field for all contestants, use of administrative resources in support of government candidates, intimidation of the opposition, and low levels of public confidence.

2.3.4 Projects may have addressed less urgent needs

UNDP projects have in a number of instances been repetitive, including similar activities in each cycle. Particularly notable is the repeated focus on public awareness and voter education. The impact of such projects is particularly difficult to quantify. However, lack of voter knowledge has seldom been cited

in Georgia as a problem (with the exception, perhaps, of minority areas in some elections). Persons interviewed for this case study generally assessed the public as extremely well informed on politics and elections and not in need of awareness-raising.[170] UNDP's campaigns may, however, have contributed to the fact that voter knowledge is not perceived as a serious problem in Georgia.

2.3.5 Training for PEC in needs strengthening

Despite repeated rounds of cascade training, the ability of PEC members to count and tabulate votes according to prescribed processes has been consistently criticized by observers. A variety of reasons for this has been cited: many election officials are new and find the procedures daunting; many election officials have been doing it for years and so do not take training seriously; many PEC members were replaced shortly before elections and after the training was completed; and last-minute changes to laws and procedures caused confusion. While each of these explanations might have some merit, perhaps it would have been worthwhile also to question the effectiveness of training methods used. This has been done by the new head of the Centre for Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Training, who plans to institute a new method of training for PECs before the next elections, using electronic training tools in conjunction with traditional cascade training.

2.3.6 Government's lack of political will hinders success

Most of the weaknesses and deficiencies in Georgia's elections highlighted by international observers do not relate to questions of technical competence of election administrators. Rather, they stem from a lack of political will on the part of the government to take the necessary steps to ensure that elections comply fully with their commitments and with international standards.

Many individuals interviewed for this case study cited examples of recent developments in Georgia that indicate that authorities have still not committed to ensuring a level playing field, a fair space for the opposition to campaign without harassment or intimidation, and legislation that meets international standards on such basic issues as the equality of the vote.

2.3.7 Routine, objective evaluations are needed

Over the 10 years of UNDP election assistance, project design benefited from only one regular electoral needs assessment mission to Georgia and no independent evaluations.[171]

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A decade of UNDP election assistance in Georgia shows that election assistance has had a positive impact in a number of important ways on the administration of elections. UNDP assistance has helped build and solidify the professional capacity of Georgia's election administration to conduct technically sound elections, helped develop a sustainable basis for training election officials at all levels in the

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170. The exception to this view came from some NGOs that have actually been involved in implementing projects on awareness-raising for UNDP. As implementers, they may be well placed to judge needs; however, they also have a direct stake in a positive assessment of public awareness projects.

171. The NAM was conducted in 2003 following the first request from the Georgian authorities to the UN for electoral assistance. In February 2008, a consultant provided a 'Report on proposed electoral support activities based on lessons learned from the presidential elections of January 2008'; the report's recommendations centred on proposals for assistance to the parliamentary elections three months later. Finally, a joint DPA/UNDP mission visited Georgia in 2009 to assess the political environment and UNDP's overall strategic engagement following the war with Russia; one of seven tasks of the joint mission was to "provide support to the on-going UNDP electoral assistance project." The joint mission provided recommendations on election assistance programming, only some of which were followed.

future, initiated new approaches leading to increased transparency and accountability, supported and encouraged the involvement of CSOs in improving elections, and worked to increase public awareness and participation in elections. UNDP assistance has also supported an open, consultative and participatory approach toward election reform. UNDP's co-chairmanship of the TWG and AWG has been central to enhanced development partner coordination and has sometimes contributed to coordinated political approaches.

While these are notable achievements, the Georgia experience also highlights some of the limits of international electoral assistance. The value of election assistance cannot be measured only in terms of technical improvements, the number of people trained, the number of public service announcements aired, or in terms of indicators such as national ownership, sustainability and cost-effectiveness. In essence, the true quality of elections lies in whether they are free and fair, as judged against UN and other international standards to which countries have committed themselves. To achieve this, several recommendations have been offered.

Recommendation 1: Use innovation in project design to address a lack of political will by the government to hold free and fair elections.

Facilitate structured dialogue between government and opposition political parties to bridge their differences and support CSOs that monitor and publicize electoral progress or problems. At the same time, however, project initiatives could also be linked to political interventions to encourage government action. For example, several stakeholders interviewed for this case study cited the February 2012 visit by and statements of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association as a good example of the type of political intervention that UN officials can usefully make.

Recommendation 2: Project design should be informed by electoral needs.

Deficiencies that have been identified in the electoral process should be considered and activities aimed primarily at addressing these should be included.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should advise on how to address human rights issues when formulating and evaluating election assistance projects.

Recommendation 4: Project design should consider the government's political will to implement free and fair elections.

If the political will of the government is questionable, projects should be designed to address this. Activities in such situations might include:

- Sponsoring dialogue between the governing and opposition political parties aimed at reforms to the election system or processes
- Providing advice and comparative experience on legal and technical steps that could be taken to deal with deficiencies
- Developing codes of conduct for behaviour of political parties, candidates and other election stakeholders
- Providing assistance to stakeholders other than the government or the election administration, including, political parties, civil society, the media, or organizations representing women or minority groups
- Supporting CSOs that seek to address weaknesses in the election process

Recommendation 5: UNDP election assistance projects should follow a direct implementation (DEX/DIM) mechanism.

In order to avoid any perception that UNDP assistance may be partial – especially in countries where the host government's political will to conduct free elections may be in question or where public confidence in elections is not strong – DEX/DIM is crucial.

Recommendation 6: Measurements of success for election assistance projects should include meeting UN standards as well as the host country's electoral legislative obligations.

UNDP should develop guidelines for making such assessments, based on the standards contained in the ICCPR, General Comment 25 of the UN Human Rights Committee, and other UN treaties, resolutions and documents. The results of these assessments should help guide the development of any future election assistance projects.

Recommendation 7: Indicators for impact assessment should be included as part of election assistance projects.

Such indicators should include whether elections comply with UN standards and good practice on elections. In accord with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the indicators could "establish mutually agreed frameworks that provide reliable assessments of performance, transparency and accountability".[172]

Recommendation 8: Needs assessment missions and independent evaluations should be conducted more frequently when election assistance is provided over a long period of time.

Regular evaluation will provide an independent assessment of project effectiveness and suitability for the changing electoral environment.

Recommendation 9: Gender issues should be mainstreamed into all elements of UNDP electoral assistance projects.

Including a distinct but separate gender component in project activities is not an adequate substitute for mainstreaming.

Recommendation 10: Mainstream election issues into a broader range of democratic governance projects (e.g., parliament and law-drafting, women's empowerment, judicial training, media development).

Such mainstreaming could be useful in general to create synergies in UNDP governance programmes and to solidify democratic gains, but might be especially useful when election assistance projects come to an end or when no development partner funding is available for election-specific projects.

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172. Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, paragraph 19

INDONESIA

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1. HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN INDONESIA

Indonesia began the process of political reform 13 years ago. Since then, significant progress on democratization has been achieved particularly by ending the 30-year existence of the New Order authoritarian regime and re-establishing a democratic political system. The liberalization of politics, the amendment of Indonesia's constitution and the reform of the electoral system are additional successes in the recent democratization process. This does not mean, however, that Indonesia has met all the requirements of a fully functioning democracy. Challenges to maintain democratic achievements and further develop the system remain.

Legislative elections in 1999, 2004, and 2009, direct presidential elections in 2004 and 2009, and the first-round direct local executive elections of 2005-2008 were all executed with relative ease and peacefulness. Over time, improvements in managing these elections were made, even though challenges inherent within the electoral process continue to be identified and addressed. These include the influence of the elite on the electoral process, the independence of electoral commissioners, and often fluctuating rules and regulations of the system.

On a national level, elections are managed by the General Election Commission (KPU), which is an independent state commission. The Commission consists of seven commissioners serving a five-year term. The electoral process is overseen by the General Electoral Monitoring Agency (BAWASLU), which is also a state independent agency consisting of five members.

1.2 POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The development of political parties in this burgeoning democracy has led to a move towards non-violent conflict resolution. Evidence of this can be seen in the peaceful negotiations that led to amendments of the constitution. Although such a process has been seen as the 'cartelization' of Indonesian politics, political parties, which have undeniably matured, show an increasing willingness to compromise on political issues.

As well, some political parties, such as the Justice and Welfare Party (PKS), which have successfully endured the first decade of national democracy, continue to strengthen its internal organization and ensure membership discipline, demonstrating increasing institutionalization and potential longevity.

In spite of these positive changes, political parties and the parliament still remain the focus of concern for many in the country. These institutions are often seen as corrupt, ineffective, narrow-minded, isolated from the people, and dominated by the elite.

1.2.1 Local politics

The development of democracy at the local level – a result of the national decentralization programme, implemented in 1999, that regionalized executive and budgetary powers – has progressed at varied levels. The programme has helped reduce the demands on rich natural resource regions by allowing local governments to make decisions about their use and how they benefit local populations. In less fortunate areas, however, the local government continues to receive support from the national government to sustain public services.

As well, though, there are some regions led by reformists running transparent, accountable governments, while other areas are dominated by local elites set on maintaining power by ensuring that family members hold strategic positions in their administration.

1.3.1 Civil society

The effort of civil society, particularly from NGOs, is considered the catalyst of democratization in Indonesia. Many NGOs across the country have been conducting advocacy campaigns related to issues ranging from political reform and corruption eradication to clean water, sanitation, health care and primary education. They have also played a crucial role in monitoring government budgets, exposing corruption, and fighting for necessary public policies. Without this activism, many of the fundamental political reforms Indonesia has seen since 1998 would not have been possible.

Certainly not all of civil society's activism has had a positive impact on democratization. Though an increase in press freedom has been a welcome change – one that has contributed to the strengthening of society's influence on the government – it has not been all good. Having a newly open media has led to an over-reliance on produced images of political issues and candidates, often misleading the public to believe false representations. Similarly, a few small radical groups have been using religion to promote their sectarian political and social agenda.

1.4 INTERNATIONAL ELECTORAL AID IN INDONESIA

Since the beginning of the reform era in 1998, international development partners have provided electoral assistance to support the development of democratic elections in Indonesia. All international development partner aid is based on the following conditions: programmes must reflect national political and legal frameworks, be in accordance with government priorities and work plans, and not duplicate other development partners' activities. Three types of international electoral assistance mechanisms have been developed to manage development partner assistance, including: i) the multilateral mechanism Elections Multi-Donor Programme under the coordination of UNDP (E-MDP UNDP); ii) the bilateral mechanism in which each international development partner provides electoral assistance directly to the implementing partner(s); and iii) the counterpart fund mechanism that is conducted by the Japanese Embassy in cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA).

Originally, international electoral assistance was under the supervision of MoHA, but this changed in 2004 when the coordination role was taken over by the Coordinating Ministry of Economic, Industry and Trade (Menko EKUIN), representing the Government of Indonesia (GoI) in cooperation with UNDP representing development partner countries. In 2009, coordination further evolved and landed under the control of the National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) with the help of UNDP. This is known as E-MDP UNDP. This coordinating mechanism is designed to foster national ownership of all international electoral assistance.

Development partners choose to deliver their electoral assistance through the multilateral mechanism of UNDP for several reasons. Some agencies do not have specific divisions dedicated to electoral assistance and therefore rely on UNDP's expertise, as was the case with The Netherlands and Spain. Others, including AusAID, value the relationship that the mechanism builds between the development partner community and the government. In all, five development partner agencies – AusAID, CIDA, DFID, AECID, and the Embassy of The Netherlands – committed to providing more than US$10.2 million through this mechanism, making UNDP a trusted and crucial player in Indonesia's democratic development.

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1. ACTIVITIES

Since the first election in the reform era, in 1999, the UN has been one of the main providers of international electoral assistance to support democratization in Indonesia. UNDP specifically has played a crucial role.

Even though international assistance focuses on different needs in each election, there are three main areas in which UNDP has provided continuous support: capacity development of electoral management institutions, strengthening capacity of civil society and voter education, and coordination in mobilizing international electoral funds and in optimizing its usage.

2.1.1 Capacity development of electoral management institutions

The capacity of the electoral management organizations – KPU and the Indonesian Election Monitoring Agency (BAWASLU) – have been growing stronger. KPU's management of procurement processes has been acknowledged by key informants as increasingly transparent and reliable, in part because of assistance received through UNDP's electoral assistance programmes. On the other hand, there is still the need to strengthen the credibility of the voter registration process and reliability of the election results. Though from 1999 to 2004 both issues were deemed to have improved significantly, a decline in these achievements has since been observed.

BRIDGE was introduced in 2003 by the AEC, and UNDP along with the AEC has played a supportive role to KPU in expanding the use of BRIDGE across Indonesia. In 2010, UNDP and KPU collaborated to select a group of facilitators to tailor training modules to Indonesia's electoral context. Since then, Indonesia has run 39 BRIDGE workshops, resulting in 32 accredited and 29 semi-accredited facilitators. Indicating a strong sense of national ownership, KPU has committed to using BRIDGE as part of a long-term capacity development strategy. KPU also aims to decentralize trainings by facilitating BRIDGE modules across all 33 provinces.

Further, KPU has developed its own BRIDGE website in Indonesian, video tutorials to support new facilitators, and a monitoring and evaluation system designed to integrate lessons learned and feedback into its long-term strategy.

2.1.2 Strengthening capacity of civil society and voter education

In 1999, international support for strengthening the capacity of civil society and voter education was strong and focused on the ability of the CSOs to manage voter education and to conduct electoral monitoring programme activities. Attention to these activities, however, waned during the 2004 election when international electoral assistance began to be managed under the coordination of the KPU. Programme activities aimed at supporting CSOs' participation in the electoral process became dependent upon the qualifications set up by the KPU and limited recipient CSOs to fewer than 50.

The involvement of CSOs in UNDP's electoral assistance programme was further downsized in the 2009 elections due to the limited amount of funding. Although these activities are part of the three focus areas of the E-MDP UNDP, the funds available to support the CSOs were relatively small. As well, the selection process for the CSOs to receive assistance was under the control of a selection committee that chose only 26 of 700 CSOs. Once again, the CSOs remained the third party of this scheme. Although only a fraction of CSOs in Indonesia were granted electoral assistance, CSOs' participation in the electoral

process resulted in several key innovations in voter education programmes, including the mobile voter education campaign.

2.1.3 Coordination in mobilizing international electoral funds and optimizing its usage

The E-MDP has become the chosen development partner mechanism to coordinate international electoral assistance into a coherent package of electoral supports. E-MDP provided strategic support to the 2009 elections, as well as longer-term capacity development of the national KPU and more than 450 regional KPUs across Indonesia until the end of 2010. The total amount of electoral funds supporting E-MDP programmes was US$10.2 million.

UNDP together with BAPPENAS took the lead in coordinating and synchronizing all international electoral assistances through regular Coordinating Team meetings through which any proposed projects must go and be approved prior to implementation.

Between 1999 and 2009, steady progress towards institutionalizing the coordination process was made. As well, an official Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was created in 2011 to bind the GoI and international development partners to managing a coherent and coordinated system of electoral and other democracy supports.

Funds for electoral assistance under the coordination of UNDP, however, have been in decline, narrowing the scope and limiting the number of assistance programmes. This decline could have two reasons. First, Indonesia does consider that international electoral assistance is no longer needed since the country has shown significant progress in managing democratic elections and is newly considered a middle-income country – a sure signifier of healthy development. Second, UNDP has proposed an exit strategy after supporting Indonesian elections for the last 13 years and development partners provide funding to other assistance providers such as AEC and IFES. One development partner agency in particular was willing to commit US$9 million in support of the 2014 election process, but will not funnel these funds through UNDP.[173]

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 Resource management

UNDP has been integral in helping the country manage its own elections, as well as the period between them, when it has to mobilize resources and prepare logistical arrangements for the activities related to the following election.[174] For instance, when Indonesia in 1999 held its first democratic election in 44 years, it received substantial foreign assistance: US$90 million from international development partners, of which US$60 million was directly managed by UNDP.

