



European Commission United Nations Development Programme International IDEA

In collaboration with

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

Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance

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UN and Elections

- **Art 21 (3) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**
 - The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in **periodic and genuine elections** which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.
- **GA resolutions (most recent A/RES/62/150 – 2008)**
 - “Elections as a peaceful means of discerning the will of the people, which builds confidence in representational governance and contributes to greater national peace and stability,”
 - “United Nations electoral assistance and support for the promotion of democratization provided **only at the specific request of the Member State** concerned,”



Basics

- ❑ UN electoral assistance requires either
 - A request
 - A GA or SC mandate

- ❑ The request for electoral assistance should be from the authority entitled to speak on behalf of the state at international level

- ❑ “UN assistance should be on a case by-case basis in accordance with the evolving needs of requesting countries to develop, improve and refine their electoral institutions and processes, recognizing that the fundamental responsibility for organizing free and fair elections lies with Government”



UN Structures – who does what

The UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities in the UN system is the USG for Political Affairs.

- ensures system-wide coherence and consistency
- lead in UN coordination of electoral assistance, system wide
- institutional memory and the development and dissemination of electoral policies

□ (GA res 46/137 (March 1992); GA res 62/150 (March 2008))



The UN Electoral Assistance Division

The Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) supports the Focal Point to fulfill his mandate:

- review of requests
- ensure consistency and coherence, UN coordination (institutional / global level)
- Maintain a roster of electoral experts
- Identify and maintain UN electoral standards
- Institutional memory, UN electoral policy, UN electoral standards
- Maintain contact with other regional and intergovernmental organizations

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Roster of Experts

- ❑ Improvement of the Roster (Computerization, use of Nucleus of data and Galaxy application, clarification of procedures)
- ❑ Primary source of expertise for staffing electoral missions carried out by DPA, DPKO and UNDP. From 2005 to 2007, over 600 elections experts from more than 35 countries were staffed electoral missions or projects.
- ❑ Among approximately 1,200 individuals, experts can be identified quickly.
- ❑ Efforts continue to increase the roster's gender balance, geographical representation and language capabilities.

Implementation - TA

(1)

Standard technical assistance
- Provided by UNDP



- Offers technical advice and assistance to electoral authorities (see DPA-UNDP Note of guidance on electoral assistance)
- Manages some 40-50 field-based projects per year
- Focus on long-term capacity-building approach
- Supports coordination among donors and national and international actors at the country level

(2)

-SC/GA mandate
-Peacekeeping or Special Political Mission
-DPKO/DPA lead



- In the last biennium: ten cases of assistance have been provided in post-conflict situations through peacekeeping or special political missions
- Support is provided on the basis of a Security Council or General Assembly mandate.
- Examples: Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sudan





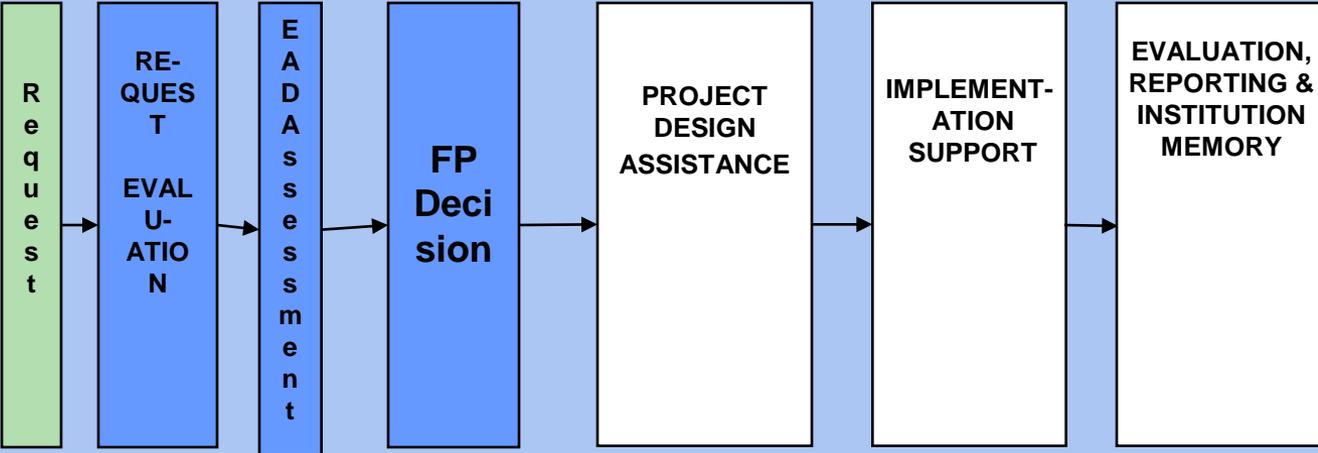
UNDP/DPA

- Note of Guidance, 2001 sets out in greater detail framework and processes**
- Copies available**
- Basic framework - UNDP lead at country level; DPA lead at global/UN system level.**
- Areas of “commonality”- Electoral policy at global level, elections and conflict management**

