Local Elections and Electoral Assistance in DRC

1 December, 2008
Local elections – an introduction

“Local, municipal and urban elections” – what is being elected?

- a) local community councilors
- b) municipal councilors
- c) sector chiefs and deputies
- d) burgomasters and deputies
- e) city councilors
- f) mayors and deputies
## Differences between national/provincial and local elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National and provincial elections</th>
<th>Local elections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Five elections:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Six elections:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>direct</em></td>
<td><em>direct</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Presidential</td>
<td>• local community councilors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• National Assembly</td>
<td>• municipal councilors</td>
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<td>• provincial assemblies</td>
<td>• sector chiefs and deputies</td>
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<td><em>indirect</em></td>
<td>• burgomasters and deputies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Senate</td>
<td>• city councilors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• governors and vice-governors</td>
<td>• mayors and deputies</td>
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Local elections – constituencies

Rural
• “groupement”
• “chefferie”

Urban
• “communes”
• “villes”

In total – estimated 6,037 constituencies
Importance of local elections

- Complete the electoral process as prescribed by the Global and All Inclusive Agreement, the electoral law and the new Constitution

- Reinforce the democratic institutions at the grass root level

- Create representative forums for the peaceful resolution of disputes and allow national minorities and the opposition to hold elected posts

- Help make the governors more accountable and responsive to the governed, improving the management of local affairs and budgets
Technical and operational complexity

- Complexity of constituency issues – definition of boundaries, number of constituencies, etc
- Complexity in eligibility criteria – update of voter rolls
- Complexity of candidate registration - number of candidates, as well as number of ballots to be printed, distributed
- Complexity of counting operations
Local elections: challenges

Local elections – technically and operationally more complex

- Diminished capacity of the IEC
- Unclear political engagement
- Limited resources and donor fatigue
- Security situation
- Time constraints


Preparations for local elections

- Initial preparatory work
- *Update of voter register*
- *Candidate registration*
- Preparation and conduct of *polling and counting*
- Post electoral operations
Update of the voter register

- The current electoral register was finalized end 2005
- There were no plans to update the register before the local elections, as they were expected to happen much sooner
- At this time, local elections require an update of the register – to take stock of new voters, changes of address, population movements
- March of 2008 – decision to update the register
Basic modalities

- Not a new registration – an electoral register already exists
- Update will done at designated registration centers throughout the country – 2000 sites
- Eligible voters not yet registered may do so
- “New 18 year olds” for 2011 may also register, but cannot vote for local elections
- Registered voters will be allowed to change their information details (address)
Current preparatory work

Initial tasks

• Pre-planning – concept of operations, budget and chronogram
• Completion of the legal framework
• Resource mobilization

Preparation of update of voter register

• Review of technical options - sustainability considerations
• Operational planning
• Procurement process
• Collection and repair of registration kits
• Selection of sites
Registration update: current status

• All preplanning finalized
• Legal framework almost finalized
• Resources for registration update committed
• Technical preparations finalized
• Procurement in progress

but

• Operational delays
International Assistance

- International assistance still required
- Continued but decreased interest and support of international community
- Government financing significantly higher, but not all electoral operations are covered
- International funds through UNDP basket-fund
- Much less activity covered than for previous elections
- MONUC’s electoral budget, but conditioned
- Diminished capacity of MONUC to provide logistic support
Basis for UN’s support

- Security Council Resolution, 30 Jan 2008
- Positive response of SG to the DRC Prime Minister request for support
- Being an important element in the consolidation of democracy, local elections are one of MONUC’s priorities for the post-transition period
- PACE – as part of UNDP’s governance
UN support to local elections

Areas of UN support (MONUC, UNDP, other)

- Political context and legal framework (political will, human rights, rule of law, civil affairs, gender, etc)
- Security (risk analysis, escort, UN military and UN police actions, etc)
- Logistic support
- Technical assistance
- Coordination of international assistance
UN electoral assistance to IEC

Objective:
- Support the operational capacity of the IEC in their organization and conduct of the 2009 local elections.

Focus:
- Technical assistance by MONUC/UNDP is mostly focused on operations. Emphasis on capacity-building. Long-term approach
- Logistical support by MONUC.
UN electoral assistance

- Continued integrated approach MONUC/UNDP
- MONUC: Electoral Division leaner, more focused
- MONUC: Electoral Division: two deputies
- UNDP: role in electoral operations diminished, emphasis on capacity-building (from APEC to PACE)
Approach to UN electoral assistance

- Capacity building and sustainability
- Strategic vision
- From electoral event to electoral cycle
- Substantial assistance, but decreasing
- Gradual and responsible retreat
- Encouragement of local ownership
- Less “generalist”, more focused
Challenges to electoral assistance

- Uncertain electoral context – proposals for joining local and national elections
- Timely availability of resources
- Time constraints
- Security situation
- Sustaining achievements in terms of local capacity
- Making elections “ordinary”
The END

• Brussels, 1 December 2008