2.2.2 National capacity development and ownership

Through its long-term commitment to capacity development of the KPU, UNDP has trained staff across the country to manage the election process with integrity and in accordance with best practices. National KPU staff is now able to impart these skills to local KPU staff and modifies the lessons and materials to fit the local context.

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173. AusAID, in interview, questioned UNDP's added value in electoral support when AEC and IFES were doing similar capacity development activities.

174. Sue Nelson, Lia Juliani, Programme Evaluation UN Development Programme Election 2004 Support Programme Final Report, (Jakarta: KPU, BAP-PENAS, UNDP, 30 October 2004), p. 4

Similarly, UNDP assistance focused on disseminating election information and voter education campaigns was initially sustained through the efforts of the University of Indonesia for the CEC programme, as well as local authorities, reflecting UNDP's pledge to facilitate of national ownership. However, this takeover had an unexpected outcome: because of a lack of national funding, the programme was suspended.

2.2.3 Trusted partner

UNDP is known and respected for its commitment to transparent and accountable management practices. This institutional behaviour not only garnered the trust of key stakeholders, but it also set a good example for implementing partners and project beneficiaries, who felt compelled to replicate this level of integrity in their own work.

UNDP also plays an integral role in building a common understanding of the principles and objectives of electoral assistance programmes among development partners, local and national governments, and CSOs.

2.2.4 Fostering innovation

Innovation was another distinguishing factor and achievement of UNDP. One such programme focused on strengthening the capacity (and integrity) of election management in the procurement process – a weak point identified during the 2004 election. With the support of E-MDP, the KPU was able to comply with 99 percent of its procurement deadlines, procure materials at the least expensive price, and fully understand the new rules. This ensured an effective procurement process in 2009 and going forward. As well, new election manuals contributed to capacity development even at the polling station level.[175]

2.2.5 Increasing women's political participation

UNDP's campaign to increase the participation of women in the political process was also a success. Not only did the campaign result in an increased number of women who participated in the national as well as local parliaments, but it also helped buoy the issue in policy and public debates. To support this campaign, the E-MDP developed a database of Indonesian women political candidates and organized extensive women participation and electability programs. Though this signifies a movement towards gender equality in Indonesia, there is much more to be done and a continued emphasis on the involvement of women in politics should be encouraged. As well, to better measure gender-specific outcomes, appropriate indicators should be included in project design.

2.2.6 Financial national ownership

Based alone on the fact that international funds represented only 0.01 percent of the budget used to support elections, it is clear that the Government of Indonesia holds the majority of financial and management responsibility.

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175. Eric Bjornlund, Rustam Ibrahim, Michael Collins, Review of Australian Assistance to the 2009 Election in Indonesia, p. 16

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 Building government and CSO relations

A funding decline from 2004 to 2009 unsurprisingly resulted in a more limited reach of development partner assistance to CSOs. According to an AusAID report in 2009,[176] CSOs that supported priorities that varied from the government or KPU were deliberately overlooked. The GoI is comprised of many institutions such as BAPPENAS, MoHA, KPU, Bawaslu, MoWECP, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Social Affairs, working with UNDP and E-MDP. In theory, this diverse group should have balanced any alleged bias. The grants programme itself was designed so that GoI and CSOs could work together. UNDP had a role in bridging the relationship. Further facilitation from a third party and neutral broker like UNDP would help further strengthen the relationship and tackle any concerns raised by either side.

2.3.2 Bureaucratic processes caused project delays

UNDP suffered a delay in programming on several occasions, mostly as a result of cumbersome internal approvals and lengthy processing and disbursement times. This was particularly challenging because of the time-sensitive nature of electoral assistance programmes. The result of these delays included: cancellation of programme, changes in target region and beneficiaries, downsizing programme scope and targets, and challenges related to timely recruitment of the public to events. UNDP should consider streamlining the process to avoid delays in the future.

2.3.3 Sustainability of capacity building remains an issue

The 2009 AusAID report[177] cited a lack of continuity between the 1999 and 2004 election support from UNDP. Institutional memory was limited, suggesting that previous gains had been lost and sustainability limited.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UNDP has supported major gains in electoral administration in Indonesia, with key improvements in national ownership and capacity and inclusion of women in the political process.

There are several strategic areas that should be pursued by UNDP so as to continue to foster a coherent and harmonized approach to long-term electoral assistance.

Recommendation 1: In order to better inform project design in the future, UNDP should conduct an in-depth evaluation of past programmes and remaining electoral assistance needs of the country.

Recommendation 2: In defining long-term electoral assistance, it is necessary to identify intermediate landmarks to better monitor project performance and make adjustments as needed.
These goals should be consistent with the long-term objectives of a logical framework and flexible enough to reflect minor changes along the way.

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176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.

Recommendation 3: UNDP should include a strategy for national takeover in the end phase of project implementation. This should be clear from the early stages of project design even for long-term projects.

Recommendation 4: The electoral cycle should be considered during project conceptualization.

The various stages of the election process – which include the period between elections – require specific activities and a respective scope of funding. Addressing these issues will help foster project continuity.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should continue to capitalize on its reputation as an impartial multinational organization with vast experience in leading, implementing and innovating electoral processes across the world to forge further partnerships with new development partners.

Thirteen years of building trust amongst development partners places UNDP in a unique position to lead the fundraising that the country needs to consolidate democracy in the long run.

Recommendation 6: Unequal distribution of funds can be avoided if UNDP establishes a better-defined and more transparent methodology that is equally inclusive of all relevant stakeholders.

Recommendation 7: UNDP should take account of recent political and economic progress in its programmes.

To reflect these changes, UNDP should consider forming new partnerships with the business community and political society – both influential groups in a democratic Indonesia.

LIBERIA

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN LIBERIA BEFORE THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Liberian multi-party democracy is a recent phenomenon. From 1877 to 1980, the True Wig Party (TWP) held office continuously, maintaining one of the longest political monopolies in the world.[178] Liberia experienced decades of prosperity during this reign; however, the distribution of the wealth was as uneven as the power structure, leaving the majority of Liberians impoverished. Intolerance of this inequality manifested, however, when William Tolbert, the last president of the ruling party, increased the price of rice by 50 percent in 1979 and demonstrators took to the streets. This was the beginning of a moment of social turmoil in the country that would peak in 1980 during a coup d'état in which Samuel Doe's troops overthrew Mr. Tolbert for the presidency.

Five years later, in October 1985, under intensifying international pressure, Mr. Doe agreed to lift the ban on political activity and to hold the first universal elections in Liberia.[179] Doe was announced as the winner with around 51 percent of the votes, after much controversy and a recount of the votes by a Special Election Commission.[180] Four years later, in 1989, an enduring civil war took place in the country when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) rebelled against Doe's regime. Only in 1997 was peace re-established and elections organized by an independent election commission. Charles Taylor's party, now called the National Patriotic Party (NPP), emerged as the winner.[181] The election – declared free and fair by international observers – marked the end of Liberia's first civil war, which left the country with over 150,000 people dead and thousands more spread across the country as refugees.

These first two elections, however, were not sufficient to sustain peace. During the course of his autocratic regime, Taylor was accused of pursuing an undemocratic course after the elections, including limiting civil society participation in the governance system.[182, 183] In 1999, Liberian dissidents formed the new groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy and Elections in Liberia (Model), which violently gained control over different parts of the country and started a second civil war. By the end of the second armed conflict in Liberia, in 2003, the two civil wars combined were responsible for nearly 250,000 deaths and displacement of half of the country's population of 3 million.[184] Only after the Accra Peace talks and the establishment of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed on 18 August 2003, did Liberia begin to follow a path of democracy consolidation.

1.2 THE 2005 ELECTION AND THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The CPA established a political and substantive framework for Liberia's post-conflict recovery. It gave the mandate to the 'all-inclusive' National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), formed right after the agreement, to request the "United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and other members of the

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178. M. Meredith (2005) The State of Africa, (London: Free Press), p. 545

179. ICG Africa Report (2011) Liberia: How sustainable is the recovery, Africa Report No. 177, p. 17

180. C.M. Kimaru, (2009) 'Lessons from Liberia's 2005 Presidential Election: What Worked and What Needs to Work in the Next Election', Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. 34 issue 1, p. 96

181. Liberia has a tow chamber system similar to that in the USA, consisting of the National Assembly (today House of Representatives) and the Senate, which has 30 seats today.

182. T. Jaye (2003) Liberia: An Analysis of Post Taylors Politics, Vol.30 issue 98, p. 643

183. S. Atuobi (2010) 'State-Civil Society Interface in Liberia's Post-Conflict Peace building', KAIPTC Occasional Paper No. 30, p. 3

184. C.M. Kimaru, (2009) 'Lessons from Liberia's 2005 Presidential Election: What Worked and What Needs to Work in the Next Election', Liberian Studies Journal, Vol. 34 issue 1, p. 97

international community […] to jointly conduct, monitor and supervise the elections in the country", which were to be conducted by October 2005.[185] The CPA also called for a reform of the electoral law and the formation of an Independent Election Commission to operate in compliance with UN and international standards. At the same time, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was established, providing a stabilization force of 15,000 to support the NTGL in the preparation of the 2005 election and disarmament of the warring factions.[186]

The adoption of the Electoral Law Reform in late 2004 finally equipped Liberia with a legal framework that was consistent with international standards and that took into consideration the realities of a country that had just endured 14 years of civil war. As well, the National Election Commission (NEC) was reconstituted as an independent entity, responsible for the overall management and control of the elections, including the preparation, organization and the adaption of all necessary measures to ensure free and fair elections.[187] As part of the restructuring process, all former staff of the Independent Election Commission (approved by the ECOWAS in 1997) had to resign and go through a transparent application and interview process, financed through the state budget.[188]

In terms of the political parties, three main groups emerged. First were the historically powerful parties like the True Wig Party (TWP), which joined the Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia (COTOL) in the course of the electoral preparations; the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), Samuel Doe's former party; the National Patriotic Party (NPP) of Charles Taylor; and the Liberia Action Party (LAP) of Gyude Bryant.[189] A second set of parties was characterized by reliance on the charisma of their presidential candidates, like the Unity Party (UP) of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf; the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) of George Weah; and the Liberty Part (LP) of Charles Brumskine.[190] A third group of 17 different parties registered, but many became inactive in the non-electoral period. With an overall voter turnout of 75 percent in the first round, and 61 percent in the second round, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (UP) was elected president.[191] The election was declared free and fair by international observers, and the various contestants largely accepted the result.

During the election, it became clear that voters' ethnic-based party loyalties were not as strong as previously believed. The electorate reacted to the challenging political situation by choosing known local personalities, regardless of party affiliation.[192] As a result, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's party did not win the majority of seats in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, producing a very diverse electorate.

1.3 THE FIRST FULL ELECTION CYCLE: 2006 - 2011

The 2005 election represented an important step towards Liberia's democratization, stirring political momentum set to promote change in the country. Nevertheless, challenges remained: the national economy needed to be rebuilt, rule of law and the judicial system had to be restored, and reconciliation and peace-building required further development. Also, the new government, the opposition and civil

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185. Comprehensive Peace Agreement Article XVIII

186. Ibid.

187. UNMIL, Electoral Division: Final Report of the 2005 Election, p. 9

188. Ibid.

189. ICG Africa Report (2005) Liberia's Elections: Necessary but not sufficient, Africa Report No. 98, p. 4

190. Ibid.

191. The 14 percent drop in the second round can be attributed to the fact that people lost their candidate in the first round and had no interest anymore.

192. Ibid., p. 393

society were still adjusting and in need of capacity-building. Most small parties were closed shortly after the election due to a lack of funding and CSOs experienced a severe decline in support, especially for civic and democratic education activities.[193]

The electoral system suffered some challenges as well. Because the Electoral Law Reform was not passed by the Senate's Committee on Autonomous Commissions & Agencies or the House of Representatives' Committee on Elections and Inauguration, the government was forced to postpone municipal and chieftaincy elections until 2008. The main reason for delay was the need for rationalization of the local government structure as well as the need to agree on boundaries.

When the government of Liberia requested UN electoral assistance in February 2009, elections became the centre of attention again and the legal reform process garnered new momentum. The government worked in collaboration with different CSOs on a list of four constitutional changes to be voted through a public referendum. Amendment No. 4, which directly addressed the financial burden of elections, was passed.

The ratification enhanced the cost-effectiveness of the elections in Liberia and was well received by all stakeholders. Rejection of the other three amendments, however, suggests that more attention should have been paid to voter, CSO, and political party education, as there was a clear lack of knowledge and understanding of the proposed legislation.

1.4 THE 2011 ELECTION

The political environment in Liberia between the referendum held in August 2011 and the election held three months later in October was marked by the launch of the political campaigns of the 15 presidential candidates. The UP and Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf, the incumbent, ran on a platform touting their achievements, including debt relief and the advances of the economy, the improvement of basic services and infrastructure, the rebuilding of the Liberian Armed Forces and the restoration of Liberia's international standing. Mr. Winston Tubman, of the CDC, although supporting most UP policies, stressed the importance of reconciliation between the American-Liberian minority and the indigenous majority, warning that a failure to do so would lead to another civil war. Mr. Brumskine, representative of the Liberty Party (LP), campaigned on four pillars: reconciliation, reform, recovery and rebuilding. He stated that, if elected, he would work to decentralize the government, as well as decrease the powers of what he called the "imperial presidency".

On 11 October, the first round of the election took place without serious incident. A 72 percent voter turnout was deemed a remarkable figure.[194] All observer groups praised the preparation and administration of the election highlighting that the election was free from violence and transparent. Right after the release of the preliminary results of the first round, Sirleaf was leading with 45.4 percent of the vote, with Tubman in second (29.5 percent) and Prince Johnson in third (11.4 percent). The CDC and eight other parties withdrew their observers/agents and protested against the results, alleging massive flaws and fraud in the electoral process.[195] They accused the NEC of bias in favour of the incumbent; however, the NEC chairman resigned due to the signature of a letter in which the wrong percentage points were awarded to the wrong party. This was more an error than a bias.

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193. 9 CSOs interview partners from 11 confirmed a complete draw down of support in the area of civic and democratic education occurring after the election in 2005.

194. Web Page National Election Commission of Liberia: http://www.necliberia.org/results2011/

195. Carter Centre Preliminary Statement on the Liberia 2011 Presidential Run-Off Election, Nov. 10, 2011, p. 4

The second round took place on 8 November before all complaints had been fully investigated. The CDC, in violation of the code of conduct of political parties, organized a march starting from its party headquarters in Monrovia. In a clash with the Liberian National Police (LNP), one person died and several were injured. Ms. Sirleaf eventually won the election. It is clear, however, that there remains a need for improvements in the process of settling political disputes so that Liberia's progress to date is not undermined.

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1. ACTIVITIES

In April 2004, the UN EAD sent a team to Liberia to conduct a needs assessment. Civic and voter education, voter registration, constituency delimitation and polling were identified as the main critical areas. In operational terms, it was concluded that international donors should provide further support to NEC – in the form of material and human resources, as well as capacity-building – so it could implement its mandate adequately. Given these findings, the key objectives of UNMIL were 1) to assist the conduct of credible elections with the provision of all necessary expertise and 2) to leave behind a Liberian election management body that would rely less on international assistance for future elections.[196]

Since the beginning of the activities of electoral support, UNDP had been an active backer of the Liberian democratization process, complementing the work of other development partners, such as UNMIL, NEC and the EC, with a focus on long-term development assistance, sustainability and capacity-building.

2.1.1 UNDP's participation in the 2005 election

The partnership between UNMIL and NEC consisted of an arrangement where NEC was the main national partner, with the constitutional mandate to implement elections, whereas UNMIL provided overall coordination, especially regarding external assistance. UNMIL brought into the country an electoral division with a budget of approximately US$19 million – raised and made available through a collaborative arrangement amongst NEC, the UN, the IFES, the EC and UNDP, approved in July 2004[197] – to cover NEC operations and the elections.