Procedures – Initial request

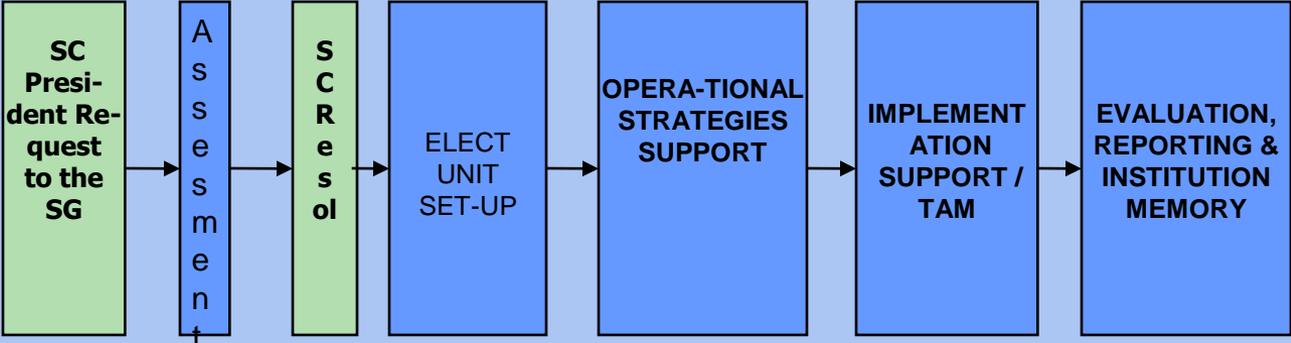
1. Request by Member State

(1) Standard procedure



2. UN Mission

(2) Post-conflict settings





Electoral Assessment

- ❑ **A Needs Assessment conducted by EAD provides the Focal Point with a technical and political assessment of the electoral environment for its decision on respectively the feasibility and adequacy for the UN to provide electoral assistance.**
- ❑ **Assessments are increasingly completed jointly with UNDP. An executive summary and a list of recommendations can be shared with the electoral authorities and the donors.**
- ❑ **Ongoing dialogue between UNDP and EAD is essential:**
 - **identify the necessity and the appropriate moment for the assessment**
 - **Early warning**



Other UN Electoral Support Activities

In addition to the above, the following activities may be implemented by UNDP:

- Coordination of observers**
- Management of basket funds**
- Procurement of election materials and logistics support**

ACE and BRIDGE are also supported by the UN system



Trends

Recent SG report

- There is an increasing realization that building capacity to organize credible elections may require assistance over a sustained period.
- Most UN assistance entails technical advice and capacity-building during an electoral period and within a longer-term development framework.
- The UN now rarely observes elections whereas, in contrast, regional organizations tend to be increasing their activities in this area.
- Too often, the technical successes of elections are overshadowed by political discord or violence and non-acceptance of the results.
- very few countries are starting an electoral process for the first time.



Electoral Cycle

GA, 2007

“Recommends that, throughout the time span of the entire electoral cycle, including before and after elections, as appropriate, based on a needs assessment, 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”

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Integrated Missions:

UN SG policy is to move systematically towards integrated peace missions:

- “One UN”
- Very often involves the UN country team in the provision of electoral assistance in a peacekeeping setting, under lead department mandated by SC
- The two major examples of integrated missions are DRC and Afghanistan
- Discussions are currently being held within the UN system to specify the concept of integration and to assess its implementation modalities.
- Organizational Chart DRC below



Observation, Certification and Monitoring

- The UN has generally maintained the practice of not observing elections to which it is providing technical assistance, so as not to be in the position of evaluating its own efforts.
- UN observation is only conducted in specific cases and is always based on a UN General Assembly or Security Council mandate.
- Certification activities vary widely in the contexts and mandates. Recent examples are Timor-Leste and Cote D'Ivoire. Monitoring was mandated by the SC for the 2007 Nepal elections.



Political Discord/Results Acceptance

- SG – “Too often, the technical successes of elections are overshadowed by political discord or violence and non-acceptance of the results”.**
- Zimbabwe, Kenya**
- UN good offices (Bangladesh, Maldives)**
- Good offices vs, Observation**



Food for Thought

- The Electoral Cycle - meanings**
- Electoral assistance and capacity building - what are the end points?**
- “Regional Solutions to regional problems”**
- Costs of elections and sustainability in a changing global economy**
- Does international election observation need to evolve, and where will the standards debate lead?**



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