The Electoral Cycle Approach:

Effectiveness and Sustainability of Electoral Assistance

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Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, major donor countries and organisations, chiefly the United States, the United Nations and the European Union (including its Member States), have contributed to the improvement of electoral processes by providing support to many countries in transition to democracy. By identifying lessons from those experiences and incorporating some of them into improved methods and practices, international electoral assistance has been evolving. The aim of this paper is to shed some light on recent developments among the main players of the international electoral assistance arena, donors and beneficiaries alike; to assess some of the lessons learnt, and to comment on new guiding principles currently under discussion. This paper provides examples of how these new principles can be translated into innovative, programmatic approaches and operational responses with a view to making electoral assistance more effective, sustainable and consistent with the national strategies and objectives of the countries being supported in a given regional context.

1. Introduction and rationale

Elections are an essential part of the democratic development and consolidation of every state; they represent a major means of increasing citizen participation in political life and achieving the twin objectives of poverty alleviation and human development outlined by the Millennium Development Goals.[1]

Casting a folded paper into the ballot box, pushing a button or touching the screen on an electronic voting machine or voting remotely via internet[2] all represent a significant mechanism whereby citizens can influence their future. During elections, voters are given an opportunity to make their own assessment of both the achievements of the outgoing government and of the policy manifestos of the opposition. Elections give citizens a political voice. They form the basis upon which political accountability is to be built, and provide orderly procedures for the succession and alternation of power.[3]

Electoral assistance has been part of the foreign policy of several established democracies since the 1960s but already from the end of World War II the Article 21 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights[4] provided the legal and moral justification for the UN work in supporting the accession to independence of non self-governing territories, such as trusteeships[5]. On the other hand, it became a characteristic of American, German and British involvements abroad, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, with the creation of government-funded electoral assistance to political parties.[6]

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, support for the establishment of representative, accountable, functioning and transparent institutions of governance was acknowledged as a priority. In post-communist Eastern and Central Europe, and in the countries of Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia the creation of stable, peaceful and economically sustainable democracies was presented as an endeavour of immediate importance.[7]

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1 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by world leaders in the year 2000 and are set to be achieved by 2015. They provide concrete, numerical benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in its many dimensions and also a framework for the entire international community to work together towards a common end. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

2 Remote Internet voting (I-Voting) is voting by Internet from a voter's home or potentially any other location with Internet access. I-voting with binding results in the local elections of 2005 in Estonia represented the first practice of country-wide binding I-voting in the world.

3 See World Bank Policy Research Working Papers posted on the Web at http://econ.worldbank.org (in particular Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A. & Mastruzzi, C. (June 2009) Governance Matters VIII – Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2008, Policy Research Working Paper N. 4978, World Bank Development Research Group Macroeconomics and Growth Team) for more information on governance indicators and ways of measuring perceptions of the extent to which citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.

4 On 10 December 1948 the UN General Assembly adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Art 21: 1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 2) Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. 3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures..

5 The first ever UN support to an electoral process was at the end of the 1940s with the observation of the first elections in the Korean peninsula. Between the 1960s and the 1970s the UN via the Trusteeship Council assisted with the observation or supervision of more than 30 referendum, plebiscites of elections. http://www.un.org/en/mainbodies/trusteeship/

6 See Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve, Thomas Carothers, Washington DC, Carnegies Endowment for International Peace, 1999

7 For more on the historical background to electoral assistance see Tuccinardi, Domenico, Paul Guerin, Fabio Bargiacchi and Linda Maguire (2007): ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance, ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, Stockholm. www.aceproject.org

Admittedly, elections are only one of the many elements of a true democracy. A tendency to focus on the short term objective of organising elections as a "quick fix" to all institutional ills of a country in transition led to several failures. However, the vote itself is absolutely indispensable. Without regular, genuine, credible and transparent elections, democracy simply cannot exist. By the same token, democratic political regimes with inoperative, dysfunctional electoral systems tend to be more vulnerable to social and political disruption.[8] Major donor countries and organisations have thus provided substantial support for elections in many countries. From the short-term approach they had generally chosen in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, they learned from experience and allowed for an incremental shift toward more comprehensive approaches. Incorporating the lessons of past failures or semi-successes into improved methods and practices, international electoral assistance has been a rapidly evolving field, where the identification and mainstreaming of "best practices" has received constant attention for a broad range of governmental and non-governmental actors.

This paper aims to shed light on the more recent developments among the main players of the international electoral community, comprising donors, international organisations, beneficiary countries and practitioners. Taking into account the findings of commissioned, external evaluations and of international conferences in the period 2009-2011,[9] it aims to provide an overview of the lessons learnt and to comment on the guiding principles currently under discussion. The paper also aims to show how these new guiding principles can and should be translated into *a more holistic programmatic approach* and *operational responses* that, If implemented, these would make electoral assistance more effective, sustainable and more consistent with the national objectives of the beneficiary countries. They would also ensure that assistance remain in line with the key objectives of the donor countries and/or of the regional and international organisations involved.

2. The Electoral Cycle Approach

Donor countries - particularly the USA, Australia, Canada, Japan and many of the EU member states - and organisations – particularly the United Nations, the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), - have contributed to the improvement of numerous electoral processes since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. From a system where elections were considered a pure internal prerogative of states, shielded from external scrutiny, a new modus-vivendi arose, whereby several countries were called to reform their electoral systems and processes. The first decade after 1989 thus saw support focus on countries suddenly undergoing democratic transitions. These were largely unprepared to go through elections. Access to comparative knowledge, best practices and lessons learned in electoral administration and electoral assistance became key assets for them, as elections had to be organised at very short notice. Electoral management bodies (EMBs) and other electoral stakeholders at national and regional levels thus required outside help in gathering the experience and knowledge indispensable to the organisation of credible and transparent elections.

8 See i.e. Collier, Paul (2010). Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places, The Bodley Head, London.
9 International IDEA (2009) Democracy in Development, Global consultations on the EU's role in democracy building. McCann, Niall (2010): Assessment of the European Commission (EC) – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance. UNDP Commissioned Report; Guerin, Paul, and Lucio Filippini (forthcoming): Country Level Evaluation of UNDP-EC Joint Electoral Assistance Programmes. UNDP Commissioned Report. DFID-UKAID, Electoral Assistance and Politics; Lessons from International Support. The OECD-DAC Governance Network (GOVNET), First Roundtable on International Support for Elections: Effective Strategies and Accountability Systems, Paris in March 2010. International IDEA and the Botswana Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the 5th Global Electoral Organization (GEO) Conference, Gaborone 7-9 March 2011.

In a second phase, starting from the end of the 1990s, EMBs and their operational partners turned to another key challenge: building *trust* across the various stakeholders involved in the electoral process, in particular the electorate, political parties, domestic, regional and international observers, civil society organisations and the media. Focus shifted from acquiring basic operational abilities to organize electoral events, which had in the previous decade undermined the EMBs' work, to solving the political, financial and logistical constraints undermining the credibility of the EMBs. At stake was the very legitimacy of the elected governments, dependent on the general public's trust in the electoral process and on dispute resolution mechanisms and without which the risk existed of a descent into electoral violence, civil strife, or alternatively into voters' apathy and plummeting turn-out figures.

In this context, the Electoral Cycle Approach was jointly developed by electoral specialists with extensive field experience from the European Commission (EC) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)[10]. This new way of looking at electoral assistance was a base for training programmes in "*effective electoral assistance*" – rolled out for the first time in 2005 – for EC and UNDP staff. That same year, Sierra Leone and Nigeria became the two first countries to benefit from the approach - through an electoral assistance project specifically designed by the EC. The Electoral Cycle Approach was later officially adopted by the EC and UNDP with the *EC-UNDP Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of an Electoral Assistance Project*, in April 2006.[11]

The development and implementation of the Electoral Cycle Approach represents a critical shift in international electoral assistance from short-term, event-based support to longer-term comprehensive assistance with increased focus on sustainability, i.e. through capacity development, of assistance efforts. The original concept of the Electoral Cycle Approach thus refers to sustainability, through electoral policies and practices which are cost-effective, realistic and meet the present and future needs of national stakeholders.

Indeed, it had been observed, until then, that many internationally assisted elections had led (as a result of complacency) to unsustainable processes and unachievable expectations. National EMBs had often found themselves at pains to meet their objectives, despite or in fact,

because of the excess of resources made available at short notice for a "single-event election". This was one of the main consequences of the *event-driven* kind of support focusing primarily on Election Day.

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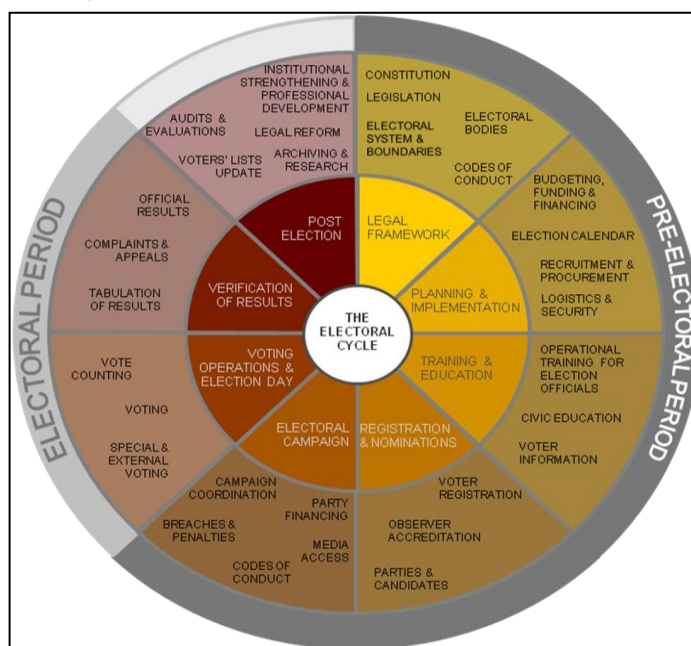
10 Antonio Spinelli and Theresa Lanela of International IDEA, Fabio Bargiacchi, Paul Guerin, Domenico Tuccinardi of the European Commission. The Electoral Cycle approach was then explained in detail in October 2006 in the EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance, in the IDEA Handbook on Electoral Management Design (December 2006) and later on also in the UNDP Implementation Guide on Electoral Assistance (November 2007).

