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Joint Training on
Effective Electoral Assistance

DAY 2
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Voting operations & Election-Day

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Day 2
Voting Operations
The culminating stage of every electoral cycle

- The many spinning wheels of the electoral process must fall in place and become one well-oiled functioning machine delivering on one specific day.
- Immediate return on past months’ investments on planning and training.
No zero risk exercise

• Well-prepared elections usually lead to “quiet” E-Day

• However the EMB does not control all parameters to conduct peaceful elections

• In particular the Human Dimension of the electoral process is instrumental in achieving successful elections
By the time voting operations start all election-related activities must have been **planned** and **put in place**

**But on E-day EMBs may face disruptive factors**

- **External factors**
  - **Weather**
  - Wise decision when setting up the electoral agenda
  - **Violence**
  - Inclusiveness and voter information

- **Internal factors**
  - **Logistics**
  - Established and tested distribution / collection plan
  - **Training**
  - Well-equipped polling staff
RISK FACTORS

- Assess all risk factors and come up with a contingency plan

- Anticipate problems that could arise from mishandled E-day operations

Even a minor issue may lead to a major crisis situation - as was the infamous ink problem in Afghanistan in 2004
Election Management Challenges

**Activities**
- Timely distribution of all materials
- Polling staff recruited and well trained
- Voters well informed on where and how to vote

**Challenges**
- Late or missing materials
- Poorly trained or biased staff not following procedures
- Disenfranchised voters - not showing up at the right PS or not properly casting their ballots

= Flaw in the process
Some E-day contingencies

- Late or delivery of materials; especially secure materials such as ballots and voter lists
- Mistakes in materials - indelible ink -
- Use of inappropriate or non-sustainable technology
- Inaccurate voter allocation on the Voter Register
- Unprofessional behavior from Polling staff
- Ineffective queue control
- Political contestants challenging the election
- Security incidents
- Weather conditions
Challenges for TA on E-day

• Limited possibilities to intervene
  "the train already left the station"

• Prepare for contingencies in advance;
  ➔ in particular for emergency delivery
  / collection mechanisms - Plan “B”

• Consider to “pay” for contingencies where
  there are no other options...
  ➔ Last minutes decisions are costly

• Apply political multi- and bi-lateral pressure
  where appropriate and effective
Learn from the exercise

Prepare for the post-election period and the next cycle to correct shortcomings and conduct capacity building initiatives

Instrumentalize observation findings
External Voting
Out-of-Country Voting

Definition

OCV provides the means for citizens residing abroad to participate in their countries’ elections.
External voting
A two dimensions exercise:

**Expatriates**
- Set-up of PS in Embassies/Consulates and/or postal voting remain a prerogative of the State and the EMB
- Legislation may restrict franchise to citizens residing in-country
- Technical assistance is not advisable

**Refugees**
- A phenomenon related to *post-conflict* environment
- Protection of refugees’ voting rights has become a standard feature of large scale operations in the past decade
OCV = A focus on refugees

- It represents an "election within the elections"»
- It often requires the launching of a separate TA and extra funding

**Challenges**
- Who is a refugee?
- Enforcement a specific legal framework
- Establishment of specific operational plan and logistics arrangements
- Conduct of targeted voter information
- Tallying of OCV results into national ones
Is it worth investing on OCV?

**Political perspective**

- The complex eligibility issue: “who?” and “why”?
- Politically emotional issue, especially in post-conflict
- The political impact: a biased diaspora?
- The legitimacy and pertinence of expatriates intervening and interfering in the nation-building from abroad

**Technical perspective**

- Operationally complex
- Excessively and unreasonably expensive
- Often unsuccessful due to low turn out, lack of interest and fear of repatriation