European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
International IDEA

In collaboration with

International Organization for Migration
Canadian International Development Agency
Organization of American States

History and Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance

Brussels, 1-5 December 2008
Presentation

- Why Electoral Assistance
- Effective Electoral Assistance
- Electoral Cycle Approach
- UN Assistance Past and Present
- Volume, Types, Trends
**Elections: a fundamental element of democratic governance**

- More countries than ever before are working to build or to strengthen democratic governance.
- Electoral support is receiving increasing attention within democratic governance.
- A sharp increase worldwide in the number of elections of a pluralistic nature.
- Only a few states in the world do not conduct elections.
Elections: a fundamental element of democratic governance

- inadequate or untimely funding of elections
- partisan administration of the electoral process
- an unequal access to the media
- electoral fraud and violations
- lack of professionalism in administration of elections
- restrictions in political freedoms and participation
- electoral violence and political intimidation
- inadequate or untimely funding of elections

not all elections provide people with real opportunities to choose their representatives freely

and more ...

Elections are not always free and fair.
Why Electoral Assistance?

some countries were largely unprepared to go through major democratic transitions that featured crucial elections. Electoral practitioners had virtually no access to comparative knowledge, best practices and lessons learned in the field of elections. Electoral institutions did not always possess the necessary experience and knowledge to deliver and guarantee credible elections. There was no coherent electoral administration methodology, the field lacked common standards.
electoral management bodies confront a new set of challenges... creating transparent and sustainable electoral systems and processes reversing situations of professional stagnation building the trust of the various stakeholders in the electoral process addressing problems of lack of retention of institutional memory solving political, financial and logistical constraints undermining their work and the credibility of elections
Why Electoral Assistance?

CREDIBILITY GAP

loss of credibility and mistrust in the electoral process

voters’ apathy and low turnout

electoral disputes, electoral violence or civil strife

an elected government that lacks of the required legitimacy
Definitions

- What is Electoral Assistance?
- Why “Effective” Electoral Assistance?”
Definitions

- **Electoral Assistance** = support (legal, technical, logistic, etc.) provided to electoral laws, processes and institutions.

- “**Effective Electoral Assistance**” = initiatives and activities to improve the quality and impact of electoral assistance to partner country electoral institutions and processes.

- EEA is part of the wider democratic development of the partner country, in accordance with the five key principles of “**ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability**” that inform the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

- EEA implies the management of a complex set of interactions among Government, EMBs, International Organizations, Political Parties, CSOs, Services Providers and Media...the electoral cycle approach.
‘Election’ Assistance
VS
‘Electoral’ Assistance
Inter-election Period

sustainable electoral support

pre-election period

post-election period

election period

period in-between elections

3, 4 or 5 years

electoral calendar

electoral event

post-election period

pre-election period
Electoral Cycle Approach

Is...

- Focused on the long term
- About developing capacities
- A way to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders
- A way to promote more exchanges, networking and south-south cooperation

Is not...

- A replacement of elections or indication that election events are unimportant
- A means to provide quick support before an election
- An excuse to provide indefinite support to electoral processes
Q: When did the UN first get involved in elections?

A: From the late 1940s through the 1970s, the UN was involved in observation/verification of elections. Rise in technical assistance began in the early 1990s.
UN Electoral Assistance Today

2004-2007 UNDP Exp. in Democratic Governance=US$5.3bil
Electoral Systems and Processes=18% of this (1/5)
In 2007, ½ of countries worked on cycle approach

<table>
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Trends in Types of Assistance

Traditional areas:
- Electoral administration
- Civic and voter education
- Support to international and domestic observers
- Mobilization and coordination of resources/partnerships for electoral support

Newer areas:
- Electoral reform, sustainable electoral processes
- Working with political parties
- Reduction of election-related violence and electoral dispute resolution
- Media and elections
Thank you!