11 On the 21st April 2006, AIDCO Director General K. Richelle signed with the UNDP Associate Administrator Ad Melkert, the EC/UNDP Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programs and Projects. These Operational Guidelines, adopting the electoral cycle approach as a principle of electoral assistance cooperation between the two institutions, outlined practical measures for the strengthening and the facilitation of the already established cooperation.

In contrast, the Electoral Cycle Approach proposed a shifted emphasis: support needed to be provided for a variety of activities undertaken well in advance of (e.g. planning exercises) as well after (e.g. legal review and auditing) election day itself. Moreover, it stressed the need to provide support to a wider range of players than previously envisaged, in particular EMBs, political parties, media organs and civil society organisations. All were seen as essential to the final outcome of the process now viewed as a whole, and not as "E-Day-centric". The Electoral Cycle Approach was thus built upon the premise that elections are comprised of a totality of interacting elements where a wide range of legal, technical and organisational aspects must be considered simultaneously. It called for the use of a rolling methodological framework, as illustrated in Figure 1 above.

In his bi-annual report to the General Assembly in August 2007, the UN Secretary General highlighted the particular value of the Electoral Cycle Approach, whilst also drawing attention on some of its specific challenges:

> *"It is often unrealistic, especially in post-conflict environments, to expect that effective and independent electoral institutions and inclusive electoral processes can be built on the basis of assistance to one election. A cyclical approach to electoral assistance will help ensure sustainability. The success of this approach also depends, to some extent, on donors maintaining interest in electoral assistance through local elections and between elections, recognizing of course that the primary responsibility for funding and supporting electoral institutions and processes lies with the Member State itself".* [12]

It is important to recall that a key original aim of the Electoral Cycle Approach was and still is the minimisation of the EMBs' reliance on external contributions and resources. At stake is to make international electoral assistance redundant by building locally owned capacity and by making EMBs and electoral processes and practices sustainable in the long term. Another relevant issue could thus make electoral assistance more effective:

> *"…the proper handling of the very complex and delicate set of interactions among EMBs, electoral assistance providers, multilateral-bilateral development agencies, partner country governments, CSOs, political parties and vendors. The appreciation of the sensitivity of this delicate set of relationships requires the development of specific skills that go well beyond the pure technical advice. These relationships go beyond electoral assistance per se and thus impact on democratic development in a much broader sense…"* [13]

The need for more cyclical support to electoral processes was again emphasised in the UN Secretary General's Report of August 2009. Specifically, the Report referred to the way in which this approach contributed, by supporting strategic planning processes and institutional strengthening, to the more rapid achievement of sustainability and thus, in the longer term, to reducing the timeframe of UN electoral assistance.[14]

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12 "Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization". UN Secretary-General report of August 2007 to the UN General Assembly

13 Tuccinardi, Domenico, Paul Guerin, Fabio Bargiacchi and Linda Maguire (2007): ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance, ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, Stockholm

14 "Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization". UN Secretary-General report of August 2009 to the UN General Assembly

3. Guiding principles for electoral assistance

In the past five years, electoral assistance donor and implementation organisations have garnered substantial experience in the implementation of projects based on the Electoral Cycle Approach. It has then become possible to evaluate the key lessons learnt in order to make future electoral assistance more effective. To this end, the European Commission, DFID-UKAID and the United Nations Development Programme have commissioned external evaluations carried out in 2009, 2010 and 2011 (currently in progress).[15]

The OECD-DAC Governance Network (GOVNET), together with various key international players, convened the First Roundtable on International Support for Elections: Effective Strategies and Accountability Systems, in Paris in March 2010.[16] The venue aptly reflected the fact that the major funders in electoral assistance at the global level are among the 34 member-states of the OECD.[17] It also mirrored the growing importance of Brazil, India and South Africa as players in South-South cooperation in general and in the electoral field in particular.[18]

The Roundtable was designed as a collective effort to take discussions about electoral support to a more strategic level and to develop "*Draft Strategic Principles for International Support for Elections*". Commissioners and representatives of the EMBs of Sierra Leone, Zambia, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Electoral Commission Forum of the South African Development Community (ECF SADC)[19] made forceful and concrete recommendations as beneficiaries and partners in the electoral assistance field.

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15 International IDEA (2010), Democracy in Development. Global consultations on the EU's role in democracy building; McCann, Niall (2010): Assessment of the European Commission (EC) – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Partnership in Electoral Assistance and the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance. UNDP Commissioned Report; Guerin, Paul, and Lucio Filippini (2011): Country Level Evaluation of UNDP-EC Joint Electoral Assistance Programmes. UNDP Commissioned Report. DFID-UKAID, Electoral Assistance and Politics; Lessons from International Support. The UNDP also commissioned an external global evaluation of its electoral assistance activities in 2011 after the one carried out in 2000 on 10 years of UN Electoral Assistance.

16 The United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Department of Political Affairs (UN, DPA), the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Programme and the UNDP-EC Task Force on International Assistance, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
The OECD-DAC-GOVNET convened and facilitated the development of the draft principles as part of its work on aid and domestic accountability; an initiative underway with developing country accountability institutions and donors to ensure that aid avoids undermining accountability in recipient countries and improves support in this politically sensitive area for faster poverty reduction. This work will deliver key messages about electoral support and other accountability issues to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Korea end-2011.

17 Australia, Austria Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

18 Russia has entered negotiations to become a member of the OECD and closer relations were established with Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa through the so called "enhanced engagement" programme through the Ministerial Council decision of 2007. Together with them, the OECD brings around its table 40 countries that account for 80% of world trade and investment, giving it a pivotal role in addressing the challenges facing the world economic development and cooperation thus including issues related to elections, democracy and stability.

19 The Electoral Commissions Forum of the SADC is an independent entity launched in July 1998 in Cape Town and is presently composed of 15 Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) from the following SADC member countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe (only Madagascar is not an ECF member at the moment). Three countries have French as the official language (four with Madagascar), two have Portuguese as the official language and 10 have English as the official language. The aim of ECF SADC is to promote free, fair and transparent elections in regional member states through democracy and accountable governance.

The conclusion of the Roundtable reflected a broad commitment to making election assistance as effective and useful as possible and the major funders, implementers and beneficiaries of international elections assistance agreed to a document containing a **Draft of** strategic and operational principles and a Draft action plan for further elaborating the Draft Principles (see annex III)[20].:

These draft principles were further discussed at the Fifth Global Electoral Organisation (GEO), held in March 2011 in Gaborone, Botswana.[21] Over the last decade, the GEO has become the most prominent global event for election practitioners and also one of the largest democracy forums in the world. The general objectives of the GEO are to bring together electoral practitioners and experts for the purposes of exchanging knowledge and sharing experiences and to provide a forum for networking as well as opportunities for provoking discussion and promoting initiatives.

The 2011 GEO brought together over 300 participants from all over the world. These included members of EMBs, international organisations working in the areas of democracy and electoral assistance, the academic community, donors and democratic governance policy makers. The "Gaborone Declaration" (see Annex 4) highlighted the universal value of electoral processes and their interdependence with democracy, development and human rights. It also emphasised the need to strengthen and professionalise electoral institutions, to minimise election-related violence and to promote the empowerment of women.

At the same time, the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security (the "Global Commission"), an international initiative jointly created by International IDEA and the Kofi Annan Foundation[22], composed of 12 eminent personalities from around the world, was launched in South Africa, to further promote the integrity of elections.[23] Recent events in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere have demonstrated more clearly than ever the fact that if elections are vital to democratic government, they are by no means a sufficient condition for it. Incumbents have continued to rig elections, benefit from illicit funding or distort perceptions through biased medias, and often, losing candidates have not accepted defeat. When elections have been marred in these ways, people have tended to lose faith in democracy and the political process, with detrimental consequences to the human rights, security and regional stability.

The Global Commission aims to highlight the importance of the integrity of elections for a more secure, prosperous and stable world. It will work to convince different stakeholders of the vital importance of electoral *integrity*, not only in terms of democracy but also in terms of security, human rights and development. It is a central part of the Commission's approach to ensure that the international community applies political solutions to the political problems surrounding elections, rather than adopting purely technical approaches. The Global Commission aims to:

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[20] OECD-DAC Governance Network. "***Draft Principles on International Elections Assistance.* March 2010 – updated June .**Revised based on discussions by participants in the **"First Roundtable on International Support to Elections"** on 1 March 2010, hosted by the OECD-DAC Governance Network (GOVNET) and also supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Department of Political Affairs (UN, DPA), the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Programme and the UNDP-EC Task Force on International Assistance, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)".

21 In 2011, the GEO was organized by International IDEA with the support of the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA), SADC Electoral Commissions Forum (SADC ECF), Botswana Independent Electoral Commission, Instituto Federal Electoral Mexicano (IFE), IFES, UNDP, UN DPA/EAD.

22 www.kofiannanfoundation.org

23 Read more about the launch and the 12 members of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security at: www.idea.int/elections/global_commission_launch.cfm

- Make election-rigging a less attractive option and ensure that the potential for abuse and violence during elections is reduced;
- Strengthen international commitment to the professional conduct of elections, which will include providing support for high-quality, credible electoral monitoring;
- Bolster international support for stronger national capacity to run fair elections;
- Build international consensus to take a firm stand in cases where parties try to rig elections.

