

Sustainability and Electoral Assistance

4 December, 2008

Subject matter

Sustainability of electoral systems and institutions **AND** electoral assistance

or

Sustainability **OF** electoral assistance

Presentation

1. Conceptual development
2. Sustainable electoral systems and institutions
3. Sustainable electoral assistance

1. *Conceptual development*

- ❑ From electoral event to electoral process
- ❑ From assistance to capacity building
- ❑ Electoral Cycle

“Sustainability”

- Feasibility
- Repeatability
- Long-term capacity (know-how, equipment and material, finances) - reduced reliance on external inputs and resources
- Endeavour is sustainable when it can be conducted successfully in a repeated manner overtime

2. Sustainable electoral systems and institutions

Sustainable electoral systems and institutions are those that ensure the holding of periodic credible elections with no (or decreasing) external reliance.

Article 21 – periodic elections

concept - refers to the sustainable development, highlighting greater autonomy and self-reliance

Sustainability elements

- easily reproduced, with decreasing external support
- appropriate levels of institutional credibility (capacity and legitimacy) – responds to political expectations and requirements
- appropriate structural, technical and operational choices

Local capacity

- **Electoral authorities (EMBs, judiciary)**
- **Government authorities**
- **Political parties**
- **Media**
- **Civil society, citizens**

EMB sustainable capacity

- *Technical and operational capacity*
know-how, human resources,
infrastructure, material and equipment,
appropriate technology, procedures, etc
- *Financial capacity*
cost of elections, financial support and
autonomy of EMB
- *Political credibility*

Sustainability and costs

- Cost effectiveness (direct and indirect costs, costs of acquisition, operation costs, training, maintenance, warehousing)
- Long term approach
- Financial support and autonomy
- Transitional elections – financing concerns not just of first generation elections

Sustainability and technology

- Technical choices – sustainable, cost-effective, transparent, appropriate
- What kind of technology is well suited for a particular country at a particular moment?

“Biggest challenge is how to ensure a sustainable, appropriate, cost effective and transparent use of technology in post conflict elections and in fragile or emerging democracies”

(ACE – focus on effective electoral assistance)

3. Sustainable electoral assistance

UN electoral assistance – contribute to building a sustainable institutional capacity to organize elections - ensuring that elections are fully owned nationally

emphasis in professional development and institutional strengthening, rationalizing technical and operational choices and ensuring cost considerations are essential part of decision-making

Characteristics (1)

- Realistic in terms of resources utilized
- Based on CB approach (methodology and objectives)
- Linked with wider democratic governance perspective and programs
- Continued in time – electoral cycle
- Strategic (plans and objectives)
- Responsible and gradual withdraw (results-based exit strategy)

Characteristics (2)

- Clear objectives and results – short, medium and long term
- Flexible approach
- Focused, not generalist
- Concerted and negotiated
- Sustainability as a long-term goal – promotion of sustainable electoral systems and institutions – sustainable institutional capacity to organize **credible** and **periodic** elections

UN electoral assistance in DRC

- 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

Issues regarding sustainable electoral assistance

- Political imperatives of first generation elections
- Support through UN missions
- Financing schedules and periods
- Donors and sustainability
- Sustaining achievements in terms of local capacity in transition periods
- Financial and administrative impact of “technical” decisions