

1. I am glad to participate in this important meeting and to make a statement on behalf my organization, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
2. I am particularly glad that this joint training programme on Effective Electoral Assistance is taking place for the second time on the African soil (following Mozambique in 2007) - this time around in an IDEA member state, Ghana. Let me hasten to felicitate the government and people of Ghana for being the latest addition to the IDEA family. IDEA is a 25-member inter-governmental organizations with a mandate to support sustainable democracy around the world, through applied research, publication, networking and experience sharing based on non-prescriptive approach: we do not tell our clients what to do, but only tell them how and what others have done. We work in areas such as electoral support, political party support, democracy assessment, gender and democracy, and constitution building. We have an office here in Accra ably represented by my colleague Theophilus Dowetin and our Africa regional programme in Pretoria, where I am also based. Our Headquarter is located in Stockholm, Sweden.
3. We thank all participants for joining us this week as we continue a dialogue and training that started a few years ago on how best to foster effective electoral assistance around the globe. As IDEA, we value the collaborative undertaking by the EC, UNDP, OAS, and ourselves to lay a foundation for effective electoral assistance.
4. I come from a country that has been one of the first beneficiaries of international electoral cooperation way back in 1989 when through UNTAG the international community sought to implement the UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978 which sought to pave the way for Namibia's transition from colonial rule under Apartheid South Africa to independence and democratization.
5. We saw a lot of UN human, technical, material, human, and logistical support towards the transition process including the conduct of the first-ever democratic elections held under the adult universal suffrage.

6. This was indeed a success story. But this was - let me hasten to say - was just one side of the many faces of electoral assistance as we know it today.
7. As a student of politics and elections, I have seen a variegated menu of electoral assistance:
 - a. I have seen those who give because it suits their foreign interest/policy, advances their PR agenda and visibility, and not necessarily to respond to the needs of the recipient.
 - b. I have seen those who give electoral aid, not to create capacity but to create dependency through tying aid. Such aid lacks local ownership, local context, and local relevance, and because it is all foreign and vendor-driven, it is devoid of sustainability and effectiveness
 - c. I have seen electoral assistance that came in the format and according to time frames of the donor and not according that of the recipient; and many a times, such aid, I regret to say, came way after the horse has bolted.
8. I am most delighted that through this training programme, our partner organizations have been working hard to redress these wrongs that for long have dominated the electoral assistance landscape. Our commitment to embracing the Electoral Cycle approach especially in the context of this training will, in my view, go a long way to help us improve current systems and practices in the field of electoral assistance. The fact that more than three key electoral assistance providers are engaged in this high-level collaborative training and dialogue is a giant step, in the right direction, and indeed an effort worth our applause.
9. I am aware most still needs to be done. We need to ask more questions about the EC approach, rather being content with the answers it gives to our earlier questions. **Good scholarships finding more questions for every answer instead of more answers to every question.**
10. Some of those questions are: Is the EC approach really the panacea to all problems associated with electoral management, planning and support: *what about the extra-constitutional and legal arrangements such as the negotiated settlements following disputed elections outcomes, which tend to literally*

through away the electoral cycle? How about the nuances in electoral cycles which result from different electoral systems: for example, a snap election or several by-elections taking place before the end of the current electoral cycle – what happens when you have some ‘mini electoral cycles’ within a ‘major electoral cycle’ and how does this situation affect election management, planning and support in the context of the EC approach? How do we handle electoral activities that stretch from one electoral cycle to another (and to another), such as unresolved electoral disputes in countries like Nigeria, Zimbabwe, etc?

- 11.** I hope time will allow us to revert to these questions during the relevant sessions in the training programme. For now I wish you fruitful deliberations and interactions for the rest of the week. Thank you very much!