As he launched the Global Commission, former UN Secretary General and current Chairman of the Global Commission, Kofi Annan (former UN Secretary General) stressed that:

> *"Building democracy is a complex process. Elections are only a starting point but if their integrity is compromised, so is the legitimacy of democracy… Most countries have agreed to principles that would, if respected, lead to credible electoral processes, but too often these principles are ignored because of lack of political commitment, insufficient technical knowledge or inadequate international support. The Commission will therefore seek to renew political commitment to the integrity of the electoral process."*

4. Towards a more holistic approach

At a time when scepticism about electoral assistance has been on the rise, successful implementation of truly cyclical electoral support programmes is a prerequisite for sustained international support. These programmes should be strategically and operationally integrated with the related areas of the broader democratic development agenda in partner countries. With the recent increase of "failed" elections, support for electoral processes has been placed under intense with donors and beneficiaries expressing concerns over the way forward.

Sceptics have pointed to various problematic issues. They have pointed to the lack of sustainability and the operational constraints in the implementation of projects in support of electoral cycles aiming *simultaneously* at long-term capacity development and short-term operational support. They have denounced this as a vicious circle whereby each successive election required renewed support. Other main causes of concern have been, among others: the failure to tackle election-related violence and conflict, the misuse of elections (and thus the assistance provided) by autocratic leaders seeking to reinvigorate and legitimise their external or internal legitimacy, and, at times, the failure to ensure that essential basic measures were in place prior to the organisation of the elections themselves.

Electoral assistance providers have evaluated the lessons learnt so far and identified the "missing link(s)". They should now be prepared to provide more appropriate and sustainable assistance for upcoming elections in parts of the world that are currently in transition or undergoing a consolidation phase of their democracies. The Electoral Cycle Approach gives assistance providers and beneficiaries alike a useful tool that accounts for every stage of the election process that need to be systematically followed**.** However, to further promote the effectiveness and sustainability of electoral assistance in the future, projects using the Electoral Cycle Approach will need to gain from the following recommendations (explained further in the points 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4):

- be much more rooted in the context of and integrated with the policies and activities undertaken in the areas of democratic and human development in general;
- take into account the political context within which electoral processes unfold and electoral assistance is provided;
- further promote synergies between election observation and electoral assistance;

- combat fraud, prevent election related conflicts and violence also via focusing on the development of leadership and conflict management skills for all electoral stakeholders;

4.1 Enforcing the links between electoral assistance and broader development support:

Given that elections are a necessary but by no means sufficient condition for democracy, it is clear that electoral assistance projects could benefit from increased coordination with activities undertaken in the related areas of democratic governance. The tendency of electoral assistance providers to treat their involvement as a purely technical exercise has led to a decoupling away from the broader development and political agendas.
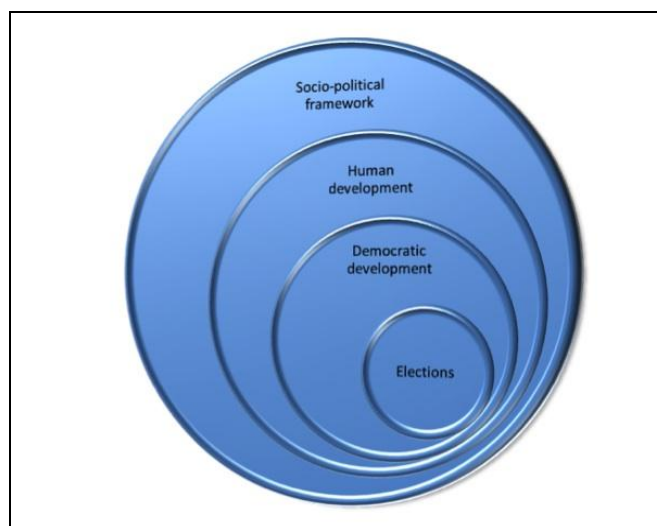
Increased awareness of the broader environment within which electoral assistance is taking place is particularly needed, not least among beneficiaries. Maximising synergies between these inter-related areas would ensure greater effectiveness and lead to improved sustainability of development assistance in the longer term (Figure 2). The various building blocks that make up a comprehensive development agenda should interact and be viewed as interdependent. For example, the failure to provide infrastructure for schools can impact on the quality of the education system, which in turn will eventually affect longer-term economic development. Some electoral assistance sceptics argue that certain minimum requirements, such as security, logistics and the establishment of a set of accepted procedures, have to be established before elections can take place. However, citizens around the world are keen to have their voices heard and to have influence in the development of their country and their own lives – through the ballot box and often in the shortest timeframe possible.

Some activities should be prioritised in order to further improve electoral assistance projects. These include support for the security sector (for election-related security issues), gender equality (for the equal political participation of women), rule of law (for an enhanced legal framework and the strengthening of election-related judicial bodies), anti-corruption (to enhance the transparency of electoral processes), environment (for the development of environment-friendly electoral processes), education (for civic education and awareness), local elections (empowering communities through decentralisation) and media monitoring (access to unbiased information or at least to a plurality of views).

4.2 Further promoting synergies between election observation and electoral assistance:

Whereas electoral assistance means "technical or material support given to electoral processes", election observation entails "the purposeful gathering of information regarding an electoral process, and the making of informed judgments on the conduct of such a process on the basis of the information collected by persons who are not inherently authorised to intervene in the process".[24] Assistance and observation

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24 EC Communication 191 on Electoral Assistance and Observation (April 2001), pg. 4-5

represent complementary activities and, when coordinated, can create opportunities for the maximisation of election support.

Both activities, when embedded in a broader institution-building and democracy-support strategy, have far-reaching political implications for the conduct of genuine, credible and transparent electoral processes. Obviously, election observation with observers deployed throughout a country on and around election day is the most visible form of action. However, its longer-term impact will depend on whether the recommendations of observation efforts are effectively used for programming purposes and subsequent electoral support. Challenges to developing synergies between election observation and assistance may arise when:

- o Election observers are not aware of existing assistance efforts and of the way in which their recommendations should feed into a larger process aimed at democratic development. This vastly reduces the usefulness of their recommendations;
- o Electoral assistance practitioners generally do not take into account the recommendations made by the observers when designing new projects and programmes;
- o National counterparts disagree and/or do not prioritise the issues raised in the observation reports, which may further complicate the collaboration between assistance providers and beneficiaries.

Based on the above, there is a need to further expand the exchanges between observers and electoral assistance providers. Building capacities, via specific training programmes for both groups, in order to strengthen mutual understanding would promote synergies in the area of electoral support. Discussions via joint seminars between observers, assistance providers and national electoral stakeholders, could be complemented by peer reviews of the recommendations with national counterparts would reinforce participation and grant national ownership of the programmatic responses. Observation reports would thus provide the base of longer-term, cycle-scale reforming efforts.

Even more importantly, the synergies between international, regional and national election observation missions should focus on developing capacity among national election observation groups supported by regional and global initiatives. Domestic observation increases not only the geographical coverage, but also represents an opportunity for the observation of activities that take place before and after international observation missions are in-country (in average from six to eight weeks). This work could be further facilitated through the support of the setting up of more permanently structured "observatories" for the monitoring of the most sensitive steps of the electoral cycle – namely the:

- delimitation of electoral boundaries,
- financing of campaigns
- cost of elections,
- media access,
- voter registration (including audit of voter register based on biometry and automated fingerprint identification systems),
- results aggregation,
- electoral violence
- electoral disputes resolution mechanisms

Long-term domestic observation and election "observatories" represents an opportunity to establish a "cyclical spin" to observation efforts and would serve as a crucial complementary activity to that of international observation missions. Support to such activities paves the way for more thorough analysis of

key issues and concerns throughout the electoral process. In the next stage, it offers EMBs, donors and electoral assistance providers a clearer picture of the challenges that are potentially jeopardizing the credibility and trust in the process and thus enhances the possibilities to identify measures to tackle such challenges.

4.3 Re-connecting technical assistance with political dialogue and mediation:

Given the political sensitivity of providing support to electoral processes, the international community has adopted a neutral stance to minimise the risk of being accused of bias towards one side or the other. Unfortunately, this has resulted in decoupling electoral assistance away from political dialogue, which in turn has led to a situation where assistance is sometimes provided notwithstanding the lack of true commitment to genuinely elections by political leaders in the supported countries. This specific issue was highlighted as a key challenge by Carothers (2010) in the abovementioned OECD DAC (GOVNET) Roundtable on International Support for Elections:

> *"Most (though certainly not all) elections that fall short of international standards do so not because of a lack of resources or knowledge on the part of those organizing them. Rather they fall short because of insufficient political will, i.e. a lack of democratic intention and commitment on the part of some major elements of the political elite."[25]*

Carothers further emphasised that electoral assistance should be accompanied by "...a willingness on the part of interested outside policy actors and donors to match their funding for election assistance with serious efforts to engage in political dialogue, persuasion, and in some cases, tangible pressure (regional or international) on the relevant political power holders to increase adherence to basic electoral norms". By combining technical assistance with political dialogue, the international community would be better placed to ensure that partner countries abide by the international treaties and commitments on basic human rights and freedoms to which they are signatories.

The EU Council Conclusions on Democracy Support in EU External Relations of 17 November 2009[26] have been designed with the aim to provide a clear framework for EU democracy support. It reflects, amongst other topics, on the necessity of integrating democracy assistance with political dialogue, and in the specific field of EU Electoral Support recognised that, by adopting the Electoral Cycle Approach, the EU rather than focusing mainly on electoral observation, should consistently carry out observation and implement electoral assistance in the context of wider support for political and institutional reforms and processes, both before and after the electoral process.[27]

> *"...Acknowledging the multidimensional, complex and long term nature of democracy building processes, the Council agrees that there is a need for a broader and more coherent approach. The Council emphasizes the need for increased coherence, complementarity and coordination…This should start from the country analysis stage and continue through planning, programming, implementation and evaluation of EU support, in*

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25 Carothers, Thomas (2010): International Elections Assistance: Context, Challenges, and Possible Strategic Principles, Discussion Paper presented at the OECD-DAC-GOVNET 1st Roundtable on International Electoral Support, Paris, March 2010
26 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/111250.pdf
27 PASOS, Policy Association for an Open Society (Policy Brief n. 1, 2010) A new beginning? Democracy support in EU external relations under the Lisbon Treaty.

order to achieve an appropriate mix of instruments according to the situation in a given country, and should be guided by dialogue with partner countries as appropriate". (Council Conclusions, Article 4)

Finally, it is clear that the impact of assistance programmes will depend on the willingness of current political leaders to operate within the existing national legal framework as well as to abide by regional/international treaties which the country has ratified. It is therefore essential to add a policy-oriented component to electoral assistance, in order to nurture the commitment to genuine, credible and transparent electoral processes by political leaders in beneficiary countries. Without a complementary political dialogue, the efficacy of electoral assistance will be restricted to contributing to the effective management of elections (e.g. through provision of practical knowledge, materials, resources etc.) within the existing political realities, which may or may not be conducive to further democratic development in partner countries.