UNDP's role consisted in the implementation of the project Support to the Organization of the October 2005 National Election in Liberia, in which it managed its own funds (US$580,000), as well as the EC's contributions (US$3 million), and focused on the support of strategic procurement of election materials and equipment, the promotion of civic and voter education, and capacity development of NEC staff and CSOs. At the same time, UNMIL was the largest supporter of the NEC on human and financial resources (US$7.6 million), leading all operational issues, as well as procurement of electoral materials and arrangements for security. The Government of Liberia provided US$5.24 million of its own to pay for salaries of NEC and elections personnel. A Special Electoral Management Committee was established as a coordination mechanism, which was composed of UNMIL, IFES/USAID and UNDP/EU and chaired by UNDP.

Another important contribution by UNDP to the election was the implementation of the new registration system that would overcome the lack of reliable census data available in the country. In

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196. UNMIL, Electoral Division: Final Report of the 2005 Election, p. 6
197. Ibid., p. 11

consultation with development partners, the NEC decided to adopt a simplified system using optical mark recognition forms (OMR), scanners and Polaroid cameras to produce voter ID cards.[198] As a key member of the Civic and Voter Education Task Force/Committee, UNDP supported the NEC in all civic and voter education activities for the registration and election periods. In total, 50 percent of the UNDP budget was earmarked for voter education activities and materials. UNDP also funded 18 CSOs, cultural groups, and gave additional support to women's initiatives. Between 25 April and 21 May, 1.35 million of the estimated 1.5 million Liberians eligible to vote were registered. The registration process was praised by all stakeholders as a success.[199]

During the second phase of preparation for the first and second rounds of the election, UNDP prioritized civic and voter education and specific procurement activities, using a budget of over US$1.25 million. All materials, though, were designed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and local CSOs.[200] These were indeed critical areas, since they determined to a large extent the credibility of the electoral process and the quality of popular participation. The civic education activities concentrated on citizens' awareness of their role in the democratic process, including the link between human rights and voting rights, the relationship between elections and democracy, the conditions necessary for the establishment of democratic elections, the importance of the secrecy of the ballot, how votes translate into seats, and why each vote is important and its impact on public accountability.[201] On the other hand, voter education activities focused on the electoral process specifically, informing citizens about the importance of providing accurate information during registration, the different types of elections, the criteria for eligibility as voters, registration requirements, mechanisms for voting, and the date, time, and place of voting.[202] The turnout at the election of approximately 75 percent is a good measure of the success of the implementation of the educational campaign.

2.1.2 The post-election period: 2006-2007

UNMIL began to reduce its activities almost immediately after the second round of elections, repatriating the large UNV force from the field. In December 2005, only six international staff and five UNVs remained to continue to support the NEC.[203] This resulted in a significant reduction in the momentum gained for civic education activities. On the operational side, the future of the data centre – the backbone of the NEC in election administration and management, and particularly important to the on-going preparation of the chieftaincy, municipal and by-elections foreseen for April/May 2008 – was still to be decided. Upon NEC's request, and to ensure uninterrupted transfer and secure storage of elections data, UNDP agreed to take the data centre under temporary ownership, but then handed it over to the NEC.

The involvement of UNDP in the 2005 election was deemed strategic and well positioned, particularly because of the short timeframe within which it successfully implemented its activities from the signature of the CPA to the election on 11 October. However, with UNMIL's withdrawal and a sharp decrease in funding, UNDP tried to keep up with their civic and democratization educational activities through 'bridging' projects. These were supposed to keep minimum structure functional during the period post-election.

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198. A. Cisse and A. Evrensel (2010) Voter Registration in Africa: A comparative Analysis, Liberia, p. 138

199. ICG Africa Report (2005) Liberia's Elections: Necessary but not sufficient, Africa Report No. 98, p. 4

200. Election campaign messages: How to Vote; Get Ready to Vote; How the Ballots are Counted; Women and Disabled People can Vote Too; Women's Votes are Equal; How to Mark Your Ballot; Your Vote their Future (poster with a picture of Liberian children); Choose Leaders not Rulers.

201. Ibid.

202. UNMIL, Electoral Division: Final Report of the 2005 Election, p. 24

203. UNMIL, Electoral Division: Final Report of the 2005 Election, p. 65

In particular, UNDP engaged in the preparation of the municipal and chieftaincy election, together with IFES, and supported the development of a Post-Election Civic Education Master Plan and disbursed small grants to eight CSOs. The Plan provided a framework for civil society and state engagement in the process of empowering Liberians with information, knowledge and skills for informed and effective participation in peace building and national development. In 2006 and 2007, as many as 7,000 copies of the plan were produced and disseminated across the country.[204] Additionally, UNDP was awarded a DGTTF Fund of US$250,000 to further support women in leadership positions.[205]

Although such fluctuation of funds was not ideal for the establishment of effective long-term electoral assistance, the creation of bridging projects using core funds allowed UNDP to continue its support to the electoral process in the absence of large-scale donor-funded projects and gave it the opportunity to be flexible in its support.

2.1.3 The pre-election period: 2008-2011

After UNMIL had completed the withdrawal of its electoral department, UNDP became the UN agency to take on the support of the NEC for the 2011 election. In 2009, shortly after the government's request for electoral assistance, several assessment missions were sent to Liberia, originating the Support to the 2010-2012 Liberian Electoral Cycle Project through which UNDP would provide technical assistance to the NEC. The project had a budget of over US$27 million (Basket Fund)[206] and started in 2010, when electoral preparations were already underway. Consequently, a series of adaptations had to take place to make the programme consistent with the situation on the ground. UNDP's technical team, for example, arrived only a year before the election date, which was a short time to establish strong working relationships with their NEC counterparts.

However, this was not the only obstacle. The data centre, which was temporarily taken over by UNDP, became obsolete between elections and the data untraceable. In response, the NEC repeated the effort through the system used in 2005, since it proved to be feasible in the field and the staff was already familiar with it. Apart from the procurement of the new data centre, the only technical equipment needed were the digital cameras, which NEC had exchanged for the old Polaroid. Voters could then receive new voter ID cards in the field. The NEC demonstrated a clear preference for the voter roll system (a list of all registered voters in an area) and is determined to keep it and update the system according to the census cycle every 10 years. Due to extensive preparation by IFES, UNDP was able to immediately work on the registration process between January and February of 2011, as well as procure the necessary equipment.

In addition to registration logistics, the project undertook efforts to improve the professional and institutional capacity of the NEC, implementing the UNV support scheme, providing in-house computer training and advisory services to all NEC departments and recruiting two legal advisors. To further support the registration activities UNDP made US$250,000 available to 33 CSOs to conduct voter education campaigns in all 15 counties, focusing on informing citizens on the new referendums and the voting process. Additionally, UNDP focused efforts towards increasing women's political participation through training of women's CSO/NGO representatives. In total, 1.8 million of the anticipated 2.1 million eligible voters (85 percent of total) were registered leading up to this election.[207]

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204. Handover note Zephania Aurora (UNDP), 2006

205. Ibid.

206. Total NEC Budget: US$38,317,117 and total Basket Fund Budget: US$27,186,840

The new delimitation of boundaries became obsolete with the resolution on the nine new districts. After a long political discussion, the referendum to change the constitutional provision that all legislative elections need to be a two-round system (which was financially impossible) was scheduled to be held before the election in October 2011. During the preparation for the referendum, the legal department became the centre of the operations since they needed to draft regulations. UNDP's legal experts delivered a draft of referendum regulations to the NEC as well as a draft of the exhibition regulations.

With the electoral decisions taken by the NEC and the government, UNDP and other development partners had to show increased flexibility. Donor interest and support for the 2011 election was high and the cooperation went well on all levels. Different coordination mechanisms like a donor coordination group and technical committees as well as basket fund steering committee meetings were set up to discuss activities and changes.

2.1.4 The 2011 election

In parallel to the referendum and post-referendum activities, the UNDP team worked with the different NEC departments to support the election process in the areas of training, message design and civic education, logistics, operations, legal and procurement to keep up with the electoral time line. While the procurement was punctual, capacity-building of local institutions was not fully effective.

Specifically, UNDP provided small grants to 18 CSOs and paid 150 civic educators for one month of outreach. The approach received some criticism as it was felt that the effort would have been more effective if the process of voter education had been sustained through the electoral cycle.

UNDP also supported the NEC in the re-institution of the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) as a means to elicit political dialogue between the opposition and civil society, achieve agreement on specific issues, and prevent political strife. Conflict prevention was further addressed by training support provided to the Liberian National Police on electoral rules and regulations. Training the judiciary would have taken this effort a much-needed step further, but, given time constraints, this was not feasible.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 Registration

In 2005, UNDP, as part of the Civic and Voter Education Task Force/Committee, supported the NEC in registering an unprecedented 1.35 million people for the upcoming election. This was a crucial development for Liberia's electoral process. To sustain this achievement, however, a viable and sustainable voter ID system needs to be developed.

2.2.2 Peaceful conduct of national elections in 2005 and 2011

Considering the recent history and context of Liberia, the Liberian people, with the support of an integrated UN, have successfully held two peaceful national elections.

2.2.3 Political discourse and conflict resolution

The formation and the use of the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC), which was re-initiated by UNDP during the 2011 election, engaged the opposition as well as civil society to reach consensus on

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207. ICG Africa Report (2011) 'Liberia: How sustainable Is the Recovery?', No. 177, 19 August 2011, p. 7

specific issues and represented a big step toward effective political dialogue and the prevention of electoral conflict.

UNDP further facilitated conflict prevention by providing training to the Liberian National Police on electoral rules and regulations.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 UNDP's support focused heavily on NEC

Currently, UNDP's electoral projects focus heavily on the NEC and less so on CSOs and political parties that are also key stakeholders for peaceful and informed elections. To enhance the credibility of elections, support to these stakeholders and others needs to be broadened further. Political parties, CSOS, the media and the judiciary need to be enabled to play their role in the process.

2.3.2 Unclear division of UNMIL and UNDP roles

Better clarity of UNMIL and UNDP mandates is needed. The lessons learned study: Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission[208] settings provides strategies to achieve this.

2.3.3 Legal framework reform needed

In the period between the 2005 and the 2011 elections, several difficult changes were brought about by the incumbent government. Nevertheless, specific electoral legislative reforms were not addressed by the government over a long period of time, even though the opposition parties highlighted several shortcomings on numerous occasions. In this situation, an open party dialogue was needed to reflect the different points of view and to initiate a constructive discussion. Electoral law reform should have been part of the political discussion in the media, carried out by political party lobbying, and brokered to reach a society contract through which all felt represented and included. The parties, the NEC as well as civil society need support to initiate these discussions and start an electoral law reform in alignment with the constitution.

2.3.4 More civic education is needed

More civic education is needed also through a comprehensive national plan, not only through the NEC. The national plan should target youth, women and grassroots organizations and offer information beyond voting logistics (where/how to vote). Civic education should take place at all times and focus on civic responsibility and rights to encourage further participation and engagement in public activities and programmes. The National Civic Education Master Plan as it was developed in 2006 was a step in the right direction, but got lost due to more pressing problems and a shift in donor interest. It would have helped to shape an engaged and informed civil society between 2006 and 2011. Capacity-building would help civil society and political parties to find their role in the political process. Governance programmes could offer entry points to support these electoral stakeholders.

2.3.5 Conflict prevention is important, but underemphasized

Conflict prevention was addressed by the project through the IPCC and the development of codes of conduct for the work of political parties and CSOs as well as electoral training for the LNP. The timeframe

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208. Lessons Learned: Integrated Electoral Assistance in UN Mission Settings (2013)

of the project, however, precludes deeper and longer-lasting conflict prevention. Transparency of processes on the side of the NEC, political parties and the government as well as the availability of discussion platforms like media outlets are highly important for preventing conflict in the long term.

2.3.6 Local elections/decentralization are costly

Local elections bear a high administrative cost, especially with 15 counties, as in Liberia. The current structure may not be sustainable and should be re-evaluated.

2.3.7 'Bridging projects' are effective for continuity between elections

Smaller projects using core funds in between election cycles, in the absence of large-scale donor funds, allow continued support and flexibility in project design.

2.3.8 Transportation costs can be reduced by using road over air transport

One challenge to cost-effectiveness and sustainability is the infrastructure available to support the transport of electoral materials. Because of its complexities, UNMIL had to support these activities with cost-intensive airlifts. UNDP encouraged the use of roads over air transport when possible – a good step towards transitioning to nationally funded elections. Weather and transport time should also be considered when further developing these logistics in the future.

2.3.9 NEC´s capacity to enforce compliance is still low

Limited support to the NEC between 2006 and 2009 created gaps in the capacity of the institution, specifically within the legal department, and constrained the NEC's ability to enforce compliance with laws and regulations related to party registration, the verification of candidates' nomination signatures, and the declaration of campaign finances, which should be transparent and audited by NEC.

The NEC lacks various procedures, such as, for example, a procedure to impose sanctions for the abuse of resources, as well as the capacity to enforce them. Performing public outreach, facilitating political dialogue and engaging with external stakeholders are other areas in need of improvement. To get a better understanding of these skills gaps, UNDP conducted an institutional needs assessment in 2012 to inform a capacity development strategy, which will contribute to the NEC's sustainability.

2.3.10. Barriers to women's political participation remain

Even though the project did succeed in empowering some female candidates, low participation of women seeking political office still exists and can largely be attributed to administrative requirements, like registrations fees, and the first past the post system, which strongly favours the front runner. Beyond political office, women should also be encouraged to participate in the electoral administration of the NEC.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the 2014 senatorial election and the 2017 presidential election on the horizon, reflecting on past experience and lessons learned is crucial to improve UNDP's electoral assistance and ensure more

advancements towards the achievement of a sustainable, free, and fair electoral system in Liberia. To this end, several recommendations are offered.

Recommendation 1: Amend the legal framework in regards to electoral law, appointment of NEC Commissioners, the timeframe and the importance of local elections.

Recommendation 2: Further support the NEC's capacity development by using the findings of the institutional needs assessment to inform targeted skills training and structural adjustments.

Continue working on more sustainable and cost-effective approaches to electoral processes in the transition period when UNMIL completes its mandate and UNDP provides support to governance.

Recommendation 3: Develop a sustainable civil and voter registration systems based on models used in other countries.

Recommendation 4: Facilitate long-term civic education and participation activities through social networks, schools, universities, ministries and the media.

Recommendation 5: Use the electoral cycle approach for project design.

UNDP's continuity in the country and its flexibility to meet the needs of context are highly valuable assets that should be used more effectively. Post-electoral activities implemented in accordance with the electoral cycle approach should be achieved, although, when UNMIL drew down in 2006, UNDP struggled to do so. Resource mobilization and the recruitment for an electoral officer to take over activities should start early and a project document consisting of short-, mid- and long-term objectives to make a case with the donor community should be presented.

The elections should not be seen as a singular event, but as long-term processes, as the electoral cycle approach suggests. This means extending support to all relevant stakeholders as well, not just to the EMBs.

MEXICO

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 MEXICO'S TRANSITION TO A MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY

Between 1988 and 1994,[209] Mexico experienced a slow, negotiated, and generally non-violent political transition away from the single-party rule that had been in place since the end of the Mexican revolution and the founding of the ruling party in 1929. That party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI),[210] had ruled the country since the 1930s and had been credited with bringing about economic growth and modernization during the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1960s, the PRI began to face growing popular discontent over corruption, inequality in the distribution of the country's wealth, and the lack of democracy. In 1988, a breakaway faction of the PRI contested the presidential election. Many believed that it was only through electoral fraud that the PRI's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, had won. This difficult and controversial election, and the civil society mobilization that followed, made it essential for the subsequent presidential election of 1994 to be perceived as credible, nationally and internationally. Mexico had been opening itself economically to the world by negotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada and joining the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The modernizers within Salinas de Gortaris's cabinet recognized that the country would also have to accept more political openness.

Following the controversial 1988 elections, the government accepted two major demands by the opposition in 1990. First, it created the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) to oversee the administration of the elections. While the IFE was, at that time, still chaired by the Minister of Interior, it was endowed with an independent civil service and included greater participation of political parties. Second, the government agreed to a full revision of the voter list and to the issuing of new voter cards. This process would be carried out by the IFE to ensure its credibility.

Another measure demanded by civil society and some political actors, including demands from within the government, was the need to invite international observers. This proposal was endorsed by the PRI's candidate in 1994, Luis Donaldo Colosio, and was supported by some within the IFE, but was not acted on by the government.

