

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

| National and provincial elections | Local elections |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="79 625 517 753">Five elections: <i>direct</i></p> <ul data-bbox="79 775 736 989" style="list-style-type: none">• Presidential• National Assembly• provincial assemblies <p data-bbox="79 1003 318 1061"><i>indirect</i></p> <ul data-bbox="79 1082 691 1296" style="list-style-type: none">• Senate• governors and vice-governors | <p data-bbox="913 625 1329 753">Six elections: <i>direct</i></p> <ul data-bbox="913 775 1734 911" style="list-style-type: none">• local community councilors• municipal councilors <p data-bbox="913 925 1155 982"><i>indirect</i></p> <ul data-bbox="913 1003 1744 1296" style="list-style-type: none">• sector chiefs and deputies• burgomasters and deputies• city councilors• mayors and deputies |

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 registered 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, bur 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, 15 May 2007*
- ***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