4.4 Combating fraud and preventing election-related violence:

Authoritarian leaders and governments use fraudulent elections to legitimize their governments, as elections can be a powerful tool for legitimizing the ruling government. In post-conflict and transitional states, democratic and autocratic elements frequently co-exist. Democratic procedures, such as competitive elections, are combined with illegal practices, such as fraudulent voter registration and/or voter disenfranchisement, vote buying, misinformation, ballot stuffing/vote rigging, intimidation of candidates and voters, destruction or voiding of votes cast and infringement of the tabulation process. Electoral fraud can have particularly decisive consequence in close competitions, since it can alter the final results and bring to office the candidates who have lost. Fraud has been denounced in recent years in Afghanistan, Belarus, Kenya, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Pakistan, Ukraine and Iran.

Electoral assistance practitioners need to be aware that "technical" assistance to electoral processes will – unavoidably – have "political" repercussions. Assessments relating to the granting of assistance usually take into account the willingness of the beneficiaries to implement changes that will lead the country further along the democratic path. However, this needs to be further followed up through the integration of electoral assistance projects with assistance to fight fraud and corruption as well as with political dialogue.

Elections are often described as a double-edged sword, especially in post-conflict and transitional contexts. Although they are intended to be a peaceful and inclusive means of deciding who will govern, they can instead, under certain circumstances, re-ignite underlying conflicts and societal divisions because of the high stakes involved. It is ultimately a fiercely contested power struggle.

The prevalence of election-related violence in recent elections, including those held in Afghanistan, Belarus, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, the Philippines and Sudan, are often cited as illustrations of this risk. The integration and mainstreaming of activities aimed at mitigating election-related violence during pre- and post-electoral periods, as well as on election day itself, is fundamental to the electoral support to countries that have recently emerged from war or civil strife. In societies with divisions that run along ethnic or religious lines, the outbreak of election-related violence may sometimes be anticipated given the way in which elections can exacerbate existing tensions if politicians choose to play the ethnic or religious card in their campaigns.[28]

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28 United Nations Development Programme (2009): Elections and Conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning and Programming, UNDP, New York; Collier Paul (2010): Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places, The Bodley Head, London

Comprehensive risk assessments and the implementation of corresponding interventions that account for the whole electoral cycle will enable electoral assistance practitioners to put in place specifically designed response measures to prevent, mitigate and/or resolve election-related conflict and violence.

Such measures should include reviewing the legal framework (e.g. research has shown, that the electoral system may affect the likelihood of violence in terms of how it produces fair results or how it encourages candidates running for office to cooperate, etc.); planning and budgeting (e.g. through the establishment of well-developed security plans and allocation of funds to policing and contingency plans where the risk of violence is high); civic and voter education (e.g. campaigns to raise awareness of the legitimacy of the process); strengthening electoral dispute resolution mechanisms (e.g. to ensure that if aspects of the electoral process should be contested by candidates or citizens in general, there is an established juridical channel through which complaints will be handled to the highest possible standards); and evaluation (e.g. assessing incidences of violence during the most recent electoral process that can feed into the planning phase of subsequent elections).

The importance of integrating conflict prevention measures into electoral assistance programming has been highlighted on several occasions. In a recent conference on Elections and Stability organised by the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) in May 2011, shortcomings in electoral administration - including mistrust between stakeholders, partisan electoral management bodies, lack of adequate mechanisms to manage electoral disputes and ensure inclusive representation, and financial gaps in the organisation of elections - were cited as important factors contributing to instability.[29] The conference recommended that all electoral assistance providers should adopt a more conflict prevention-oriented approach in their electoral assistance and place prevention of election-related conflicts and violence at the heart of their work and prioritize advice aimed at facilitating political stability.

In this context, activities aimed at the development of leadership and conflict management skills for electoral stakeholders can play an important part in fostering inclusive processes. Workshops and cascade training in this field are currently being pioneered to address the need to build capacities at the interface between electoral administration and conflict management from a leadership perspective. These initiatives aim to investigate ways in which electoral administrators and other electoral stakeholders can improve their leadership skills and to identify measures to prevent the escalation of election-related violence and conflict throughout the electoral cycles**.

5. Increasing ownership and sustainability

Among the major concerns that have recently been expressed is the extent to which current projects premised on the implementation of the cyclical approach have proved capable of building sufficient capacities on the ground. Even though, in the initial stages, substantial financial and human resources

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29 The Regional Conference on Elections and Stability was organized in Praia, Cape Verde, from 18 to 20 May 2011. The conference, hosted by the government of Cape Verde, was organized by the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), in partnership with the UNDP regional office, with the support of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and its Electoral Assistance Division, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the European Union (EU), and the International Peace Institute (IPI). Participants including high-level representatives of West African states, international and regional organizations, as well as representatives of election management bodies, national security forces, civil society, academic institutions and the media, examined the situation of elections in West Africa, focusing on the impact of electoral processes on democracy and stability and its implications for crisis prevention, and peace-building.

have been allocated to activities intended to spread technical know-how from internationally recruited teams of experts to various local stakeholders, these activities are often not been implemented in the manner intended.

There are several reasons for this. On the assistance providers' side, weaknesses in the operational design of the programme activities and/or components usually result in inefficient strategies to address both short- and long-term needs. In addition, short timeframes have sometimes led experts to "do the job" instead of mentoring and training local partners. Occasionally, international experts have lacked the competencies necessary to share knowledge and experience. Moreover, where competent experts have been recruited for only a limited period, and possibly have not stayed long enough after the elections, the scope for true capacity development in the post-electoral period may be limited.

Conversely, whilst the beneficiaries may well be committed to the holding of genuine elections, stakeholders may not always be dedicated to sustained learning: they may lack the staff to retain such capacities (an example of this is the brain drain phenomenon, where experienced electoral administrators leave to work for other EMBs or international organizations); the institutional set-up may not be conducive to long term capacity or institutional memory (if, for example, the EMB is only convened for the electoral period or if specific departments/staff, such as IT-related ones, are not embedded within the permanent structure), and there may also be a general unwillingness to invest limited funds in capacity development activities (for one thing, the EMB may expect to receive similar assistance for the next electoral cycle).

There is a need to strengthen commitment, on the part of both assistance providers and beneficiaries, to the development of national and regional capacities. The Electoral Cycle Approach encouraged the donor community to invest in longer term programmes that are more conducive to producing sustainable impact on the ground through the development of local capacities at all stages of the electoral cycle (before, during and after elections) at several levels (district, regional and national) and among multiple stakeholders (civil society, the media, security forces parliaments, political parties, the judiciary etc.). However, there is a need to ensure the proper implementation of such activities so that, after two or three cycles, partner countries are equipped to run elections unassisted from an operational point of view, thus making international involvement obsolete. In the final analysis, even though the state budget receives large donor macro-economic financial support, elections are at the core of the democratic functioning of a state and should be planned for and funded by the state budget.

In recent years, several innovative approaches and projects, specifically geared towards capacity development, have come into being. Comprehensive face-to-face and e-learning programmes[30] for donors, electoral administrators and other stakeholders in electoral processes have been developed. The overall objective of these training programmes at a global level is to further promote internationally accepted practices for the conduct of elections. This includes not only technical but also political aspects: sound administration aimed at strengthening EMBs combined with the involvement of relevant stakeholders in line with the broadest possible concept of participation.

The BRIDGE project (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections)[31] was awarded UN recognition for Public Service in 2010 and represents the most advanced training programme of this kind,

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30 See www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org and www-elearning-ec-undp.electoralassistance.org
31 The Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) was established in 1999 and is a collaborative effort among five key partners, namely International IDEA, IFES, UNDP, UN and the Australian Electoral Commission. The overall objective of BRIDGE is to promote internationally accepted principles of democracy and good electoral practice; to enhance the skills and confidence of stakeholders in the electoral process; to increase the awareness of tools and resources available for the building and maintaining of a sustainable electoral culture; and to develop a support network for stakeholders in electoral processes and encourage a culture of sharing information and experiences. The BRIDGE training curriculum has 24 modules

with 24 different training modules currently available on various electoral issues and new ones being developed on a continuous basis. The four-level system for the accreditation of trainers has further ensured control of the quality of the delivery of such training programmes, and it is used extensively as an integral part of electoral assistance projects by key actors such as, to name but a few, UNDP, IFES, IDEA, EISA and funded by different donors.

Pooling funds for electoral assistance projects (or their sub-components) with a focus on regional capacity development and on benefiting from existing learning programmes, such as BRIDGE, can improve the effectiveness of capacity development efforts. Indeed, it goes beyond traditional capacity building by creating and nurturing new networks and partnerships and promoting peer collaboration.