1.2 ADDRESSING THE VIOLENCE IN 1994

At the beginning of 1994, two events deepened the sense of crisis and led to further emergency reform. In January, an armed rebellion broke out in the southern state of Chiapas, rupturing the image of a modernizing Mexico that the government had tried to project. In March, the presidential candidate from the then governing party was assassinated. This was the first high profile political assassination since the 1920s. The need for credibility became so acute that the government finally accepted the need for international observers and turned to the UN to organize an observation mission.

The UN Secretariat, however, replied that there was insufficient time to organize such a large mission, which would also require a General Assembly mandate. It suggested instead that the organization provide support to local observers. The Mexican Government agreed and provided the UN with a fund of around US$5 million that the UN would then manage and distribute to CSOs that would carry

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209. A strong case can be made that the reform process effectively began in 1977, but most observers consider the highly controversial election of 1988 to be a major turning point that accelerated the reform process.

210. It was initially founded as the Partido Revolucionario Nacional. The name and some organizational aspects were changed in 1946.

out electoral observation[211]. In addition, the UN agreed to provide training and logistical support to CSOs conducting observation, which was a relatively new phenomenon in Mexico, at least in a legally recognized form.[212] Finally, it was agreed that the UN would designate a team of independent experts to conduct a technical evaluation of the Mexican electoral system in order to provide confidence to civil society and opposition groups in Mexico's recently reformed laws and institutions. The report of the technical team would reflect only the views of its authors, not those of the UN. At this stage, the recently formed Electoral Assistance Division of the UN's Department of Political Affairs carried out this project.[213]

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1. ACTIVITIES

The UN played a key role in providing credibility to an electoral process under severe political stress in 1994 and assisted in consolidating the transition in subsequent years. It is important to note, however, that the UN's involvement came late in a transition process that had been negotiated between the regime and the main opposition political parties, perhaps over several decades. In many countries where the UN is involved in the provision of electoral assistance, its technical assistance is vital for establishing the key features of what is generally considered a credible electoral system: an independent EMB, a reliable voter list, effective civic and voter education, and credible electoral justice institutions. However, in the case of Mexico, these key features had already been agreed upon and largely put in place when the UN began its involvement. Unlike in many other countries, UNDP neither played a significant role in training or building electoral institutions nor advised on the creation of the voter list.

Since 1994, the UN has assisted the seven federal-level elections, establishing a close partnership with Mexican electoral authorities. These were primarily the IFE and the Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federacion (TEPJF) – the EMB and the electoral court, respectively. While the UN's initial involvement was limited to supporting local observation efforts and providing confidence in the capacity of Mexico's electoral administration, its activities have expanded. The UN, mostly through the UNDP CO, has worked to increase voter participation, strengthen electoral justice, and participate in efforts to reform state institutions. Recent projects (at least from 2010) were oriented to mainstreaming gender equality and women political participation aimed at advancing the political rights of indigenous populations.

The UN also facilitated South-South cooperation between Mexican election experts and those in other UN Member States, as well as between Mexican electoral institutions and their counterparts in other countries.

The UN's involvement in the 1994 election was seen as a success. Due in large part to IFE's effective organization and the credibility of the voter list, the election was seen as one of the cleanest in Mexican history, even though the PRI retained power. Finally, the professional performance of the UN allayed many fears within the government that UN involvement would be a danger to national sovereignty.

Mexican institutions considered that both types of UN support provided in 1994 would continue to be useful. There was an expectation that the government would again finance domestic observation for the next federal congressional elections in 1997. The role played by the UN in supporting CSOs in

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211. To date, Mexico is one on the few governments that still funds national observers.

212. Legislation allowing national electoral observation had only been adopted in early 1994.

213. A special mission was established for this purpose: the Equipo Técnico de las Naciones Unidos en México (ETONU-MEX).

fact could only be played effectively by an impartial, credible organization, such as the UN. Neither the government nor the IFE could distribute funds to observer organizations without creating a conflict of interest. At that time, the government was run by a political party that would contest the elections and the IFE was one of the entities that was being observed. Also, the technical evaluation of the electoral law was deemed to have been extremely helpful in building confidence and assisting international observers understand the recent, rapid changes the electoral law had undergone. Given the expectation of continuing reforms and the ongoing lack of trust among some in the opposition, corroboration by another group of independent experts would again help to build confidence in the reform process.

At this point, the UNDP CO, in close cooperation with EAD/DPA, became the primary interlocutor with Mexican electoral institutions. IFE considered its relationship to be with the UN as a whole, as reflected by one IFE interlocutor: "The UN understood that we didn't need technical assistance. We lacked credibility and legitimacy inside and outside Mexico. From the international perspective, legitimacy was very important. That came from the UN, which at the time had a very good reputation and leadership on electoral matters." This statement is stressed, as it reflects the leitmotif of the UN's long-term involvement in Mexico. Almost all of the figures interviewed for this study mentioned the importance of the attitude of UNDP towards the primacy of sovereignty and the establishment of credibility. But as important as this point may be, it is also difficult to define.

2.1.1 Assistance to local observers

UNDP has provided assistance to local observers in every election held since 1994. There have been two noteworthy changes in the UN's approach to the provision of electoral assistance in Mexico, as it began to learn from experience. First, UNDP took over the project from ETONU-MEX. Second, the provision of technical assistance (i.e., training on observer methodology) was clearly separated from the financial disbursement function. Instead of distributing funds itself, UNDP established a technical committee made up of Mexican experts selected by the IFE and the TEPJF.[214] A UNDP representative participated with voice but no vote.

Among the tangible outputs of this form of assistance was the development of a CD-ROM on election observation methodologies, which has since been translated from Spanish into English and French and distributed to UNDP COs around the world.

A further innovation in this type of assistance included encouraging the participation of academic researchers and international organizations as observers in order to provide mid-term and comparative perspectives as well as sound methodological approaches to the observation process.

2.1.2 Assessment of Mexico's electoral system

As noted above, the government requested the UN to conduct a technical evaluation of the reforms and the existing electoral administration (the 1994 elections would be the first ones run by the newly created IFE) to increase confidence, especially among CSOs and opposition political parties. The UN established a technical evaluation team of three independent, international electoral experts to carry out this evaluation.

Another round of electoral reforms took place in 1996 and the UN, upon request of the Mexican Government, tasked a group of expert with the evaluation of the electoral law. Even though further

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214. We will refer generically to the 'Electoral Tribunal'. In fact, there have been two different bodies, the Tribunal Federal Electoral (TRIFE) between 1990 and 1996, and the TEPJF, each having different competencies.

electoral reforms have taken place, no further evaluations were conducted by the UN. To date, however, the UNDP continues to provide support to local observers.

2.1.3 Strengthening democratic culture

Following the 1997 elections, the UN's electoral assistance programme began to evolve and initiated new activities. The electoral context in Mexico was changing, the UN's experience in providing electoral assistance to other countries was growing, and the relationship between the UN and Mexico's electoral institutions was deepening. In the 2000 presidential election, Mexico experienced a watershed in its transition as an opposition party candidate won the presidency in 2000. This was a major testament to the transparency and credibility of the electoral system, which was increasingly recognized around the world.

However, once the problems of holding fair balloting had been removed, another set of problems emerged. After the 2000 presidential election, most political actors recognized that the voting process could not be easily manipulated, but the electoral playing field remained uneven. The government had significant influence through the use of resources, and voters, who were cynical about democracy, were often easily misled or misinformed. As a consequence, the next task of the transition was to focus on strengthening Mexico's 'democratic culture'.

Mexico's electoral institutions enlisted the assistance of UNDP towards this end. The aim was to improve the information Mexicans have about their democracy in order to increase the quality of their participation. Project activities included the organization of workshops and seminars, the research and publication of documents, support to civil society (beyond local observation support) and other awareness-raising activities. The programme paid special attention to specific groups, such as women and indigenous populations (and indigenous women in particular).

At the same time, with the complementary goal of levelling the playing field, UNDP partnered with the Ministry of Social Affairs to look at the use of public funds and the effect that its use was having on voters. The UNDP CO established a commission of Mexican experts that investigated whether federal funds were being denied to some constituencies and over-provided to others with the intention of affecting electoral outcomes, among other activities aimed at providing technical assistance to ensure the non-partisan use of social programmes. The study lasted two years and found that, for the most part, social services were provided equally and were not being misused. One of the weaknesses of this study, however, was that it only looked at federal funds and focused on programmes that were generally well-audited. A significant amount of government spending actually went through more opaque state and local programmes. This is an area in which UNDP could make a significant contribution, if the right incentives for local electoral agents' involvement are built in. The project then evolved into a larger governance project, which continues today. The project maintains a web-accessible database of numerous federal and local programmes, allowing citizens to monitor the use of public funds. This serves as example of the link between electoral assistance and other areas of democratic governance.

Another recent project that demonstrates the unique partnership approach of UNDP's electoral assistance in Mexico as well as crossover with governance is an ongoing initiative to improve the participation of women as candidates in Mexico's elections[215] The TEPJF requested (and funded) UNDP's a support in evaluating state legislation and its impact on women's political participation. UNDP

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215. Igualdad de género, derechos políticos y justicia electoral en México: por el fortalecimiento del ejercicio de los derechos humanos de las mujeres. This is a US$500,000 project that began in August 2010.

assembled a team of experts to analyse all existing international instruments that deal with women's political participation. Based on that meta-analysis, it isolated the elements that an ideal law would include. Then the team compared the relevant legislation of each Mexican state with this ideal law. On the basis of that comparison, each state was ranked in terms of its proximity to the ideal. Finally, the four lowest-ranked states were selected and its findings were presented to legislators, government officials, and civil society to encourage initiatives to improve the existing law. In one of these states (Yucatan), the governor – a woman – has already submitted improved draft legislation to the state congress. According to the head of the Mexican team carrying out this evaluation, the presence and endorsement of the UN RC at the presentation of the findings to state officials was crucial in persuading those officials that the initiative was technically sound and politically impartial and, in the case of Yucatan, helped lead to the formulation of a new draft legislation. It is worth noting that the UN does not typically involve itself in state elections.

The constancy and longevity of UNDP´s provision of electoral assistance in Mexico undoubtedly played an important role for its increasing involvement at the sub-federal level. Some areas of opportunity that remain are the legal framework and the performance of EMBs at the local level. The research report on the quality of local elections, which was funded by UNDP, indicates that there are significant differences in the autonomy and professional performance among the different subnational EMBs; yet public perceptions of the independence and performance of federal and local EMBs are better explained in relation to the opinions expressed by other electoral agents (mainly, political party leaders). These results are relevant for the planning process of new UNDP interventions aimed at strengthening the confidence and credibility of electoral institutions in Mexico.

2.1.4 'Reform of the state'

The political transition in Mexico took place through electoral reforms and revealed another unfinished task. Many Mexican politicians and political scientists argued that the structures of governance that were developed by the single-party regime were unsuited to a multi-party democracy[216] and that a reform of state institutions was required.

The first post-PRI administration of President Vicente Fox, in 2000, established a commission to develop a set of reforms, though this did not lead to significant legislative changes. In 2006, a framework and agenda to discuss state reform was established in the Senate. The issues included reforms to the electoral system (including independent candidates, a second round for the presidential election, and the re-election of legislators), reform of the legislature (in particular, the composition of the lower house), relations between the legislative and executive branches (for example, if the cabinet should be ratified by the parliament), and federalist structures.

In 2007 and 2012, several major reforms to the electoral legal framework took place without the direct participation of UN as a provider of technical assistance. In contrast with the requests for technical evaluations made to the UN in 1994 and 1996, there is no current demand for assistance, even if several electoral agents have pointed out the proximity of another reform. However, request for support to electoral observers as well as new emerging issues related to the participation of women, indigenous communities, and electoral justice was requested for the 2012 federal election.

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216. See, for example, Francisco Valdés Ugalde, *La Regla Ausente: Democracia y conflicto constitucional en México.*

2.1.5 Electoral justice

UNDP has increasingly been working with the Electoral Tribunal in the areas of electoral justice and electoral integrity, due to the importance that electoral justice has been acquiring especially in the last decade, where there have been a number of elections around the world with very close results that have led to violence. Another trend are the current developments in the area of electoral integrity, some of which are closely related to the role of electoral justice in the process.

2.1.6 Participation of IFE in UN electoral assistance to other countries

Another area in which UNDP has had a significant impact is the promotion of South-South cooperation by assisting the IFE in developing its cooperation with other EMBs around the world. In 1994 and in 1995, the UN invited the IFE to provide experts for technical missions to Brazil and to Haiti, respectively. After 1998, IFE's assistance to other countries became increasingly systematic.[217] This was part of a growing trend of EMB-EMB relationships, which were in part facilitated by UNDP and the result of the prestige and recognition that the IFE enjoyed globally.

To the time the case study was conducted, IFE had participated in 21 joint missions with the UN. After 18 years of their bilateral relationship, their joint participation in missions to bring technical support to other EMBs represents a little more than 30 percent of the IFE's international activity in this area.

In 2007, UNDP, IFE, and the TEPJF further formalized and strengthened their training capabilities to EMBs. Mexico provided approximately US$500,000 to explore the possibility of establishing an international centre for electoral capacity-building in Mexico.[218] This initiative was supported by UNDP, EAD, and the UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who is also the ex officio focal point for electoral assistance. The project document described the proposal as an "almost natural" extension of the broad and productive cooperation between the UN and Mexico over the previous decade.

In 2009, US$3 million was provided by UNDP[219] to further the implementation of the centre as well as to continue with the provision of electoral assistance and knowledge-sharing and the promotion of South-South cooperation. The centre currently exists as an informal body within the IFE.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 Programming has been responsive to national needs

UNDP has been highly responsive not only to the initial needs that prevailed when UNDP assumed responsibility for electoral support in 1997, but also to subsequent needs as they evolved over time. As one interviewee put it, the UN involvement in Mexican elections has become "part of the furniture". In the 30-plus interviews conducted for the historical study, almost all interviewees were asked whether they felt that the UN's presence was still needed, now that the democratic transition was largely consolidated. With the exception of two or three interviewees from civil society, the answer was that the UN was needed. Some stated that the UN's presence was even more important now than it had been.[220]

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217. There were missions to East Timor and Zimbabwe (1999), Peru (2000/2001), and Bolivia and Ecuador (2002).

218. Plan de Iniciación para el establecimiento de una instancia internacional de Capacitación y Investigación Electoral

219. Programa Internacional de Investigación y Capacitación Electoral. One half of the funds were provided by GPECS, and the other half was divided between IFE and the TEFPJ.

220. This message was also conveyed in a meeting in New York with Mexican Political actors and UN officials, convened by the SSRC Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum (Reunión Informal sobre México, 24 de Junio de 2011).

2.3. LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 Relationship-building over time between UNDP and the electoral institution can lead to an advantageous partnership

The relationship between Mexico's electoral institutions and UNDP demonstrates the advantages that can be secured from developing an institutional relationship over time.

Confidence in the mutual capacities and mutual discretion of the institutions leads to deeper forms of cooperation; trust reduces bureaucratic transition costs and expands the scope of what is possible through cooperation. UNDP's involvement in discussions of Mexican state reform, as well as IFE's predilection to have the UN as a privileged partner in the establishment of an international centre, evidences this deeper and wider cooperation. At the same time, such an enduring relationship can also have negative effects, including what might be called a complacency of approach or a resistance to innovation.

2.3.2 Observation methodologies should reflect the changing electoral environment

Complaints from CSOs citing UNDP's complacency or reluctance to innovation when awarding funds for domestic electoral observation led UNDP to push for a new innovative approach in its support for the 2012 electoral process. CSOs claimed that the observation methodologies have not kept up with changes in the electoral observation (for example, observation of social media, observation of the use of resources by the state, etc.). The 2012 UNDP project attempted to address this issue by promoting observation of specific themes and issues, diversifying the groups being supported by the project (new CSOs, academic and research centres, and international organizations), and promoting observation of the pre- and post-election period, not only the election day. The project supported the use of new technologies to map and communicate observation reports and channel them to the appropriate authorities.

