European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
International IDEA

Joint Training on
Effective Electoral Assistance

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Assistance to Political Parties
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What role do parties play in a democracy?

Why should we care about them?

How is UNDP providing support?
What comes to mind when you hear the term ‘political parties’?

– Actors in processes – elections, policy formation, opposition
– Democratic governance institutions – parliamentary and executive representatives
– Image and functioning
  • Self-interested
  • Discredited
  • Unrepresentative and undemocratic
  • Captured by elites
  • Not issue based
What is the role of political parties in a democracy?

- Aggregate interests
- Structure the vote
- Integrate and mobilize the public
- Foster future political leaders
- Organize government
- Influence or form public policy
Why are Parties Important?

- Critical governance and electoral actors
- Have been left out of DG assistance
- Traditional assistance of limited utility – why much is ‘bouncing off’ parties
- Can be facilitators or spoilers of democratic gains
What do assistance providers bring?

Electoral Cycle entry points:

- Role in **Institutions**: EMBs, Parliaments, Government, Political Party Commissions
- Role in **Processes**: Legal framework, voter+party/candidate registration, voter sensitization, campaign, pollwatching, electoral disputes, accepting results, conflict management
- **Functioning** and **Image**: Codes of conduct, relations with media, internal rules and regulations, nomination procedures, financing of parties

Value added?
Lessons Learned thus far: Do’s and Don’ts

**DO**
- Be aware
- Be non-partisan
- Be transparent and clear
- Be inclusive
- Be equitable
- Know your capacity
- Use HD/MDG agendas
- Focus on dialogue
- Think about the cycle
- When in doubt seek help

**DON’T**
- Give funding directly
- Favor parties over each other

**BUT WHAT ABOUT?**
- Parties and violence?
- Parties that prohibit women?
- Balancing democratic ideals with reinforcing status quo?
Thank you!