In this context, the UNDP Project in Support of Electoral Cycles in the Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa (PALOP)[32] and Timor Leste (Pro-PALOP TL Project) represents a particularly forward-looking project, combining the implementation of a comprehensive BRIDGE strategy for the six focus countries involved while at the same time developing and documenting regional lessons learned through advanced networking exercises intended to further inform the work carried out by electoral management bodies and other stakeholders in the region.[33] The Pro PALOP-TL places great emphasis on knowledge production, knowledge transfer and capacity development to strengthen electoral processes and institutions in the PALOP-TL countries and includes collaborations with the other two countries of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP),[34] namely Portugal and Brazil.[35]

Such comprehensive programmes have the additional advantage of serving to promote aid effectiveness. Through the organization of joint training events between countries with a certain number of "common denominators", funds for training programmes can be pooled across borders and further ensure that

covering all aspects of the electoral process divided into four headings: 1) Introduction; 2) Electoral architecture; 3) Electoral stakeholders; and 4) Electoral operations. For more see at www.bridge-project.org

32 The Portuguese-speaking African Countries (Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa) are a group of five African countries that are former colonies of Portugal and where the Portuguese language is the official language. The countries are: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe and form part of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). The PALOP countries and Timor Leste have development cooperation links mainly with Portugal, the EU and Brazil and receive support from them mostly in the fields of democratic governance, culture, education and Portuguese language development and preservation.

33 The Pro PALOP-TL project will provide assistance to the PALOP countries and Timor Leste over a period of three years (2010-2013) and is fully funded by the EU with 6.1 million Euro. www.propalop-tl.org The three components of the projects are 1) the strengthening of EMBs in the six focus countries, 2) the adaptation of knowledge tools and products to meet with the needs and requirements of the PALOP-TL countries, and 3) the support to political participation of women and youth, parliamentary and strengthening media institutions. Through this innovative project structure, the Pro PALOP-TL aims to build networks, promote South-South collaboration and create an environment for the exchange of experiences and lessons learned among EMBs and relevant electoral stakeholders among Portuguese-speaking developing countries. This is done, for example, through the delivery of a comprehensive BRIDGE training programme – in Portuguese – for the region as a whole, focusing on the specific issues that are considered most crucial to further enhance electoral processes in the PALOP-TL countries. The Project also informs the ongoing formulation of the projects in support of ECCAS and SADC in the context of the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance.

34 Community of Portuguese Language Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa) is the intergovernmental organization among Portuguese-speaking countries where Portuguese is an official language. The CPLP was formed in 1996 with seven countries: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and São Tomé and Príncipe. East Timor (Timor Leste) joined the community in 2002 after gaining independence. In July 2006, during the Guinea-Bissau summit, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritius were admitted as Associate Observers along with 17 International associations and organizations considered as Consultative Observers. The Portuguese-speaking countries are home to more than 240 million people located across four continents (Africa, Europe, South America and South East Asia). www.cplp.org

35 The 11th July 2011, within the premises of the Secretariat of the CPLP in Lisbon and with the presence of the Executive Secretary and Ambassadors of the members states of the CPLP, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Brazilian Electoral Justice, through their Supreme Electoral Court and the UNDP through its Office in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, to cooperate in implementing the capacity development activities of the Pro PALOP-TL Project.

participants are actually working on the topic of the learning event and/or network platform via the establishment and support of Regional Schools on Electoral Administration.

The UNDP Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) represents another large-scale electoral assistance initiative aimed at developing capacities among EMBs and other key stakeholders.[36] Through three level-focused (global, regional and country levels) and one cross-cutting (women's empowerment) components, the programme is geared towards promoting knowledge sharing and synergies across multiple levels. Of greatest relevance here is the regional component that seeks to promote capacity development and regional exchange and networks amongst countries in South-East Africa, West Africa, Asia-Pacific, Arab States, Latin America & the Caribbean, and Europe & the Commonwealth of Independent States.

More generally, South-South collaboration programmes that promote dialogue and the exchange of experience and reflections on successful ideas, practices and strategies among countries that are following comparable electoral-democratisation-development paths provide an effective entry point to capacity development. Through the pooling of know-how, South-South collaboration initiatives seek to maximise the benefits derived from their various experiences. Support for the development of strong electoral networks and associations of EMBs are good examples of how electoral stakeholders from the relevant countries can achieve increased political viability and strength. Donors, electoral assistance providers, international-regional organizations and beneficiary countries should dedicate much more attention in creating a viable environment for south-south collaboration and making such collaboration networks a driver for effective development, for example in the African countries, through the African Union (AU)[37] but also via sub-regional organisations such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC),[38] the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)[39] and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).[40]

6. Way Forward and conclusion

The Electoral Cycle Approach has received widespread support and has, for a number of years since 2005, provided a constructive theoretical tool for the formulation of a new kind of electoral assistance programmes and projects. However, the implementation of the approach on the ground has encountered several challenges. In view of some scepticism with which electoral assistance is regarded, there is a need to implement more sustainable strategies that take into account the complex political circumstances and the consequences of such support. This applies to both assistance providers and beneficiaries.

With regard to the former, the Electoral Cycle Approach has certainly contributed to a more comprehensive approach in theory. However, in terms of implementation, longer-term goals have often

36 The overall objective of the GPECS programme is to enhance the credibility, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability of electoral institutions and processes, with a particular emphasis on capacity development, South-South exchanges, inclusive participation and women's empowerment. The programme seeks to develop policy innovations and programming options in these areas at the global, regional and country levels. In addition to the development results sought at these various levels, the programme emphasizes the organizational effectiveness necessary to deliver and absorb effective electoral assistance by fostering the requisite architecture, capacities, tools and culture within the international community, within regional centres of excellence and at national level. The initiatives are based on the electoral cycle approach, while seeking also to integrate electoral assistance into a wider framework of democratic governance. The GPECS was initiated in July 2010 and runs over a three year period and was mainly funded by Spain with also a contribution from CIDA.
37 http://www.africa-union.org
38 http://www.sadc.int/
39 http://www.ecowas.int/
40 http://www.ceeac-eccas.org/

been sacrificed. In other words, the international community should practise what it preaches by implementing the policies and activities outlined above. Building upon the lessons learned from the donors' evaluations of electoral cycle support programmes, recent discussions suggest a need for operational setups to be better aligned with the identified desideratum of focusing on the promotion of sustainable long-term capacity development throughout the electoral cycle, without detracting from the crucial activity of supporting electoral events and operations. These set-ups and arrangements aim to explore in more creative and effective ways existing donor policies, rules and procedures on funding, human resources and procurement. Programmes and project life cycles (from formulation to evaluation and closure) are being revisited in order to better articulate and align their architecture with the need to provide effective responses to the complex and multiple demands of the electoral assistance field as outlined in this paper.

With regard to the beneficiaries, new opportunities for developing regional and national capacities should be actively embraced, beginning with organisation assessment and staff appraisal; institutional reform; effective strategic planning; peer reviews; South-South collaboration, and capacity development in leadership and conflict management. Becoming gradually more independent of international support and being able to drive the process themselves should be the overarching objective, even though this necessarily means that the country will receive less external financial support for elections that could be employed for other national priorities while the State budgets should be used to organise elections.

The "missing links" have thus been identified in order to ensure the successful use of the Electoral Cycle Approach. All the stages leading up to the organisation of credible and legitimate elections are now given sufficient attention and all stakeholders can be effectively involved in and contribute to electoral processes that feature effective election administration; competitive multi-party systems; democratic political parties; political inclusiveness and citizen participation. This can be achieved by focusing on the implementation of the following activities:

- Grounding electoral support more firmly within the political context/circumstances of the beneficiary state by using the political economy analysis[41] approach as a tool to help identify what kind of support would work and where and the risks associated with non-workable strategies, identified by formulation missions.
- Promoting political dialogue as an integral part – the political dimension – of electoral assistance planning also by developing regional, national and local capacities for dialogue and mediation for the consensual and inclusive management of transitions and the prevention and mitigation of electoral and political conflict, taking into account their gender-differentiated effects and ensuring women's participation.
- Integrating electoral assistance projects with other activities that are carried out in the fields of democracy and development support more broadly, including education, infrastructure, women's

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41 "There is growing recognition among donors of the importance of understanding the political, economic and social processes that promote or block pro-poor change, and to understand the role of institutions, power and the underlying context in developing countries. The need for this has been reinforced by the ongoing reform of the ways aid is delivered and managed. This includes not only the shift towards increased country ownership, alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures, and the move from project to sector and budget support. There is also an expectation that sound analytical work might provide a firmer footing for the harmonisation agenda and more common ground for joint donor initiatives. This is particularly important where donors are moving towards Joint Assistance Strategies...An increasing number of donors are using political economy analysis or adopting its findings in their search for partner country-led incentives for progressive change and to better understand the political factors that shape development challenges and outcomes, in particular the underlying causes of poor governance. A variety of approaches to political analysis are being developed, reflecting the different perceptions and operational concerns of different donors..." www.oecd.org/dac/governance/politicaleconomy

empowerment, parliamentary development and anti-corruption, and having a strategy for stabilisation and recovery, combining access to the rule of law, justice and security.

- Using strategic, operational and financial planning as a tool to ensure a phased approach within the cycle that donors could easily support, and having benchmarks and indicators, which would also help to make long-term electoral assistance more effective in its implementation of measures aimed at improving the credibility of electoral processes and institutions in place, to build confidence, widen participation, especially of women, and prevent violence

- Increasing the synergies between domestic, regional and international election observations missions and electoral assistance so that the recommendations of the observation missions are routinely treated as a starting point to engage electoral observers with EMBs and electoral assistance providers with donors and other electoral stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of electoral assistance projects that promote dialogue, prevent violence (including gender-based violence), boost participation and ensure successful management of electoral processes.

- Increasing the support to national election observation organizations for the development of appropriate and customised methodologies to implement long term observation or permanent "observatory" focusing the most sensitive steps of an electoral cycle such as: delimitation of boundaries, campaign finance, media access, voter registration (including audit of voter register based on biometry and automated fingerprint identification systems), results aggregation, electoral violence and electoral disputes resolution mechanisms.