2.3.3 Sustainability of election observation by CSOs remains a source of concern

IFE interlocutors observed that, while the government's policy of supporting domestic observation over the years had been the correct one, it may become counter-productive. It was suggested that the guarantee of government support for observation in federal election years had impeded the development of a self-sustaining civil society. The question implied by this criticism is whether the expectation of funding at every election has turned civil society groups that, among other projects, also do electoral observation, into observation groups that exist almost entirely for the money provided during elections. Despite this issue, the 2012 UNDP electoral observation project received significant financial contributions from IFE and Mexican Government for more than US$6 million.

2.3.4 Emerging challenges for the 2012 elections

As noted earlier, the 2012 elections in Mexico presented a new set of challenges for Mexico's electoral institutions and threats to its democratic representation. They faced the following problems: first, the IFE had lost credibility as a result of the controversial 2006 presidential election, where it was widely criticized for how it handled the very close electoral result. Second, the deadlock between political parties over naming the final three general councillors for the IFE took more than a year to resolve and further diminished its credibility. Finally, the IFE's reputation was affected by a consistent media campaign against it, resulting from the dissatisfaction of media companies over new rules enforced by

the IFE that regulate political speech through a mechanism that deprives these companies of revenues. The 2012 election was technically well organized, even though complaints of fraud originated in allegedly widespread vote-buying and biased media coverage. The Electoral Tribunal discarded these complaints on the basis of lack of evidence.

A separate environmental issue was insecurity and violence. As a result of the government's policy since 2006 of aggressively taking on narco-cartels, violence has spread around the country and has begun to increasingly affect civilians. There were many reports of these groups threatening candidates as well as assassinating local politicians. Heads of CSOs also report that many local activists were afraid to act as observers.

In this context, the UNDP electoral assistance project was seen as very relevant to support the impartiality of the observation and the process in general. However, many actors stated that the project required a different approach to the one previously used, i.e., one that would diversify the pool of observers and the issues being observed and increase the long-term impact of the electoral observation. The 2012 UNDP project supported an unprecedented number of groups (46 CSO, 11 academic and research centres and two international organizations); expanded the area of observation to themes such as media and freedom of speech, political party financing, electoral justice, as well as the participation of women, youth and indigenous peoples; and put great emphasis on the quality and communication of the reports and studies of the different observer groups.

2.3.5 The quality of the partnership between UNDP and the Mexican electoral institutions is closely linked to their (financial and political) independence and capacity

As one IFE interlocutor stated, "Not needing international financing plays a big role in the effectiveness of the partnership." The financial independence of the IFE and its technical proficiency mean that it does not need to not passively receive advice from UNDP. This creates a dialectic between the Mexican institutions and UNDP's expertise and value added that improves the relevance and effectiveness of the assistance offered. When technical advice offered by outside experts is not questioned by recipients, it is possible that the quality of that advice will fall, the possibility of mistakes not being recognized will rise, and the suitability of the advice for the particular local context will be less relevant than it should be.

2.3.6 Handover is critical for continuity and effectiveness in long-term projects

There are clear benefits to an enduring institutional memory, as in the case of Mexico. A proper handover of long-term projects from one expert to another should be ensured in order to meet its objectives and to maintain a strong relationship.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The niche of long-term electoral assistance that UNDP has found in Mexico was neither strategically planned nor initially sought by either the Mexican authorities or the UN. A paradox at the heart of UN electoral assistance to Mexico is that, when it was first proposed, significant fractions within the Mexican Government opposed it and it was acceded to reluctantly by the UN's senior leadership and opposed by other members of the UN Country Team in Mexico. The fact that this has become, almost accidentally, one of the longest and most successful UNDP interventions suggests that strategic niches are clearer in hindsight than in the planning phase.

Another paradox is that one might expect a long-term presence for UNDP to be more likely in a case where an electoral institution might need to be built from scratch (in a post-conflict situation, for example), rather than in one where institutions already exist and are consolidated. In the case of Mexico, the IFE was already one of the most advanced EMBs in the world when the UN became involved, and, since then, it has only become better resourced, more sophisticated, and more highly regarded. Despite this, the IFE considers the continued UNDP presence highly beneficial. Something that may have contributed to this good cooperation is the fact that UNDP and IFE are members of several global partnerships and knowledge networks such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and GEO and therefore see the potential of their collaboration beyond their work in Mexico.

Recommendation 1: A long-term relationship between UNDP and national EMBs should be considered a possible direction in which electoral assistance could evolve.

In many countries, this would require a paradigm shift: from EMBs seeing UNDP as merely a provider of funds and technical assistance to perceiving the organization as a partner for long-term capacity development and innovation that go beyond the mere provision of technical electoral assistance to broader forms of assistance that deepen democracy and improve governance. A further advantage would be to significantly accelerate South-South cooperation, as different UNDP COs could facilitate exchanges between EMBs. Furthermore, in cases where EMBs are built from scratch, such a relationship might be built into the initial design.

Recommendation 2: Civil society concerns should be addressed, as CSOs are a major partner of UNDP.

Several CSOs have expressed concerns related to the selection criteria of members of the Technical Committee, which is the body established for selecting the organizations that benefit from the Electoral Observation Fund. In past projects, the Technical Committee has been selected by two IFE electoral councillors and two magistrates from the Electoral Tribunal.

Recommendation 3: In positioning itself globally for the future, UNDP should carefully consider not only the potential of regional experience, but also specific thematic issues.

IFE interlocutors suggest that future electoral assistance will increasingly be EMB-to-EMB, particularly through regional associations.[221] One of the mainstays of this support was expected to be the international electoral training centre mentioned earlier. The International Electoral Training and Research initiative has been highly successful in promoting Mexican experience, in mainstreaming the electoral cycle approach, and in establishing links among some individual high-level officials. But it still remains unclear whether the initiative was indeed successful in facilitating the transfer of a specific electoral knowledge from Mexico to other countries and how effective and sustainable this model of assistance is.

Another trend to consider is the demand for assistance on a thematic, not a regional, basis. This implies the search for relevant experiences and good practices outside the traditional geographically based regional bodies in order to analyse and discuss possible answers to generic problems.

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221. This issue was also raised at the Gaborone meeting on Electoral Cycle Assistance in 2011: "Two different settings of cooperation were described: where the support is provided on a bilateral basis, often under the aegis of the UN (as in the case of the numerous technical assistance initiatives implemented by the Mexican EMB), or where EMBs decide to form regional forums or associations such as the SADC Electoral Commission Forum (ECF). The multiplication of these bilateral and regional initiatives demonstrates the growing tendency of EMBs to exchange experience and maximize resources in order to share innovative solutions to common challenges – as they often share similar contexts – and improve the quality of their electoral management and processes." Meeting Report. UNDP Global Practice Meeting on Electoral Cycle Support, 3-5 March 2011. Gaborone, Botswana.

Recommendation 4: UNDP should look more closely at the links between elections and governance and begin to tailor electoral assistance so that it includes more factors that promote good governance, rather than simply good elections.

Assistance provided over the long term opens possibilities that are not available to electoral projects that begin and end around a particular electoral event or electoral reform. These possibilities include the ability of UNDP to work more closely with political parties. This has traditionally been an area fraught with danger for the UN and is considered to be ill-advised by EAD, as an association with a party can be misinterpreted as support for that party. Nonetheless, the long-term presence of UNDP in Mexico has given it a wide set of interlocutors in various political parties and there may be greater scope to begin a dialogue on more general political reform. The second area of impact has to do with the content of these governance reforms themselves. As noted, UNDP has been invited to participate in debates on the 'reform of the state'.

Recommendation 5: Strong leadership should be used to facilitate a balance in competing interests that arise from the nature of UNDP Mexico's financing mechanisms.

Most of the costs of the UNDP office in Mexico are borne by the government, not by UNDP (of the overall 2011 budget of US$25 million, US$20 million were provided by the host government). Funds for the electoral programme, however, come for the most part from the independent electoral institutions (IFE and TEPJF). This creates the risk of a perception, especially in electoral years, that UNDP does not act as an honest broker. So far, this perception has been avoided, in part because of the large capital of trust that UNDP has built up over its many years in providing electoral assistance, but also in other governance programming. Nonetheless, the government could pressure the UNDP CO.[222] Strong leadership therefore would ensure that: (i) the UNDP office retains the support of the government; (ii) the electoral activities continue to be viewed as impartial by opposition political parties and CSOs, in particular; and (iii) the general UN principles of global consistency in the implementation of electoral activities are not violated.

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222. During the 2006 election, the UN issued a public report that was critical of statements made by the president because they undermined the fairness of the electoral playing field. The government did complain about this when it was raised at a press conference.

MOZAMBIQUE

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique became independent from Portugal in 1975 after 10 years of armed struggle for liberation, led by FRELIMO – Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambican Liberation Front). After independence, FRELIMO established a socialist single-party system, which lasted until 1990, when a new constitution provided the basis for the creation of a multi-party system and guarantees for democratic freedoms. During the post-independence period, Mozambique faced external military actions by neighbouring countries (the former Rhodesia until 1980 and South Africa until 1992, during the 'apartheid' regime) and was involved in a civil war with the rebel movement RENAMO – Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (Mozambican National Resistance).

The 16-year war that ravaged the country until 1992 destroyed most of its social and economic infrastructure and generated more than 1.5 million refugees in neighbouring countries. Finally, on 4 October 1992, a General Peace Agreement was signed in Rome between the president of the Republic of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, and the president of RENAMO, Afonso Dhlakama. According to the Agreement, the first multi-party general elections would take place within one year of its signing.

However, the military and political conditions took time to develop and elections were postponed until 1994. The UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the international community were crucial in this process in order to avoid the repetition of the 1992 Angolan disaster, where civil war restarted violently a few weeks after election day. Finally, the first multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections were held in October 1994, with a high turnout (85 percent of registered voters). Observers from ONUMOZ Electoral Division and different international organizations monitored the elections, which were declared "free and fair" and considered a "successful outcome" by the UN.[223]

Though operating with different mandates and rules of engagement, UNDP and ONUMOZ coordinated their actions and cooperated at central and local levels in order to ensure a peaceful preparation and implementation of the electoral operations all over the country. As a result, the end of ONUMOZ operation did not leave any voids or imply any special handover to UNDP in the electoral assistance area.

Since these 1994 first multi-party general elections, Mozambique has been able to organize and hold its presidential elections and parliamentary elections every five years and, since 1998, its local elections on schedule every five years.

1.3 RULING PARTY

FRELIMO has won all four presidential and parliamentary elections with a growing majority of votes. At the local level, FRELIMO has also won the large majority of the municipal elections and the first provincial assemblies' election, thus confirming and strengthening its position as the dominant party in Mozambican politics.

1.4 ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS AND LEGISLATURE

Since 1994, the EMBs – National Elections Commission (CNE) and its executive body, the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE) – have had full legal responsibility for the organization

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223. Statement by the Secretary-General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 19 November 1994

and implementation of all electoral operations, from voter registration to the tabulation and publication of electoral results. The CNE has evolved from a temporary structure composed solely of political parties' representatives, in 1994 and 1998, to a permanent one, with a five-year mandate, composed of CSOs and political party representatives.

Electoral legislation has been repeatedly revised and changed between elections. The first electoral law, approved in 1993 (Law 4/93), was a 'product' of the Peace Agreement. Therefore, it was specifically conceived to comply with the Agreement's protocols for the first multiparty elections. New laws had to be drafted and approved by the parliament to support the first local elections in 1998 and the general elections in 1999.[224] After these elections, the laws were revised again in 2002, 2004, 2007 and 2009[225] in order to improve them and adjust parts of their content to reflect the recommendations made by the Constitutional Council, the observation missions and the experience and knowledge acquired during prior electoral operations. On the whole, the electoral legal framework used until 2012 was comprised of Law 7/2007 on the election of the president and National Assembly, Law 8/2007 on the EMB, Law 9/2007 on voter registration, Law 10/2007 on the election of provincial assemblies, Law 18/2007 on local government elections, and Law 15/2009, which harmonizes inconsistencies in the provincial assembly election. A new electoral law has been approved for 2012.

1.5 VOTER REGISTRATION

The Constitution of Mozambique provides that all citizens 18 years or older are entitled to vote and be elected unless deprived of these rights by circumstances provided in law.

The 2003 municipal elections were preceded by a countrywide voter registration update. A total of about 2.1 million registers were updated – 1.3 million new voters and 0.8 million transfers and replaced voters' cards.

For the 2004 elections, the registration update covered the national territory and – for the first time – the Mozambican communities residing in South Africa, Malawi, Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Portugal and Germany. The total registered voters for the 2004 general elections reached 9.1 million. The registration process, however, was the object of controversy and complaint from RENAMO-UE – a coalition of opposition political parties. Once again, the computerization of the voters' registers became an issue and was one of the main concerns of the UN EAD assessment mission that took place in April and May 2004. The mission analysed a sample of the database provided by STAE, which showed invalid data and duplication of registers.

These issues were further confirmed by the international observation missions, who criticized the lack of transparency and limited access provided to observers by the CNE to important steps of the electoral process, particularly the computerized tabulation of results.

As a result of the approval of a new law on voter's registration (Law 9/2007) and in response to the problems faced during the 2003 and 2004 elections, a new voter registration system was implemented before the 2008 local elections. The CNE and STAE decided to use digital technology (laptop with digital camera, fingerprint scanner and card printer) in order to allow voters' data to be saved immediately and directly transferred to the provincial and national databases. It also avoided the use of Polaroid cameras and film, both expensive items of the previous registration system.

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224. Laws 4/97, 5/97 and 6/97; Laws 3/99 and 4/99

225. Laws 18/2002, 19/2002 and 20/2002; Law 7/2004; Laws 7/2007, 8/2007, 9/2007, 10/2007 and 18/2007; Law 15/2009

By the 2008 elections, nearly 10 million citizens were registered to vote.

1.7 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Mozambique is preparing for the 2013 municipal elections and the 2014 presidential, parliamentary and provincial elections. Despite its 20-year history of electoral processes, the country still faces important challenges and improvements still need to be made in order to strengthen its national and international credibility and to ensure its full compliance with the national legal requirements and international and regional standards for elections signed or ratified by the Mozambican State (AU; South African Development Community (SADC)).

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1 ACTIVITIES

2.1.1 UNDP's role from 1994 to 1999

UNDP's support and assistance started with a short-term mission at the end of 1992 and was continued from early 1993 to mid-1995, contributing significantly to the 1994 elections in areas such as organization, operational planning, budgeting, financial management, procurement, logistics, training, civic education, social communication and legal issues. UNDP put in place one of the largest electoral assistance operations ever, for which it raised and managed contributions from 12 development partners (mainly the EC) and the Mozambican Government, completing the overall electoral budget of US$64 million.

In 1998, UNDP assisted STAE in the preparation of the local elections, which included the overall planning and budgeting, the reconciliation of inventories from the 1994 elections, the formulation of an integrated multi-development-partner-funded project of assistance, and the mobilization of the required technical and financial resources. This assistance was followed by the implementation of a new project, which provided US$16 million and deployed a joint UNDP/EC technical assistance team covering the areas of organization, training, logistics, voter education, social communication, budgeting and financial management.

For the 1999 elections, UNDP started the fundraising soon after the 1998 local elections, in order to ensure the necessary means for implementing the new voter registration and adequate preparation of electoral acts. A total of about US$47 million was disbursed by development partners for these elections, mainly to support technical assistance, the purchase of equipment and electoral materials, air transportation and vehicles, and training and civic education programmes. The technical assistance team recruited was half the size of the 1994 assistance team and its role was more advisory than executive. Simultaneously, for the first time in Mozambique, UNDP's assistance was designed to be continued after the elections, aiming at the consolidation of the experience acquired in the process, the conclusion of voter registration computerization and the publication of detailed election results.

2.1.2 UNDP's assistance during the 2003 and 2004 elections

UNDP's technical assistance to the 2003 local elections started after a UN EAD assessment mission recommended a positive response to the government's request for UN coordination of the international development communities' efforts. The government and UNDP agreed to provide the STAE with technical assistance during the preparation and implementation of the 2003 local elections as well as during the

immediate post-electoral period in order to lay a strong foundation for the 2004 general elections. The project also intended to "contribute to the funding of some electoral operations and materials, namely in support of the civic education campaigns, training programmes and materials". The project's budget (US$3.7 million) was funded by Italy, Canada, Sweden and UNDP.

