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