- Emphasising the building and development of national and local capacities on the ground, connecting country, regional and global levels through the facilitation of south-south cooperation, peer reviews, and exchange of experience among EMBs and regional EMB organizations chiefly by funding regional and transnational projects.

- Increasing support to regional and national schools of electoral administration and to academic curricula relating to electoral studies also via distance education and E-learning programmes using sustainable and cost effective communication technologies. The focus should be on the provision of both academic and practical comparative experiences to electoral administrators and to those seeking careers as electoral professionals also targeting the increase of the number of women in electoral administration by enabling them to become electoral administrators.

- Focusing on the development of leadership and conflict management skills for all electoral stakeholders, in order to further enable them to face the complex interconnected challenges of organising and dealing with electoral events. This would provide the needed capacity for senior and mid-ranking staff of EMBs tasked with creating a vision for long-term strategic goals, dealing with political parties and the media, dealing with fraud, managing a crisis, lobbying for reform and resources, and improving communication and synergies with other key institutions and actors. On the other hand, such large scale cascade training initiatives need to include representatives of parliaments, the media, civil society and security services in order to strengthen their leadership skills together with colleagues from the EMBs, via self-awareness, influence, communication and learning aptitude and by focusing on "leading through collaboration" and "leading within the system".

Elections represent, and will continue to represent a crucial test of democracy, as is witnessed by the many contested electoral processes of the last few years. Clearly, the international community will need to provide continued support to the organisation of such events. The development and implementation of innovative approaches to capacity development is a cornerstone for re-strategising international electoral support. Through a more holistic approach to electoral support as presented in this paper and enhanced donor focus on inter-electoral periods, particularly in terms of sustainable strategies for developing local ownership through the strengthening of capacities, the international community will stand a better chance

of success in cooperating with its partner countries and serving its own strategic democratisation and economic interests.

ACRONYMS

ACE	ACE Electoral Knowledge Network
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-operation Office[42]
ATLAS	UNDP adaptation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)[43]
AU	African Union
BCPR	Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CPLP	Community of the Portuguese Speaking Countries
DFID-UKAID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EISA	Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EU	European Union
FAFA	Financial Administrative Framework Agreement between the EC and UN Agencies
GEO	Global Electoral Organization
GPECS	Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (UNDP programme)
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
IFE	Instituto Federal Eletoral Mexicano
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
JTF	Joint EC UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development,
OECD DAC	Development Assistance Committee's Governance Network (GOVNET)
OIF	Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
PALOP	Portuguese speaking countries in Africa
Pro PALOP-TL	Project in Support of Electoral Cycles in the Portuguese Speaking Countries and Africa and Timor Leste (UNDP project funded by the EU)
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SADC ECF	Southern African Development Cooperation Electoral Commission Forum
UN	United Nations
UNEAD	United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (Department of Political Affairs)
UNDPA	UN Department of Political Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOWA	United Nations Office for Western Africa

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42 In 2011 AIDCO became DEVCO "EuropeAid Development and Cooperation". DEVCO is responsible for designing EU development policy and delivering aid throughout the world. EuropeAid brings together two former Directorates General (DG): DG Development and DG EuropeAid. Having one address for development policy and implementation will provide a single contact point for stakeholders both inside and outside the EU. EuropeAid is also the single interlocutor for the European External Action Service (EEAS), and for all sectoral DGs.

43 This is a project management tool in the UNDP system to boost its operational capacity. ATLAS is not an acronym or abbreviation but stresses UNDP's global network approach.

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ANNEX I

Democracy in Development - Global consultations on the EU's role in democracy building

Preface of Vidar Helgesen - Secretary General of International IDEA

This report presents the first ever peer review of the European Union's external policies and practices on support for democracy and democracy building around the world. With the support of Sweden holding the incoming EU presidency, International IDEA has engaged counterparts and partners of the EU in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab world, South Asia and Southeast Asia[44] in a series of multi-regional consultations to get their feedback on the impact of these policies on democracy and democracy building in their respective regions. We organized this process of multi-regional consultations in response to some monumental failures in the name of international democracy promotion in recent years – such as efforts to impose democratic solutions from the outside and a refusal to accept democratic outcomes from within. Today it seems to be widely recognized that democracy cannot be brought about in a top-down and outside-in way. This recognition urgently needs to be translated into true dialogue between peers in a way which is active but not aggressive, critical but not condescending, honest but not humiliating.

The need for new approaches to democracy building is further underscored by continuing global political and economic power shifts. The message from partners is that the EU is well placed to take a leadership role in shaping new approaches. The EU is seen by counterparts in other regions as arguably the biggest democratic success story in history. It is seen as an attractive and reliable cooperation partner, marked by long-term commitments and a transparent agenda. The EU's own internal achievements are frequently held up as a source of inspiration: peace, democracy, economic development, social cohesion and regional integration. However, partners also lament the inability of the EU to step up to that leadership role, and its inability to translate its own experiences of integration into a more integrated approach to supporting sustainable democracy across the world. Foreign and security policy, development cooperation, enlargement policy, agricultural, trade and migration policies all impact on the opportunity for and sustainability of democracy. While partners experience the breadth of such impact, they do not experience the EU as acting in an integrated way.

On this basis the recommendations emerging from the multi-regional consultations urge the EU to build on its strengths to improve its policies, practices and partnerships in four ways:

1. The EU needs to articulate its own experiences of democracy building, in order to respond to the great interest in the EU story and to inspire political dialogue and shared learning across regions.
2. The EU needs to reflect its internal achievements in its external action. The broad understanding of democracy as integrating political, social and economic rights which has been so successful in Europe itself, should be reflected in the EU's external action as well. Such an effort will require more interconnectedness between policy areas within the EU.
3. The EU needs to stand by its basic principles, reaffirming its long-term commitment to democracy even in situations where short-term interests might lead to difficult compromises.

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44 Roundtable conferences were organized in collaboration with the African Union (AU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the League of Arab States (LAS). In Southeast Asia and South Asia the roundtables were organized in collaboration with leading think-tank partners of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) respectively: the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS). Three global meetings encompassing all regions including EU institutions were also held in the process. In addition, background papers and articles were commissioned and individual interviews conducted to support the consultations.

4. The EU must turn its rhetoric of partnership into a reality perceived by partners if progress on democracy building is to be achieved.

Share Europe's own story

European discourse about itself is often gloomy. Yet the good news is that the EU is clearly perceived to be more of a success story in other regions than at home. Seen from the rest of the world, EU member states have grown peace, democracy and prosperity out of the ashes of brutality and bloodshed. They have nurtured an unrivalled combination of individual freedom, economic dynamism and social protection and cohesion. As many countries across the world struggle to find the right balance between the citizen and the state, there is considerable interest in how Europe has achieved just this: and which political and economic processes were put in place to make it work so well? The EU's partners are actually rather puzzled that the EU does not make more of its success. There is a common demand by partners for information-sharing at peer level as a basis for political dialogue and assistance programmes. This is why they want to see the EU articulate its own experience into a more coherent policy in support of democracy building world wide.

Apply abroad what you apply at home

When other regions look to European democracies, they see more than merely electoral democracy. They see human rights understood and applied as an interdependent whole: civil and political rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights. They see democracies that by and large deliver on the needs and expectations of their citizens. This very ability of democracy to deliver social and economic development is at the top of the agendas of the EU's partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Arab world. Lack of social cohesion is fuelling human insecurity and political instability. A state unable to stimulate economic and social development often results in discontent about how democracy works. In turn, this leads to dissatisfaction with international democracy assistance which is seen to advocate free and fair elections but not always freedom in everyday life. Herein is the giant paradox which the EU needs to address: when other regions experience EU external action, they see a much narrower, procedural, election-focused approach than what successfully characterizes democracies in Europe. If the EU is to capitalize on its own experience and attractiveness, it needs to seek synergies between democracy and development cooperation. This, in turn, requires synergies between development cooperation and foreign and security policy.

Stand by long-term commitments and avoid double standards

Even though democracy holds such a central place in the European story, the EU is largely known as a trade bloc in the rest of the world. The EU is seen as surprisingly shy when it comes to maintaining Europe's fundamental principles, with democracy often giving way to short-term economic or security priorities. This leads counterparts and partners to express doubts about the EU's commitment to democracy in other regions of the world. When times are tough, should the commitment to democracy and human rights be the first to fall by the wayside? True, political reality is that interests and priorities compete at times. The message from partners is that the EU should be transparent about its choices in situations where other goals are given precedence. Such transparency would help manage expectations and enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the EU's long-term commitment to democracy. Lack of transparency, on the other hand, paves the way for accusations of double standards. The European response to the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections in 2006 is quoted in all regions, not only in the Arab world, as the prime example of double standards that undermine the credibility of EU calls for democracy and free elections. European credibility is however also weakened by what is labeled as protectionist agricultural, trade and migration policies. For the EU's counterparts, trade is not merely an economic issue: it is a decisive question of whether democratic governments in less prosperous countries will have the opportunity to create economic and social development from within and thereby strengthen the sustainability and accountability of their own democracy.

Partnerships not preaching, dialogue not declarations
Partnerships are well established terminology in EU relations with other regions, but less well established in practice. The EU's counterparts strongly express a wish to see the EU meeting them as partners and not as students. The donor-recipient approach to relationships must be abandoned. Resolutions, sanctions and isolation normally lead nowhere. The focus should be on nurturing home-grown initiatives in dialogue with partners. In line with this, the language of democracy promotion, which is seen as a one-way activity, should be replaced by more collaborative language of shared democracy building. In a world where power relations are changing, this is an urgently important message for the EU to take in. One may ask if such an approach goes well with the insistence that the EU needs to stand by its principles. The resounding response from the multi-regional consultations is yes: true partnerships also include honest dialogue on difficult issues, the willingness to listen not least when there is disagreement. In actual fact the very process of consultations reflected in this report has demonstrated the potential of dialogue. The invitation for partners to scrutinize the EU resulted in more: the deliberations were equally marked by openness about the weaknesses of and challenges to democracy in the various regions themselves. They also produced a desire to take the discussions further towards a shared common agenda for democracy building across the many regions. The desire for such a process holds even more promise than the report itself.