For the first time in Mozambique, UNDP and the EC addressed this technical and financial support as a 'two-in-one' effort covering the 2003 and 2004 elections. Therefore, the administrative and financial management of the whole electoral process was made easier, allowing the transfer of remaining funds from one election to the following one and retaining UNDP's technical assistance personnel from 2003 to 2004. This team, as mentioned earlier, was substantially smaller than in the past (and what was proposed initially in the project document). Other than one permanent CTA, who worked directly in the management of UNDP funds and in the coordination of short-term missions, UNDP also recruited an international IT expert who worked with STAE's Computer Department starting in July 2004. UNDP provided about US$2 million for the funding of technical assistance, civic education programmes and training of electoral officers.

2.1.3 UNDP support from 2008 to 2011

From June to December 2008, during the preparation and implementation of the local elections, UNDP supported CNE and STAE in developing and accomplishing different activities of the electoral process, namely, the recruitment and training of civic education agents, registration officers and polling agents; training for journalists on election-related reporting; training of police on electoral law and basic principles of election security; sensitization of political parties on good practices of elections; creation of a website for CNE and STAE; development of a communication strategy for CNE/STAE; creation of a media centre; and logistical support. UNDP assistance was ensured by a permanent CTA who advised STAE in the management of electoral funds through National Execution modality (NEX) and direct payments.

From 2008-2011, UNDP implemented the project Support to the Electoral Process Management in Mozambique. The project's overall objective was "to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of STAE and CNE through the promotion of professionalism and ethics among electoral officers" and "to support initiatives that will improve credibility, efficiency, transparency and fairness in the electoral process". The three-year project had a budget of US$4.8 million funded by UNDP (TRAC 1&2) and cost-sharing with the government and development partners.

During this project, specific activities were tailored for the 2009 elections, including supporting electoral institutions to translate the electoral law; producing and distributing pamphlets, booklets and guides on electoral procedures for polling staff, the police, and the general public; financing the training by electoral institutions of registration and polling officers, civic education agents, police officers, and journalists on elections rules and procedures; and supporting key CSOs in their work of informing the general public about the voting process and the need for voting. Among these, women's groups were a special focus.

Further, UNDP financed a website with information about the election results and the role of the electoral bodies, provided funds for the development of a media centre, coordinated an International Observer Mission made up of staff from 12 diplomatic missions and facilitated the exchange of information between these missions and the Mozambican authorities.

After the 2009 elections, UNDP continued to support CNE and STAE through the 2008-2011 project and maintained the permanent CTA through 2010 and 2011.

In the meantime, a new UNDP/EC joint project was launched in 2010: the Project in Support of the Electoral Cycles in the African Portuguese-Speaking Countries (PALOP) and Timor Leste, which organized and funded several initiatives throughout 2010 and 2011 (conferences, seminars, training courses) where CNE and STAE members participated eagerly. These initiatives allowed the exchange of experiences and knowledge among Portuguese-speaking EMBs, thus strengthening South-South cooperation on electoral matters.

2.1.4 UNDP's current project

For 2012-2015, a new UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) has been approved and a new UNDP project, Support to the Electoral Process through Improved Electoral Civil Responsibility at Decentralized Level, has been drafted. The project document specifies that "the Electoral Cycle Approach views electoral assistance as an on-going and cyclical activity rather than an event-driven at determined points in time" and that the project aims 1) to strengthen the technical capacity of STAE in civic education; 2) to institutionalize electoral civic education and voter registration; 3) to promote civic education in secondary schools; 4) to train media and political parties on the electoral process; 5) to develop partnerships with CSOs, government institutions, and faith-based organizations (FBOs); and 6) to encourage women's electoral participation.

The project has an estimated budget of US$4 million, with US$1.7 million from UNDP and the remaining US$2.3 million still needing to be mobilized. STAE is the implementing partner, using National Implementation (NIM) Modality.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 UNDP credibility and acceptance among Mozambican counterparts

Throughout the last 20 years of electoral support, UNDP has always been regarded very positively by its Mozambican partners (government, Constitutional Council, political parties, EMBs, and CSOs) on the basis of its impartiality, credibility, legitimacy, multilateralism and equidistance from all political parties. UNDP's capacity to establish platforms for dialogue without interfering in Mozambique's internal affairs is also cited by the Mozambican counterparts as a very important asset.

These achievements must be sustained, not only because they are basic principles of its mandate and rules of engagement, but also because they are crucial for the success of its involvement in and support to the consolidation and development of the democratic process in Mozambique.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

2.3.1 UNDP's support to ensuring necessary improvements is limited

Past experience shows that UNDP's support is important, but may not be sufficient to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to overcome the existing flaws and shortcomings. In fact, UNDP's electoral assistance can be effective and efficient only if actually needed, wanted and requested by the Mozambican counterparts. Then, additional conditions (financial and organizational) must be created to allow the accomplishment of pre-established outcomes and the achievement of planned outputs.

UNDP is capable of providing specialized assistance in specific areas of the electoral process, but is constrained by its engagement principles (obligatory request from the Mozambican Government, non-interference, impartiality), the progressive downsizing of its support and the present reduced capacity to mobilize funds from traditional development partners. Nevertheless, UNDP is in a privileged position to 'build bridges' between CNE/STAE, the government and development partners and other stakeholders to continue to find ways to improve national capacities and to overcome the problems and shortcomings still faced by the electoral process.

2.3.2 UNDP continues to contribute to democratic governance

Besides its support for Mozambican electoral processes, UNDP has also supported other areas of democratic governance through medium- or long-term projects, especially related to parliament, the judiciary, and the decentralization process and citizen participation at the local level. However, there has been a lack of communication between these different efforts and opportunities to create synergies and strengthen outcomes have been missed.

The new 2012-2015 UNDP project mentioned above, which will be implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO, is a non-event-driven approach to civic education on electoral matters that reflects the concept of the electoral cycle and contributes to the deepening, consolidation and strengthening of democratic governance practices.

2.3.3 Low voter turnout remains

Low turnouts in recent general elections (36.4 percent in 2004; 44.4 percent in 2009) and low or very low turnouts in local elections (24 percent in 2003; 46 percent in 2008; 18 percent to 28 percent in recent by-elections) are a strong reason for concern as they may express a decreasing interest of Mozambicans in exercising their electoral rights, thus weakening representative democracy at all levels. As the Constitutional Council recently pointed out, a deep analysis of the causes of and solutions for these high rates of abstention should be considered.

2.3.4 UNDP has received recent criticism from development partners

Some development partners, in particular the EU, have criticized UNDP's role during the recent electoral processes, citing its reduced initiative in the institutional dialogue with the CNE, the lack of development partner coordination, and the complexity of and delays in the administrative procedures. Additionally, the 7 percent overhead charged by UNDP is considered too high and not cost-effective, namely by the EC Delegation. At the same time, however, the EC Delegation pointed out that the joint UNDP/EU project Pro-PALOP-TL was a positive effort of South-South cooperation.

2.3.5 Sustainability and cost-effectiveness have not been achieved

Sustainability and cost-effective electoral processes are two objectives still to be achieved in Mozambique. The government's financial resources, the existing infrastructure and the available qualified human resources are some of the constraints that still hamper these objectives in the short term. However, improvements have been achieved by CNE and STAE since 1994, specifically related to the improvement of electoral operations' planning and budgeting, the cost-effective use of human resources, equipment and technology, and improved financial management and accounting. UNDP's support in these areas has been significant, in particular during the first two cycles of elections (1994 to 1999), where on-the-job assistance and training of the Mozambican staff were explicit responsibilities of

UNDP. The fact that CNE is now a permanent EMB with a five-year mandate and that STAE's top staff has been in office since 1994 contributes to the increasing national capacity and ownership of the electoral process. Nevertheless, new qualified staff should be progressively recruited, trained and involved in electoral management and operations in order to ensure future sustainability within the EMBs at central and local levels.

The decrease in the cost per registered voter – from US$10 in 1994 to US$4.8 in 1999 and US$2.4 in 2004 – was the result of improved election budgeting, organization and management and contributed to strengthening sustainability of the electoral processes. However, the cost per registered voter grew to about US$5.9 in 2009, the highest cost since 1994, justifying a careful analysis of its components and the reasons for such a significant increase. Another cause for consideration is the fact that the electoral budgets are still very much funded by development partners' contributions, either through direct budget support (via annual state budget) or project funding.

In this context, the significant investments made in 2007 and 2009 in the purchase of new digital equipment for voter registration and computerization of the registers' database must be well preserved and fully used in the coming elections in order to contribute to the sustainability and cost-effectiveness of the electoral process.

Nevertheless, improving sustainability and cost-effectiveness through better planning and budgeting of electoral operations, rationalization of procedures and management of human resources and equipment, should still be a permanent concern of CNE and STAE and should be addressed within the 'electoral cycle' approach, profiting from the inter-election periods to analyse past experience and introduce corrections and improvements where necessary and viable.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The long-term assistance provided by UNDP has contributed to the enhanced capacity and knowledge of its Mozambican counterparts, including parliament, EMBs, political parties, and CSOs. Despite this, according to the Constitutional Council and the international and national observation missions, room for improvement remains. They point to the need for clear and consistent electoral laws, which includes recourse for violations; greater transparency of EMBs, especially during counting and tabulation; a legitimate voter registry free of errors;[226] distinct electoral stages and procedures; simplified and closely monitored bureaucratic requirements for the validation of candidatures; simplified complaint and appeal procedures and channels; strengthened knowledge of the legal framework within political parties; and prevention of the use of government resources in FRELIMO's electoral campaigns.

To address these concerns, recommendations are offered.

Recommendation 1: UNDP's long-term technical assistance to the electoral process should be firmly and permanently complemented by other means and areas of intervention.

Some of the issues stated above are legal, technical or organizational, but others are caused by biased behaviours and poor practices of people involved in the electoral process. In such cases, impunity is a serious concern and jeopardizes the credibility and acceptance of election outcomes. Political will is a precondition to correcting these situations and improving the quality and credibility of the electoral

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226. A detailed description and analysis of the voters' registration in Mozambique can be found in 'Voter Registration in Africa – A comparative analysis', EISA, 2010 (http://www.eisa.org.za/PDF/vrafrica.pdf).

process. To address this, UNDP should consider educational, political, judicial and other activities in order to improve and strengthen democratic principles and rules within Mozambican society in general and among the electoral actors specifically.

Recommendation 2: UNDP should consider past experiences in future project design.

This includes looking at the increasing difficulty in raising development partners' funds for UNDP's electoral support, the evolution of UNDP's assistance in the past, the transition from DEX to NEX and NIM (increasing national capacity and ownership), and the remaining issues highlighted above.

Recommendation 3: UNDP is irreplaceable as a facilitator of formal and informal dialogue platforms between Mozambican stakeholders and development partners and should continue to fill this role, as it is still deemed necessary.

Through its permanent contact and dialogue with the Mozambican counterparts, UNDP can provide development partners with credible and impartial analyses of the main issues concerning the progress of the electoral process. The credibility and impartiality of those analyses must be ensured by UNDP in order to offer an accurate evaluation of the political and institutional environment and an in-depth report of the organizational and technical problems and bottlenecks that jeopardize electoral operations.

Recommendation 4: Continued support should be given to facilitating regional networking.

Ongoing discussions and knowledge-sharing among African Portuguese-speaking countries could continue to prove beneficial to electoral innovation and sustainability of reform.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should help address outstanding issues and shortfalls by establishing channels and platforms for dialogue with Mozambican counterparts and interested partners.

UNDP should be prepared and available to provide CNE/STAE and other institutions with expertise in this process with the intent to contribute to Mozambique's full compliance with national legal requirements and international standards, strengthening its overall credibility and broadening its national and international acceptance.[227]

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227. In the meantime, new issues could also be addressed if agreed with the Mozambican counterparts (e.g., linkage between voter registry and civil registry; cost-effectiveness of the electoral cycle voter registration established by Law 9/2007, when compared with a regular registration updating annually or every five years; etc.)

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

1. POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL CONTEXT

1.1 PALESTINE'S FIRST ELECTIONS

The Palestinian democratization process is exceptional in that it precedes fully-fledged statehood and because, from its inception, it has largely hinged on peace negotiations with Israel, which remains an occupying power. Indeed, the first Palestinian general elections in 1996 came about following the 1993 Oslo Accords, which officially established the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) formally as an interim body pending the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement. The Oslo Accords also set out the foundations of a legal framework for Palestinian elections.[228]

The 1996 elections provided Palestinians with a limited choice, given the boycott by Hamas and other opposition groups, which did not support the Oslo negotiations and objected to an electoral process that derived its existence from the Accords. In addition, this first experience of elections was marked by political and procedural uncertainties. Nonetheless, over 70 percent of 1,028,280 registered voters turned out and Yasser Arafat was elected president with 88 percent of the votes, and 88 members were elected to constitute the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Although new commissioners were appointed to the Central Elections Commission (CEC) very shortly before the elections, District Election Offices had been established for several months.

While all electoral processes are embedded in political frameworks, the Palestinian scenario faces exceptional challenges, dependent as it is on developments in one of modern times' most notoriously intractable political conflicts and the stalemate in the peace process. This is particularly the case because, as in many other young democracies, the culture of institutionalism is still taking root and cannot be relied upon to outweigh wider political instability and because it is taking place within the context of occupation.

1.2 A PERIOD OF NO ELECTIONS: 1996-2004

These challenges are evidenced by the fact that there were no Palestinian elections between 1996 and 2005 due to the start of the Second Intifada in September 2000 and the 2003 Israeli incursions into Area A. Ostensibly, Palestinian elections were expected in 2000, if only because the presidency and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) had four-year terms. However, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was also only intended to be a temporary governing body, designed for the duration of the Oslo process, which was supposed to conclude in 1999. Instead, the Israeli redeployment from the West Bank and Gaza envisaged by the 1995 Interim Agreement never met the agreed deadlines, and the peace process was already severely compromised before the final status negotiations at Camp David in July 2000, which, in turn, broke down. The Second Intifada broke out in September 2000 and lasted until 2005.

As the Intifada continued, casualties rose and one cease-fire attempt after the other failed. In this context, the Quartet on the Middle East was officially established in October 2001. Composed of two nations and two international entities – Russia, the US, the UN and the EU – the Quartet was initially an ad hoc cooperation that sought to entreaty first President Arafat and later the Israeli Government to agree to and honour a ceasefire. After its second endeavour in April 2002, Quartet members remained determined to follow up on the peace process for as long as necessary.

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228. The original Oslo Accords, or Declaration of Principles, were supplemented by the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in September 1995. Annex II of the Interim Agreement is a Protocol on Elections and sets out the foundations of Palestinian electoral framework.

In the same year, the Electoral Reform Support Group (ERSG) was established to coordinate electoral reform and development partners' efforts.[229] The ERSG was co-chaired by the EU and the US and included the UN Special Coordination Office and UNDP, as well as development partner countries including Japan, Spain and Denmark. Later reformed and renamed the Electoral Working Group, the ERSG took the lead in supporting the creation and the institutional development of the Palestinian CEC, despite the uncertainty of any immediate prospect of elections. In October 2002, the Palestinian CEC was established under the General Elections Law of 1995.

In 2003, the Quartet sought to revive the peace process, this time with the 'Road Map' for peace, intended to take place over the course of approximately two years. In essence, the Road Map sought a two-state solution, following three key phases, the first of which focused on democratic reforms to the Palestinian Authority, including elections, as well as Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities and a freeze in Israeli settlement building. To this end, President Yasser Arafat appointed a prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, in March 2003. In June 2003, a ceasefire was declared but did not hold, and, by the end of the year, neither resistance to the occupation nor settlement expansion had abated and there appeared to be no particular prospect of Palestinian general elections.[230]

1.3 2005 PRESIDENTIAL AND 2006 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

It was following President Yasser Arafat's death in November 2004 that presidential elections were rapidly organized, to be held on 9 January 2005, within 60 days of Arafat's death, as provided for by the Basic Law. These elections were again boycotted by Hamas, because the party saw the elections as associated with the Oslo process, which they did not adhere to. Instead, Fatah's Mahmoud Abbas stood against Mustafa Barghouti and three other independent candidates, as well as candidates for the Palestine People's Party and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Abbas garnered over 62 percent of the vote, while Barghouti attained nearly 20 percent.