ANNEX II

Electoral Assistance and Politics: Lessons for International Support, DFID-UKAID

Executive Summary and Introduction

Elections are increasingly accepted as a key component of establishing and maintaining state legitimacy, an important step on the path to forging an inclusive and stable political settlement. Moreover, elections have become a feature of states along a fairly wide political spectrum, from established democracies to transitional democracies and semi-authoritarian forms of democratic governance, from very fragile to more effective contexts. However, poorly conducted elections – for example, those that are carried out prematurely, those without adequate inclusion, or without transparent procedures – can easily exacerbate violence.

Delivering free, fair and credible elections is therefore a considerable but important challenge, logistically, financially, and politically. The international community has an important role to play in supporting the successful planning, delivery and embedding of elections within a wider context of support to political systems and deepening democracy. Development partners can provide financial, political, technical and diplomatic assistance as part of these efforts, directing support strategically to a wide range of stakeholders and over a long period of time – the 'electoral cycle approach'.

However, a range of evidence suggests that international support to elections often falls short of the desired standard. Whilst significant progress has been made towards a more nuanced, harmonised and politically-informed approach to elections by the international community, a number of obstacles continue to impede more effective international support to elections. These include: a failure to analyse the wider political context within which elections occur; weak electoral risk analysis, such as understanding when the best moment may be to hold elections; incoherencies within the diplomatic and developmental policies of the international community; unrealistic expectations regarding the potential impact of the international community's role; inadequate attention to election observation; lack of a long-term and broad approach to strengthening women's political participation; and poor commitment to the principles of harmonisation, alignment and ownership.

This paper draws on a number of reviews and case studies of elections in the last four years to draw out key lessons, in the form of 'principles for election support'. It calls for greater international efforts to address the challenges and failures that currently reduce the effectiveness of international support to this critical area of democratic development

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Today, citizens and political leaders in developing countries commonly see elections as a crucial step in the process of governments attaining internal and international political legitimacy. In peaceful, established democracies, elections represent a crucial opportunity for citizens to select and to hold to account those

that seek to govern. At the other end of the spectrum, in countries emerging from conflict, well-timed elections can contribute to conflict resolution and help to consolidate a peace agreement or power-sharing 'deal' between elites. As such, they can constitute a crucial step along the path to forging a stable and inclusive political settlement, provided that elites have first come to an agreement that they are ready to work together within a political system. Although elections alone do not equate with democracy, it cannot be achieved without them either.

Moreover, there are compelling reasons for the international community to provide electoral support in partner countries, despite the complexity, sensitivity and challenges that this presents. Although elections are very much a domestic affair, there is evidence that international support can make a difference, especially in post-conflict and fragile states. Their role goes beyond provision of financial and technical support, to include international credibility and serving as a guarantor in the aftermath of elections regarding electoral outcomes. A further incentive for many donor agencies such as DFID is the understanding that democratic politics and political rights are a critical component in the fulfilment of poverty reduction in the broadest sense.

A broad look at the state of democracy around the world reveals that although the condition of democracy is certainly troubled in many places, the number and proportion of regimes that are democracies has stayed more or less the same in the last 10 years. Many of the countries where democracy has only emerged relatively recently are characterized by deep societal divisions: elections are giving citizens a real say in who their leaders are and the opportunity to apportion power peacefully. Nevertheless, the hope that an increase in the number of countries holding elections and adopting democratic institutions might lead to a democratic transition across the world has been short-lived.

Democracy has not fulfilled many of the expectations that citizens harboured and some authoritarian regimes have become more secure and confident, increasingly adept at imitating forms of democracy while undermining its substance. Events in Kenya in 2007 and Zimbabwe in 2008 have underlined that elections can be intensely violent. The Afrobarometer shows that although the majority of African people still support democracy as the best form of political regime, the proportion in favour has decreased over the last ten years. In some contexts, democratic elections have failed to deliver increased stability and development, and in some instances international assistance has even provoked a backlash against Western governments and organisations believed to be trying to control electoral outcomes.

Supporting democracy in fragile and conflict-affected countries is especially challenging. The OECD DAC Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States highlight the critical importance of the maxim to Do No Harm in any development intervention. But it is not always clear how to follow this rule within the complexity of electoral support – for example, when and how the international community should support elections in a peace building process. Amongst the international community, there is growing recognition of these challenges and trends, and of the fact that international support to elections falls short of desirable impact and coherence.

ANNEX III

Draft Principles on International Elections Assistance
March 2010 – updated June

Revised based on discussions by participants in the **"First Roundtable on International Support to Elections"** on 1 March 2010, hosted by the OECD-DAC Governance Network (GOVNET) and also supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Department of Political Affairs (UN, DPA), the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Development Programme and the UNDP-EC Task Force on International Assistance, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

Preamble

Supporting democracy is a crucial endeavor for the international donor community, both because of the intrinsic value of democracy as a political system that helps foster human dignity and the contributions that democratic governance makes toward better developmental outcomes for individual citizens. Elections are only one element of democracy, yet they are an irreplaceable one—without regular, genuine elections democracy does not function. Elections give form to citizens' political voice, constituting both a fundamental root of political accountability and an orderly process for successions and alternations of power.

Through substantial support for elections in many countries attempting democratic transitions over the past several decades, the international donor community has helped improve numerous electoral processes. By identifying lessons from these experiences and incorporating some of those lessons into improved methods and practices, international elections assistance is positively evolving.
Nevertheless, given the complexities, difficulties, and risks of electoral processes in many developing countries elections assistance continues to face numerous challenges, especially in post-conflict contexts and in fragile states with sharp sociopolitical divisions.

*Marking a renewed commitment to make elections assistance as effective and useful as possible, the major funders and implementers of international elections assistance agree to the following strategic and operational principles***:**

Take the local context seriously through careful, comprehensive assessments. Elections assistance efforts should be grounded in incisive political economy analyses that identify and examine the determinant power dynamics and political constraints that shape the electoral environment, as well as the specific roles that elections are likely to play in particular settings. 3

Be alert to electoral risk. Elections assistance providers must respond to the recent rise in electoral and post-electoral violence in developing countries by giving greater attention to electoral risk and long-term causes of political violence that could ignite in election processes. These concerns should be reflected in the design and implementation of elections assistance interventions.

Don't misuse electoral assistance and promote transparency. Elections assistance should be employed based on the highest standards of impartiality and only to promote free and fair elections, not to advance other donor policy goals, such as burnishing the legitimacy of favored partner governments or building friendly relationships with governments. Assistance should be provided on a transparent basis: information on who is providing funding and assistance should be readily available and cost-effectiveness should be ensured so that state expenditure is in line with efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Ground electoral aid in complementary diplomatic policies. Elections assistance should be grounded in complementary diplomatic policies that seek to nurture or reinforce the commitment on the part of partner governments to follow accepted electoral norms.

Recognize the role of regional organizations. Elections assistance providers should take full account of the valuable role that regional organizations can play both in election monitoring and election assistance and seek the greatest possible complementarity with such organizations.

Embrace a full concept of ownership. Aid to strengthen an electoral process should be owned not only by the relevant partner government but by the broader political society in question. Elections assistance providers should embrace an interpretation of local ownership that takes account of this political imperative.

Build on donor coordination. Elections assistance providers should build on the progress they have made in creating cooperative mechanisms for elections assistance by assessing the record of such mechanisms and seeking ways to broaden and deepen communication, cooperation, and coordination among all relevant aid providers, including around joint funding mechanisms

Be as comprehensive as possible. Designing elections assistance to be comprehensive horizontally across the many domestic institutions and sectors that are involved in an electoral process will ensure better synergies and overall coherence. Elections assistance and observation should be well coordinated, as observation plays a key role in effective electoral support.

Think and act across the electoral cycle. Elections assistance should be designed, planned, and implemented in a long-term fashion across the full length of electoral cycle and if possible across multiple cycles, avoiding the common tendency to focus primarily 4

on activities relating to elections day. Donor support should encourage sustainability to ensure that local capacity is built as quickly as reasonably possible.

Push for integration. Elections assistance should be actively integrated into the wider domain of democracy support, especially assistance for political party development, legislative strengthening, media assistance, and civic education programs.

Emphasize citizens' understanding and engagement. Efforts to help citizens understand the utility and significance of elections as one part of a broader set of accountability mechanisms should be an integral element of elections assistance. Experience show that it is important to support consultative approaches to help election stakeholders to be jointly responsible and to build their confidence, and that of the wider public, in election management bodies and other institutions involved.

Add the local to the national. Aid providers should complement their traditional focus on national elections with greater attention to strengthening local elections.

Make the connection with accountability. Elections assistance providers should actively connect their activities with the wider set of donor programs supporting accountable governance at all levels.

Don't neglect gender. Although progress has been made to widen and deepen the role of women in politics in many developing countries, elections assistance providers should do more to incorporate a full gender dimension in elections assistance, especially concerning candidate selection and voter participation.

Respond more consistently to flawed elections. Donor governments committed to advancing free and fair elections should strive toward greater normative consistency in responding to flawed elections.

Keep learning about impact, and act on it. Building on the important learning efforts undertaken in recent years, elections assistance providers should carry out deep-reaching evaluations of the impact of elections assistance in varied contexts and incorporate the learning from those evaluations into assistance practice. 5

ANNEX: Draft Action plan for further elaborating the Draft Principles

The 1st Roundtable on International Support for Elections agreed to further discuss and develop the *Draft Principles for International Support for Elections* over the coming year in various international and regional fora on elections. **The following presents some initial ideas on a follow-up.**

1. The Draft Principles should be taken to a higher political level and been further developed in light of feedback from different communities and international and regional fora. The GEO (timing to be determined) and the IDEA Democracy Forum in Ghana (30 November – 1 December 2010 in Accra) will be excellent opportunities to present and discuss the draft principles more widely, in particular with regional organisations and electoral bodies. Other ideas on opportunities for discussion should be collected.