While the 2005 presidential elections displayed some shortcomings, international observers emphasized that "whilst democracy cannot necessarily be consolidated in one or two elections, the practice for Palestinian leaders to seek legitimacy through the ballot box is being entrenched and the spirit in which the Palestinian people registered and participated are strong indicators of a will to follow the path of the rule of law and popular participation." Further, they concluded that "many of the problems facing the election stemmed from the wider political context and the impact of the existing occupation and conflict. For the electoral process, the challenge now is to learn from this experience by further strengthening the independence of the CEC, ensuring more rigorous enforcement of the legal provisions and clarifying and developing the legislative framework in time for the proposed Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections."[231]

The period between the 2005 and 2006 elections enabled a clear and constructive consolidation of the electoral framework, and the CEC addressed many of the lacunae that were within its power. The legal framework for elections was clarified and amended in a process that included consensus from participating political parties, before being approved by the Legislative Council.

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229. The ERSG was created as an off-shoot of the UN Task Force on Palestine, which sought to coordinate support for civil society, elections, financial accountability, judicial reform, local government, market economics, and ministerial and civil service reform. The Task Force was composed of representatives of the Quartet as well as Norway, Japan, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

230. Nonetheless, President Yasser Arafat approved the holding of local elections, and the first round of these took place in December 2004. For further details on Palestinian local elections, see later section.

231. EU EOM Final Report, West Bank and Gaza Elections 2005

Indeed, in technical terms, the January 2006 elections of the PLC marked a number of significant steps in the building of democratic institutions in the Palestinian territories. The CEC's experience and its good use of the substantial support it received culminated in a high level of professionalism and independence. Not only did the CEC improve its administration of voter registration and that of political parties and candidates, but, further, it withstood an increased degree of political pressure and consolidated its reputation as a neutral and independent body. There were aspects of the elections that were largely outside of the CEC's control. Not the least of these were the voting arrangements in East Jerusalem, which, as in the 1996 and 2005 elections, were inadequate in that only a small proportion of Palestinian Jerusalemites were permitted by the Israelis to vote within the city, and this only in a number of post offices, where voting arrangements were administered without the presence of CEC staff, but rather by Israeli post office staff, and without any guarantee of vote secrecy. Since these conditions are determined by the 1995 Interim Agreement with Israel that ostensibly would only apply to one election, questions continue to be raised as to how long an 'interim' agreement may be applied.

Both the presidential and PLC elections were observed by national and international election observers, including missions sent by the EU, NDI and the Carter Center. For the 2006 elections, the CEC reported having accredited a total of 254 CSOs to observe the elections, which, in turn, accredited over 17,000 national observers.

One of the positive elements of the 2006 elections was the participation of groups that had previously remained outside of the electoral process: Hamas's Change and Reform political party put forward candidates and constituted the main competition to Fatah. However, their success in the polls – they won 74 of the 132 seats in the PLC[232] – ultimately marked a dramatic regression in Palestinian democratic institution-building and internal stability.

1.4 POST-2006 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

Israel, the Quartet, the US and the EU refused contact with a Palestinian Authority led by Hamas unless it explicitly renounced violence, recognized the State of Israel and committed to respect past agreements. In the following months, the international boycott of Hamas, Israeli arrests of elected Hamas members, and the bitter rivalry between Fatah and Hamas conspired to make the PLC a redundant body, which ceased to meet. Israel froze its agreement to hand over Palestinian tax revenues and the Palestinian Authority faced political and financial crisis, with public workers going unpaid for many months.[233]

In a bid to maintain crucial support to Palestinians while bypassing the elected government, the Quartet established a Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) to fund needs directly in June 2006. The three phases of TIM focused on emergency support of health care services, the continuation of energy utilities, and support for vulnerable Palestinians through the payment of social allowances to the poorest segment of the population and to key workers delivering essential public services. These reached some 150, 000 heads of households.[234]

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232. Fatah won 45 seats, with the remaining 13 seats going to smaller political parties.

233. The freeze on handing over taxes collected on Palestinians' behalf resumed on 1 July 2007. The freeze was then reinstated following Mahmoud Abbas's successful bid to have Palestine join UNESCO in November 2011 and in the light of reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas in the following period.

234. In February 2008 with implementation in March, the TIM was replaced by PEGASE, which principally aims to build good governance and the rule of law in the Palestinian territories, including reforms to the justice and security systems, as well as to support democratic institutions.

Irrespective of the international community's dilemma and reasoning, it is undeniable that the developments that took place after Hamas's electoral success dealt a severe blow to the process of democratic institution-building in the Palestinian territories. While most attention in 2006 turned to the July War between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, internal Palestinian dynamics continued to deteriorate and, despite the brief formation of a unity government in March 2007, inter-factional violence in June 2007 took a dramatic turn and resulted in Gaza falling exclusively under Hamas control, with Fatah controlling the West Bank. This situation remains a determining factor in the Palestinian political landscape.[235]

For the four following years, internal Palestinian democracy did not have a clear path to follow, and, with both the presidential and PLC mandates expired and the PLC in paralysis, legitimate process has given way to various forms of expediency.

1.5 MOVEMENT TOWARDS NATIONAL UNITY

Nonetheless, in March 2009, Hamas and Fatah began national unity talks in Cairo, during which they sought to find agreement on a government programme, the management of security forces, and elections. In the following year, the Arab Spring moved across North Africa and into the Middle East, and, although its contagion in the Palestinian territories included some demonstrations against Israeli occupation, its most consistent expression amongst young Palestinians was a call for unity.

By December 2011, Fatah and Hamas discussed electoral reforms with a view to holding general elections in 2012. One of the first outcomes of electoral reform discussions was the replacement of five CEC commissioners, with appointments approved by all political parties. Other electoral subjects on which agreement has reportedly been reached include the system for allocation of seats in the PLC, a possible increase in the minimum threshold of votes to gain a seat, and a change in the number of constituencies. Lastly, the Cairo talks raised the possibility of holding elections for the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the legislative body of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Founded in 1964, the PLO significantly predates the Palestinian Authority and holds a permanent observer seat as the representative of the Palestinian people at the UN General Assembly.

While a number of internal and external political elements will require resolution before the next Palestinian elections can be held, one consideration that should not be overlooked will be public perception of the Palestinian electoral process: despite manifest support for elections in the past, Palestinian expectations of elections have been particularly high and have led to disappointment due to the international community's stance on accepting the Palestinian democratic choice. All Palestinian elections have been linked to an expectation not only of development and consolidation of internal democracy, but have also been seen as an integral element in a process leading to peace and sovereignty. The fall-out of the 2006 elections in particular left many in the electorate profoundly disheartened.

1.6 LOCAL ELECTIONS

During the time covered above, two sets of local elections were expected, although neither was successfully completed.

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235. Since Hamas's takeover of Gaza, the Strip has been under a blockade by Israel and Egypt and, in addition, it suffered extensive casualties and infrastructural damage during the month-long military attacks by Israel on Gaza during January 2008.

Shortly before his death, President Yasser Arafat approved the holding of local municipal elections – the first in almost 30 years. These were administered by the Higher Committee for Local Elections (HCLE), a body established under the authority of the Ministry for Local Government, an institution of the Palestinian Authority (PA).[236] The first round of elections was held in two parts: the first part on 23 December 2004 in 26 districts in the West Bank and the second on 27 January 2005 in 10 districts in Gaza. The second round of elections for local councils was held on 5 May 2005 in the West Bank (76 districts) and Gaza (8 districts) and on 19 May 2005 in the West Bank district of Al-Ram. The fifth round was suspended indefinitely in the aftermath of the 2006 PLC elections.

No further local elections have been held since 2005, but they have been due and announced several times before being postponed and then cancelled. Each time, the CEC has undertaken preparatory work, including voter registration in the West Bank – in Gaza, CEC offices were closed in 2007 and not re-opened until February 2012.

Local elections were again announced for July 2010, but were cancelled in June of that year, following a statement by the Cabinet.[237] Next, municipal elections were called for July 2011, but were postponed to October, and then indefinitely, after Hamas authorities rejected the call, stating that they would not allow electoral operations in Gaza and would boycott the elections in the West Bank.

1.7 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION

The 1996 general elections were effectively administered by an ad hoc elections commission, with commissioners appointed just weeks before polling, while district election officers were in charge of preparations about six months beforehand.

In October 2002, the CEC was formally established under the General Elections Law of 1995. Headed by nine commissioners appointed by the president for a four-year term, the CEC is now one of the most respected Palestinian institutions, trusted as an independent, neutral body, and generally admired for its efficiency in the face of serious challenges. The 2005 Electoral Law confirmed the common understanding that the CEC is a permanent body, with its core budget provided by the PA. As a permanent body, the CEC has been able to widen its scope, engaging with civil society to disseminate electoral knowledge. In addition, partly propelled by repeated calls for local elections, the CEC has regularly updated the voter register in the West Bank. In Gaza, the CEC offices closed after the Hamas take-over in 2007 and Hamas explicitly stated that it would not allow electoral activities. In anticipation of 2012 elections and following unity talks, the CEC Gaza offices re-opened in February 2012.

Despite the fact that the CEC has never been accused of bias, on 22 December 2011, the president replaced five CEC commissioners in lieu of the Cairo Reconciliation Agreement and Doha Agreement, appointing independent judges and academics with the approval of all political factions. While the CEC's successes are all its own, the degree to which its committed leadership and staff have been able to achieve all that they have is also thanks to timely, sustained and coordinated international support from the time of its inception.

Based on the 2005 and 2006 elections, the CEC's areas of weakness include transparency and enforcement of the law and loss of staff to INGOs. The electoral law does not establish mechanisms by which the CEC

236. Under the terms of the law on local elections, the HCLE was due to oversee local elections for one year, after which it would be dissolved and its responsibilities transferred to the Central Election Commission (CEC).

237. In response, four electoral lists filed petitions to the High Court challenging the legality of the Cabinet's decision, since Local Election Law does not give either the Cabinet or the CEC the right to cancel elections. The High Court ruled against the Cabinet.

may enforce the law and the CEC has not addressed this lacuna, although this may be attributed to some degree to CEC's disincentive to issue regulations (or 'bylaws'), which must be approved by the PA, limiting the administration's political independence.

In the lead-up to the next elections, it will be necessary to bear in mind that the CEC has only twice been tested in national elections – the last time over six years ago, since when some conditions have deteriorated. In addition, the CEC continues to experience restrictions on freedom of movement, which hampers its ability to work, and the facilitation of movement within and in and out of the West Bank and Gaza will be a factor in its efficiency. As before, voter registration, campaigning and administration of elections in East Jerusalem will depend on the Israeli authorities' not impeding activities.

1.8 DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for Palestinian presidential and PLC elections has undergone a number of revisions since general elections began in 1996. The foundation of the electoral framework remains the Protocol Concerning Elections (Annex Two) of the 1995 Interim Agreement between Israel and the PLO. This protocol outlines some basic provisions on the right to vote, criteria for candidate eligibility, campaigning, and international observation. It also sets restrictive parameters for voting in Jerusalem, which has been a persistent problem in Palestinian elections.

The Palestinian Election Law (No. 13) of 1995 provides that presidential and PLC elections be held at the same time and was intended to offer a framework for the interim agreement. As such, it was adequate for the 1996 elections, but lacked detail and clarity, especially when used as the basis for exclusively presidential elections in 2005.

The 1995 Election Law provided for 88 members of the PLC, of which six seats were reserved for Christian candidates and one for a Samaritan candidate. Seats were distributed 'according to population distribution', albeit neither clearly nor equitably.

The most significant changes to the legal framework took place prior to the 2006 PLC elections. The new, 2005 Election Law separated the presidential and PLC elections and significantly changed the election system, increasing the number of PLC seats to 132 and introducing a so-called mixed/parallel system, according to which half of the seats are elected by proportional representation on a national basis, based on closed lists of candidates, and half through majority races from districts.[238] In addition, the new law introduced a quota for women.[239]

The number of seats per district was not prescribed by the Election Law, but was rather determined by the CEC in rough proportion to the size of the estimated population in that district, with most districts having more than one PLC member. The 2005 Election Law dropped the reserved seat for one Samaritan candidate, but maintained the six seats for Christians, even if it did not clarify exactly how to allocate them.

The new Election Law also implemented some recommendations contained in international observers' recommendations in 2005, including a prohibition of the use of the civil registry in the election process and increased measures against manipulation of assisted voters, as well as other positive changes. One key deficiency that remained unchanged in the 2005 law was that regulations issued by the CEC to

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238. Previously, all PLC seats were elected from multi-member district constituencies using a majority system.

239. The 2005 Electoral Law stipulated that all candidate lists had to include at least one woman in the first three names, as well as at least one in the following four names, and another in the following five names.

provide transparent procedural detail must be approved by the PA, limiting the CEC's independence and efficiency. In practice, this has acted as a disincentive to produce regulations, resulting in procedural lacunae and an associated weakness in enforcing compliance.

Since the last elections, two developments have taken place regarding the legal framework for elections. First, a 2007 Election Law was issued by presidential decree, which, among other points, amended the PLC electoral system to one that is entirely proportional, rather than also having district-based seats. This was later revised in a compromise waged during the Fatah-Hamas Cairo negotiations. The Cairo agreement stipulates that, while 75 percent of seats (99 seats) are to be elected by proportional representation, 25 percent (33 seats) will be elected by a district-based majority system. This will present a serious problem in terms of equality of vote weight, given the impossibility of dividing 33 seats among 16 districts while respecting population sizes.

The 2007 decree stipulates a threshold of 1.5 percent of votes for any electoral list to gain seats, but this is likely to increase, since Fatah now prefers a threshold of 2.5 percent, and Hamas one of 3 percent. The 2007 Election Law decree does not explicitly relieve the CEC of having to submit regulations to the PA for approval.

The second development came during unity talks between Fatah and Hamas, which led to agreement that, for the first time, the Palestine National Council – the legislative branch of the PLO – should be directly elected. The Cairo Agreement proposes that these elections be held according to a fully proportional system and that elections be held within the Palestinian territories and also for Palestinians in the Diaspora. While this development would be a particularly positive step in terms of Palestinian democracy, its implementation would require significant political and technical support, as well as a clear legal framework. Several drafts of a by-law to the 2007 Electoral Law decree have been drafted to this effect. The Agreement stipulates that the CEC will carry out and oversee PLC elections only within the OPT for 200 PNC members. It is not clear how the Diaspora will participate.

2. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1 ACTIVITIES

Since 1996, UNDP´s Programme for Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) has provided electoral assistance in the OPT through 10 separate projects. These have included support to civil society, but most have given priority to the creation and capacity-building of the CEC.

2.1.1 UNDP/PAPP support to 1996 Palestinian elections

The first UNDP/PAPP project was aimed at supporting the management body for local elections, which was the Higher Committee for Local Elections (HCLE), under the direction of the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). Implemented by the MoLG, the project provided equipment for data processing, communication and transport to prepare for elections in 374 municipalities. However, local elections were delayed and none were actually held until 2005. This delay presaged a pattern that has presented a challenge to supporting Palestinian elections ever since: the need to support the planned events of polling while considering the frequent possibility that the event may be delayed, possibly repeatedly.

Nonetheless, another precedent was set: that of anticipating support for the EMB to enable it to carry out its work. Ultimately, this approach proved to be one of the most successful elements of support to the Palestinian election process.

2.1.2 UNDP/PAPP support to Palestinian elections 2002 – 2006

In the midst of an unravelling Oslo peace process, the Second Intifada's outbreak and regular Israeli incursions, the prospect of Palestinian elections seemed remote and the chances of a regular electoral cycle even more so.

It was in this uncertainty that international support to the Palestinian electoral process proved to be prescient, flexible, and based on an element of risk-taking that proved to be successful. One of the keys to this success was UNDP/PAPP's attention to long-term needs and provision of appropriate assistance to that end. Another key contributing factor to the positive outcome – evidenced by technically successful 2005 and 2006 elections – was efficient coordination with other international players. Lastly, much of the success of the UNDP/PAPP support between 2002 and 2006 relied on excellent relations between UNDP and the EAD/DPA.

From 2002, the ESRG coordinated funding for elections programmes from USAID, the EU, European countries and Japan. As well as working with the PLC to develop a draft election law, the ERSG supported the formation of the independent CEC, to which UNDP contributed by implementing the infrastructural building of the CEC as well as putting two electoral experts at the disposal of the nascent election administration.[240] It is widely acknowledged that the technical and infrastructure support offered to the CEC at its inception – primarily by UNDP and the EU – gave the institution a strong foundation.

The success of the technical expert assistance can be partly attributed to CEC's willingness to receive and make use of invited expertise as well as CEC's leadership and staff's commitment to maintaining ownership of their work, which resulted in a clear role for advisors and sustainable capacity-building.

During this period, UNDP/PAPP also provided the CEC with the means to move around. This was enabled not only by a UNDP vehicle, but, more important, by UNDP cards for some of the CEC management team. This remains one of the most oft-cited positive measures, one that had immediate practical value in a context where freedom of movement was restricted.

Due to the sustained investment in the CEC's infrastructural and technical capacities from 2002, the institution was well prepared when Yasser Arafat's death in November 2005 brought about unexpected elections and was able to organize elections within 60 days. UNDP supported this urgent initiative through supporting an updating of the voter registry – a feasible endeavour, given earlier updates.

Following the 2005 presidential elections, UNDP/PAPP administered the 'Mobilising Civil Society Project,' wherein eight Palestinian NGOs were provided with funding to carry out programmes enhancing civic education and political participation. Several of these programmes targeted women and youth, promoting participation as voters and, in the case of women, supporting their endeavours as candidates. In addition, the Palestinian Bar Association carried out a series of lectures and workshops to train lawyers and electoral judges on the provisions of the updated Election Law.

These projects were devised in view of the upcoming 2006 PLC elections and, since their end, some civil society groups have expressed their need for ongoing support and their feeling of abandonment after Hamas won the elections. Others have expressed the view that only a small number of NGOs tend to receive support, while others are not considered. Whether this last complaint is well-founded, well-publicized, transparent and objective processes would help clarify how NGOs are selected.

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240. As part of this overall support programme coordinated by the ESRG, the European Union provided five elections experts and 10 million Euros to support the project, UNDP/PAPP provided two experts, Japan contributed US$1 million, Canada contributed 1.2 million Canadian dollars and an expert, Norway contributed US$1 million, and Denmark provided US$300,000.

2.1.3 UNDP support to Palestinian elections 2006 – 2011

The period after the 2006 PLC elections brought a series of serious blows to the political and democratic framework in the OPT.

The international community's refusal to deal with a government that included Hamas dislodged the general expectation that technically sound elections that respect the will of the voters will act as a necessary stepping stone towards democratic practices. Instead, the territories were plunged into political acrimony and institutional and governmental paralysis, alongside a system of international financial support that, in practice, went against the usual principles of national ownership and sustainable support to good governance. The sudden new panorama was worse than a process that does not move forward: it was a new stalemate born of a technical success. Internal politics became volatile and then violent, culminating 18 months after the elections in the split between the West Bank and Gaza that persists today.

At this point, the UN's membership in the Quartet of the Middle East may have presented a certain contradiction: as a neutral supranational body, the UN never subscribed to a ban on contact with Hamas, but the Quartet did determine that there should be no contact. Most significantly, the realities of one party effectively being excluded from government naturally affected the development of programmes for which UNDP would normally have partnered with government entities.

The dearth of electoral support activity between 2006 and 2011 appears to reflect not only the new and extremely challenging circumstances, but also a degree of paralysis, even if not exclusive to UNDP. While the degree of unravelling could not have been anticipated, an earlier and more explicit attempt to devise a new approach might have helped avoid the hiatus that ensued.

In 2009, UNDP was awarded a US$900,000 fund by GPECS. Together with the CEC, UNDP determined to dedicate these funds to capacity-building, but the uncertain political and electoral landscape posed a significant challenge to allocation. In addition to the disruption of any clear concept of an electoral cycle that arose following the 2006 elections, local elections were anticipated several times before being cancelled between July 2010 and October 2011.

On each occasion, the CEC was obliged to begin preparations, only to have the elections cancelled and to move back to long-term capacity-building strategies. As a result, only 10 percent of the fund had been used by the end of 2011, even though the project was originally supposed to end in mid-2012.

The CEC and UNDP could have benefited from drawing up a strategic plan that integrated the possibility of such abrupt changes, with contingency plans to move back and forth from long-term capacity strengthening to event-preparation.

2.1.4. UNDP support to Palestinian elections 2011 to present

Awareness of the precarious political and electoral context is explicitly accounted for in the Revised Project Document for the GPECS funding, signed by the CEC and UNDP in September 2011. The aims of the project – which will depend on a no-cost extension – remain reinforcement of the CEC through training and development programmes; CEC engagement with political parties, the media and NGOs; focusing on women's and youth organizations; and project management, including periodic reports, an audit and the design of a full electoral cycle programme.

The revised project document was the outcome of a comprehensive process, led by the CEC and supported by UNDP. As such, it can be seen as the culmination of an understanding that the CEC has always sought partners, but that it has always wished to design programmes itself. To this extent, the CEC has been the source of its own sustainability.

2.2 ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2.1 Maintaining flexibility

Where UNDP/PAPP has been able to be flexible and responsive to changing demands such as delays and political disruptions, it has significantly contributed to the Palestinian electoral process, not least in its sustained support of the CEC's capacities.

2.2.2 Remaining committed during extended periods of no elections

Despite long periods in which the electoral cycle was broken, UNDP has maintained engagement with key stakeholders, which has proved to be a worthwhile investment in the process.

2.2.3 Strengthening the capacity of the CEC

UNDP provided comprehensive and flexible technical assistance and support to the CEC throughout a tumultuous period. This provided a foundation that has helped the CEC to develop into a strong institution.

2.3 LESSONS LEARNED

Over the course of 15 years of electoral technical assistance in the exceptionally challenging context of Palestinian democratization under occupation, a number of lessons can be learnt about how best to invest in sustainable, cost-effective support that maintains national ownership and promotes the respect for human rights.

2.3.1 Investing in the capacity of the election administration is a constructive, cost-effective approach that brings tangible added value to the electoral process

The Palestinian CEC is an indisputable success story. Put to the test and emerging with a strong reputation within three years of its establishment in 2002, the CEC has evolved into an institution that has independent expertise and planning capacity.

The CEC's neutral and qualified leadership, alongside its own motivation to make the most of technical support, has been critical to its success. The CEC and UNDP took the fruitful approach of not allowing assistance to overstep into managing the body's activities.

In terms of the assistance itself, its form – starting with infrastructure and quickly being supplemented by high-quality expert advice – and the fact that it was provided with prescience and a degree of risk-taking, have provided a model of good practice.

2.3.2 Technical assistance needs to be tailored to a disrupted and uncertain electoral cycle

The Palestinian political context has resulted in numerous national and local elections being abandoned, announced but delayed, and (on occasion) called and held at very short notice. This makes it difficult to plan for a clear electoral cycle. The CEC's activities – and the assistance that supports them – have suffered from a number of shifts from long-term capacity-building, to having to prepare for imminent elections, before resuming long-term activities. In recent years, this has been exemplified by the thrice-announced and thrice-cancelled local elections. Planning should take this reality into account from the outset and outline contingency plans in case of elections being called or cancelled. Such planning will help mitigate the technical impact of an uncertain political environment and help maintain clear benchmarks, even when activities have to shift their approach from cycle to event driven or vice versa.

It is clear that, where elections are delayed for long periods for political reasons, it is important to maintain skills and capacity to ensure that only minimal, if any, ground is lost. This appears to have been achieved in the Palestinian context, not least thanks to the CEC's own strategic planning.

2.3.3 Technical assistance needs to be politically informed

Parallel to the need to tailor assistance to disrupted electoral cycles, it is crucial that technical assistance respond to political developments. This may justifiably mean scaling activities down, as was necessary when Hamas was excluded from governmental bodies. To this end, the coordination between UNDP and DPA is crucial and, in the Palestinian territories, is facilitated by the presence of UNESCO.

2.3.4 Technical assistance depends on flexible, responsive approaches

The exceptional challenges of the Palestinian context make it a useful case study for the need for technical assistance to be flexible enough to meet changing demands. It is important that governance programmes include mechanisms for regularly reviewing priorities and that efficiency be enabled by streamlined procedures for seeking political input and adapting project documents so as to avoid unnecessary delays.

2.3.5 Technical assistance should harness regional expertise and dynamics

The Arab Spring has revived a regional dynamic that could be constructively harnessed to enable peer-to-peer networks. Election administrators as well as parliamentarians, youth and women's groups as well as domestic election observers could all benefit from exchanging experiences and contributing to capacity-building in other countries in the region. Developing peer networks would be a sustainable approach that could help create a buffer against political instability and international development partner fluctuations.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The context of Palestinian elections holds exceptional challenges. In some respects, this makes it unique, but the challenges may also serve to provide insight for other contexts that may share at least some elements of the OPT´s circumstances. UNDP has been providing electoral technical assistance in the OPT since 1996 and, since then, has greatly contributed to reform and progress.

Despite the challenges inherent to elections in an occupied territory, and despite internal political division, UNDP's technical assistance has contributed to three sets of fair and transparent Palestinian elections and, since the creation of the CEC in 2002, the Palestinian election administration has come to be respected as an independent and efficient body by Palestinians and equally within the Arab World.

Challenges remain, however, and, in order to address these and further strengthen the electoral process in Palestine, these actions should be considered.

Recommendation 1: As the fundamental elements of neutrality and efficiency are achieved, technical assistance should explore how to address remaining weaknesses.

In the case of the CEC, this particularly concerns the ability to enforce transparency of the electoral process and compliance with the law and regulations, a capacity that hinges not only on the institution's capacity, but also on the extent to which it can feel secure in its political autonomy. As well as legal reform, CEC empowerment to enforce compliance would be assisted by programmes targeting political parties and the public to ensure that this element of its mandate is understood.

Recommendation 2: Gender mainstreaming and gender-specific components are an integral part of electoral assistance; CEC should conduct a gender audit of its structure and work with UNDP and UN Women to continue to support women political leaders.

Recommendation 3: Support to civil society should be targeted and measurable.

Performing needs assessments and ensuring that projects include measurable objectives will promote more effective programme design.

UNDP may also consider connecting with a wider base of NGOs and regularly updating its network to ensure it coordinates with the most relevant groups. This might even include coordinating with groups that it is not funding.

Recommendation 4: Given the preponderance of young Palestinians and the persistently low levels of women's participation in political and electoral processes, UNDP should continue to support these sectors of society.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should consider prioritizing high-quality domestic observation work.

This is especially the case in contexts that have a generally high level of education and political awareness. Consideration could be given based on strong technical training, a clear methodology, and the expectation of issuing reports. Domestic observation missions could carry out long-term work, observing voter registration and legal reforms.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: CHECKLIST FOR CREATING AN ELECTORAL RESOURCE CENTRE

Commitment

1. A genuine mid- to long-term commitment from the government, EMB and donors alike will help ensure sustainability beyond the initial establishment phase.

2. An ERC needs a champion within the EMB who will defend it and promote it and needs a driver from within UNDP/donors who will support it beyond its establishment; ownership is key for success and funding is key for sustainability.

3. Key partners need to be identified in the government, EMB, CSOs, Ministry of Education, assistance providers and donors, and possibly regional networks (ACE, EMB forums).

Purpose

1. Is the ERC for training on democracy/civic education or more legal/technical electoral issues? Or is it for capacity/professional development or a space for dialogue/exchange or an archive or research facility? Or for all of these aspects?

2. The space could be used for a variety of activities beyond training, such as post-election reviews, strategic planning, discussions on legal reform, development of codes of conduct, observation coordination, national civic education planning and many others. It would be important that such a space be seen as neutral and welcoming to all stakeholders. Beyond a purely electoral focus, the centre could integrate other aspects of democratic governance (e.g., DG BRIDGE) with an aim to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders.

Scope

1. An ERC needs to identify its scope, its audience, their needs and level (e.g., subnational EMB staff, CSOs, political parties/monitors, schoolchildren, journalists, judges, police, and parliamentarians).

2. The ERC could aim, depending on scope and resources, to reach out to all areas and all groups through subnational workshops and mobile facilitators and not just become a capital-based resource with the burden on participants to travel to its site.

Strategic Planning

1. The ERC will benefit from a comprehensive strategic plan developed with a vision, clear goals and objectives and needs to be developed in consultation with those that would use the centre. The strategic plan needs to be owned by those implementing, to be monitored in its implementation and to be kept on track in order not to lose momentum.

2. The Strategic Plan and course materials could include gender mainstreaming and, possibly, conflict prevention and cross-cutting issues. Other issues such as disability or minority issues could also be addressed.

3. Learn lessons from other resource centres established by other sectors/institutions (e.g., human rights, anti-corruption, media, political parties, etc.).

Resources

1. A clear staffing organizational chart that matches the resources and the demand (e.g., management, communications, developers, facilitators, translators, administrative support, etc.).

2. An ERC needs a pool of core facilitators who do not have to be full-time, but who may be called upon for various courses on a needs-basis. Train-the-Trainer/-Facilitator courses are needed to build up this pool of experienced or accredited facilitators.

3. Staff internships.

Assessment, Monitoring & Evaluation

1. Institutional and individual assessment for each target group is a good baseline upon which to design a capacity or professional development programme – with surveys on topics, interests, availability, and relevance.

2. Including follow-up surveys and interviews that would feed back into modifications of the strategic plan, resource allocation and the courses themselves, monitoring and evaluation tools need to be developed to measure the usefulness of courses and the centre in general, as well as their impact in the mid to long terms, for participants.

Accreditation/Certification

1. For credibility, it is important that these training courses be acknowledged by EMB or peer groups to have value and act as an incentive in terms of being recognized for promotions or career development.

2. It is also important that facilitators have accreditation and experience in conducting specific trainings or at least training with guest experts to support the substantive elements and to bring comparative experience, if possible.

Flexible and Modular Courses

1. What types of courses are on offer (e.g., BRIDGE, other types of training or skills courses)? How will they be customized/translated?

2. A modular curriculum could be developed and easily adapted to different needs, levels and specific or mixed groups.

3. Other courses could target senior management: e.g., leadership/management, strategic planning, or media management courses.

Design

1. The design of materials should be user-friendly and relevant and should be used post-training when applying knowledge at work (e.g., checklists, guides, templates).

2. Resources could come in different formats, such as website, e-learning, DVD/CD, and printed materials, to suit types of participants and their needs.

Comparative Exchange

1. The ERC could provide a forum to invite guests from the region (EMB, CSOs) for sharing experiences and comparative research on laws and practice and approaches and for fostering a networking approach. This could be a centre for specific needs-basis analysis, research, and policy development where stakeholders share views.

Promotion

1. Advocacy, PR, press releases, newsletters and capturing voices could help promote the ERC and inform the public about what it has achieved.

2. Continued resource mobilization is critical to sustainability by identifying areas where continued funding is required and by demonstrating results to potential or existing funders. Testimonials, survey results and evaluations with a clear way forward all help support proposals for funding from government and donors.

Archiving

1. Develop library and archiving plans. Carry out an assessment of the current management of information and the archiving system; procure books and other knowledge resources.

2. Work with the Election Resource Centre to devise a step-by-step plan for the collection, cataloguing, use and management of materials. The plan will use a phased approach, starting with a modest amount of materials and simple system and building up the resources over the course of the project.

3. Work with the NEC IT section on the library and archiving database development so that exploration of materials in the database is easy for users.

4. Conduct on-the-job capacity enhancement training for ERC managers and other staff of the Election Resource Centre in information management and archiving. The technical consultant will use the best practice in information management and archiving.

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