2. Further understanding about building coherence between the technical and the political level of electoral assistance is needed and might be explored at upcoming meetings:

 The challenges of electoral assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states needs further exploration. International IDEA held an expert meeting on May 24-25 on the development of an early warning and response assessment tool for electoral violence. The meeting served as a basis for further discussion at the GEO on elections and conflict. Within the OECD, the Statebuilding task team of the International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) and GOVNET are exploring collaboration on a workshop on elections in fragile and conflict-affected states.

 It was agreed that the group should further explore basket funding issues with a lead from the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force. It may also be interesting to hold a seminar on whole-of-government approaches for elections and to reach out to colleagues working on elections in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

 Increased consultation with regional organisations and electoral bodies is needed, and the GEO could be used to this effect; other possible events for regional discussion should be considered.

3. The draft principles could be piloted in an upcoming election in a developing country.

ANNEX IV

Global Electoral Organization (GEO)

Gaborone Declaration 2011

We as members of election management bodies, regional and international organizations and institutions, donors, practitioners, specialists and representatives from the academic and diplomatic community – all working in the field of elections, meeting in Gaborone, Botswana from 7-9 March 2011 for the 5th Global Electoral Organization Conference. Appreciating the opening address by His Excellency, S.K.I. Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and his assertion that although there is still a democracy deficit in parts of the world, it remains a vital aspiration of millions and a much sought after universal value. Recognizing recent events in parts of Africa and the Middle East, the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day, the launch of the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security that seeks to place elections and democracy at the centre of the international agenda and promote and protect the integrity of electoral processes in order to achieve a more secure, prosperous and stable world. Acknowledging the intention of fostering an exchange of ideas and experiences among the elections community to address issues related to elections and its role within the democratic framework, including electoral reform, elections and conflict and engaging electoral stakeholders. We therefore:

- Affirm that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine through participation their own political, economic, social and cultural systems;

- Emphasize that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing;

- Recognize that elections exist as a cornerstone of democracy that empowers people to participate in the selection of their political representatives;

- Note that an increasing number of countries around the global conduct elections as a peaceful means of discerning the will of the people, but also observe increasing instances of election-related violence;

- Highlight the importance of establishing and strengthening the professionalism of credible electoral institutions;

- Acknowledge the need to address the root causes of, and reduce the potential for election-related violence, which is a form of political violence;

- Call greater attention to the importance of promoting gender equality in all economic, political and social contexts and empowering women in the conduct and administration of elections;

And in consideration thereof, we call upon participants of the conference, individuals and organizations, in cooperation with us, to bring the experiences and outcomes of this conference to the attention of electoral authorities, political parties, civil society the media and other across the globe, to endeavor to ensure more credible and inclusive electoral processes and undertake to reconvene to regularly assess progress made and chart a course for further improvements.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE AUTHORS

Fabio Bargiacchi is presently working and since January 2011 as the Chief Technical Advisor to the UNDP Project in Support of the Electoral cycles for the African Portuguese Speaking Countries and Timor Leste. From January 2007 till December 2010, Bargiacchi served as Coordinator of the Joint EC UNDP Task Force and Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor at the UN/UNDP Brussels Office. In this period, he contributed to the establishment and led the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the supervision of activities for the identification, formulation and support to the implementation of all EC-UNDP electoral assistance projects. From October 2004 till December 2006 he worked as the Election Specialist at the Directorate for Operations Quality Support of the EuropeAid always in the context of the EC UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance. Thus, Bargiacchi from October 2004 till December 2010 was involved in more than 70 UNDP projects that received funding by the EC for roughly 610 million of EURO and was at the forefront of the conception and delivery of all the Joint EC UNDP IDEA effective electoral assistance face to face and distance training from September 2005 till February 2011. In the period 1997-2004, Bargiacchi held a variety of posts in the field of electoral assistance and observation with the EU, the UN and the OSCE in countries such as West Bank and Gaza, Tanzania, Suriname, Indonesia and Zimbabwe working as Senior Election Operations Expert, Training/Reporting Advisor and Coordinator of EU Election Observers. He also has large experience in managing projects in the broader Democratic Governance fields gained, in particular, from working for the Delegation of the EU in Mozambique for two years. Bargiacchi dealt with electoral and democratization processes in more than 40 different countries. Bargiacchi is a BRIDGE accredited trainer and has coordinated, co-authored and contributed to a series of elections-related publications and papers, amongst them the *EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance* (2006), the *ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance* (2007), the *UNDP Implementation Guide on Electoral Assistance* (2007), the JTF Operational Paper on Procurement Aspects of introducing ICTs in electoral processes: the specific case of biometric voter registration (2010) and the chapter on EU Electoral Support in *The EU and Peace building, Policy and Legal Aspects* (2010).

Mette Bakken is working as an electoral assistance consultant for UNDP and for the European Center for Electoral Support (ECES) in the fields of operational guidance and project development as well as knowledge development, training and information. Over the last three years, she has been working extensively with the development and implementation of workshops and trainings organized in the context of the EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance by the Partnership's related Joint Task Force and the Global Programme in Support of Electoral Cycles (GPECS). Furthermore, Mette has assisted the operational guidance work carried out by the Joint Task Force vis-à-vis UNDP Country Offices and EU Delegations, including the development of project documents, budgets and work plans. Since December 2010, Bakken has been engaged by the ECES where she is focusing on strategy development, proposal writing, research and information. Bakken has carried out substantial research in the field of electoral system design and reform both in western established democracies and in transitional and post conflict countries. She has co-authored and contributed to the Participants´ Manual for the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Training on Effective Electoral Assistance, EC-UNDP-IDEA E-learning on Effective Electoral Assistance, JTF Operational Paper on Procurement Aspects of introducing ICTs in electoral processes: the specific case of biometric voter registration (2010).

Paul Guerin has worked in democracy and electoral support for the past 18 years for UN/UNDP, EU, OSCE, IDEA and IFES in post-conflict and emerging democracies in Asia, Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe. He has organised elections directly, advised election commissions, worked with civil society, observed elections and evaluated electoral support programmes. His specialization is capacity development designing knowledge resource tools and courses such as ACE and BRIDGE promoting best practice and effective electoral assistance policies such as the Electoral Cycle Approach and strategic

planning while covering a range of topics such as legal framework, voter registration, dispute resolution to civic education in different forms from interactive face-to-face training to e-learning. Guerin is one of the main authors of the BRIDGE curriculum and he is a BRIDGE expert facilitator He has contributed to various guides and policies such as EC Methodological Guide to Electoral Assistance, UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide, ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance, Participants´ Manual for the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Training on Effective Electoral Assistance, EC-UNDP-IDEA E-learning on Effective Electoral Assistance and various IDEA Handbooks.

Ricardo Godinho-Gomes is a political scientist with published articles regarding Guinea-Bissau's political and electoral system and was the co-author of the Democratic Governance section of the 2006 National Human Development Report (NDHR Guinea Bissau), "Governance and Millennium Development Goals (MDG)" in Reform Politics to Achieve MDG (Winner of the NHDR 2007 prize). He joined UNDP in 2006 as an Electoral Assistance Project Manager. Since 2007, he has been the Guinea-Bissau's UNDP Country Office's Democratic Governance Programme Analyst, responsible for the electoral assistance and parliamentary strengthening portfolios. Since January 2009, Godinho-Gomes has been working as Electoral Assistance Specialist supporting the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF) and UNDP Guinea Bissau. He was one of the core JTF electoral assistance specialists involved in the drafting of the Project in Support of Electoral Cycles in the African Portuguese Speaking Countries and Timor Leste (Pro PALOP-TL). Godinho-Gomes also ensured support and carried out formulation/follow-up JTF missions to Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tomé e Principe, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Chad, Liberia and Niger, among others. In addition to these missions, Godinho-Gomes, who is an Accredited BRIDGE Trainer, provided support to lessons learned exercises in the broader JTF training and knowledge dissemination activities. Since June 2010, he has been supporting, more specifically, UNDP in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tomé e Principe and East Timor with the implementation of the Pro PALOP-TL activities, providing expertise and advice in electoral administration and assistance, as well as support on programme and financial management and reporting to these countries. He contributed to the Participants´ Manual for the Joint EC-UNDP-IDEA Training on Effective Electoral Assistance, to the EC UNDP IDEA Elearning on Effective Electoral Assistance and to the JTF Operational Paper on Procurement Aspects of introducing ICTs in electoral processes: the specific case of biometric voter registration (2010).

*An additional and appreciated contribution was provided by **Raphaël Pouyé** also in terms of final expert review and editing.* Pouyé entered the field of electoral support in 1999, working with the UN ahead of the self-determination referendum in Timor Leste. He then held electoral assistance positions with the UN in Timor Leste and Burundi. In addition to participating in numerous election observation missions of the OSCE and the EU, he was political analyst for the EU Electoral Observation Missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Timor Leste, electoral analyst in Sudan, and Deputy Chief Observer/Team Leader in Mozambique, Togo and, most recently, Benin. A post-conflict scholar, Raphaël studied at Sciences Po Paris and Yale University and has taught a Masters Degree course on Peacekeeping and Conflict resolution. In the post-conflict sector, he worked for over a year in the field as the political adviser of the EU Force in Chad-Central African Republic (EUFOR Chad-CAR) a mission with the mandate to "take all necessary measures, within its capabilities and its area of operation to protect civilians, facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid, and ensure the safety of UN personnel". He regularly publishes articles and reports on peace and security. He designed and taught civilian crisis response to ministry-level representatives in several West and Central African countries under a joint Canadian and Belgian government programme. In the field of training, he has been involved in supporting domestic electoral observation platforms with Democracy Reporting International in Tunisia and joined the Pro PALOP TL team as a domestic observation and civic education specialist in mid-2011.