GLOBAL PRACTICE MEETING ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS & PROCESSES
MANILA, PHILIPPINES, NOVEMBER 15TH – 18TH 2004
Meeting Report

Introduction

While it is true that elections do not equal democracy, the act of freely casting a secret vote remains an enduring image and feature of democratic life. Recent elections in Georgia and Ukraine—to take two examples—remind us that faith in the electoral process, and the people administering that process, matters. It matters not only to the electoral exercise per se, but to the credibility of the regime that follows and, ultimately, to the strength of the country's governance institutions. UNDP is concerned with achieving a balance between supporting the act of voting as exemplified by short-term, event-specific election assistance, and longer-term support to electoral systems and processes that help to sustain democratic principles throughout societies and their institutions. To help achieve this balance, UNDP works through the Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) service line of electoral systems and processes as well as across service lines such as e-governance and access to information, local governance and parliamentary development. UNDP's involvement includes, inter alia, supporting legal and institutional frameworks; coordinating electoral assistance; supporting voter and civic education; and enhancing the role of women.

Rationale for a Practice Meeting

The Practice Note on Electoral Systems and Processes[1] was the first step in launching the sub-practice of electoral systems and processes within UNDP, but there was consensus that more needed to be done to harness the considerable knowledge and expertise that exist within UNDP, to strengthen practice linkages with partners and to chart a course for the future. With the number of countries in which UNDP is asked to provide electoral assistance increasing, BDP organized a global meeting in Manila from 15 to 18 November 2004 to bring together for the first time ever the UNDP practitioners working in electoral assistance along with external partners and recognized expert practitioners in the field.

The **objectives** of the meeting were to:

- Bring together UNDP practitioners as well as senior external practitioners and partners to build the community of practice, strengthen its interaction as a global community, and build on external and intra-UN networks in the firm belief that the practice is an open space;
- Explore the substance of what UNDP does and the state of the art in electoral assistance, and identify the implications of both for the sub-practice;
- Derive a set of common community, policy and practical needs and encapsulate them in an action plan (e.g., next steps in building the community, developing the practical tools to strengthen UNDP's capacity to implement electoral assistance, and guidance for UNDP practitioners); and
- Test the concepts and approach of a global programme on electoral systems and processes that focuses on knowledge networking; capacity building—both internal and external—for long-term electoral assistance; and innovative partnerships and research.

The **expected results** of the meeting were:

[1] UNDP's Executive Team approved the Practice Note on 9 January 2004.

- Broadened vision of UNDP practitioners and greater capacity to provide policy advice and broker knowledge, definition of a set of good practices.
- Understanding of current state of the art and identification of niche areas for UNDP to help set the agenda and drive the knowledge management strategy for the sub-practice.
- Enhanced community of practice and understanding of what it means to be one and how to sustain it.
- Establishment of an agenda for future actions (e.g., development of toolkits, primers, global or regional comparative research or guidance notes on particular issues, documentation of good practices etc.).

The agenda of the meeting (see Annex 1) was developed with participant input and the meeting was therefore designed to address some of the challenges that practitioners have identified as pressing in their day-to-day work. It was also intended to mainstream an element of learning, and address some of the more "corporate" objectives of building the community of practice. A preparatory committee was formed to help guide the agenda development and during the meeting a co-facilitation group was used to keep track of and "pull through" five key themes in the meeting: policy development, knowledge management, implementation issues, communication and marketing, and partnerships.

Thirty-two participants from UNDP country offices, election projects and RSC/SURF who work on electoral assistance day in and day out, together with Philippines country office and UNDP headquarters colleagues, attended the meeting. UN partners, such as the Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA/EAD), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) also participated, as did 17 international and national partners representing 11 organizations. These included national electoral management bodies such as the Instituto Federal Electoral of Mexico, Elections Canada, the Australian Election Commission and COMELEC (Philippines); international organizations such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the International Foundation for Election Systems—Democracy at Large (IFES), the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The meeting was made possible in part through the financial support of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, and the excellent logistical support of UNDP-Philippines. This report summarizes the major themes and conclusions of the meeting. Specifics on each agenda topic and all meeting documents are available at: www.undp.org/governance/electoral-manila/index.htm.

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Meeting Results

The meeting attempted to strike the appropriate balance between competing objectives. First, on the substance side, the meeting sought to give adequate attention to community building, learning, knowledge sharing and codification, partnership development, and strategic planning. Second, on the development of a practice community, the meeting tried to accommodate what part of the community is essentially internal to UNDP and what part is open to external partners

and providers. Third, the meeting tried to balance the technical, implementation and election-related knowledge and policy development, with UNDP's wider concern to support electoral systems and processes beyond the event per se for their linkages to democratic governance and to poverty reduction.

According to the meeting outputs and the participants' own evaluations (see Annex 2), the objectives of the meeting were met. The community of practice was strengthened and the sub-practice identified as internal to UNDP, albeit with an open window to partners and space to work with them through the sub-practice. Common issues and knowledge were shared and lessons codified, including the identification of a number of good practices in various areas of electoral support – e.g., India and e-voting; Yemen and enhancing women's participation. Participants heard about new or ongoing initiatives – e.g., Iraq and the voter registration and political development processes; political party support and how it may fit into UNDP's agenda. Partnerships were strengthened with established and potential partners in the field, and the building blocks for an action agenda for the future that reflects how we are going to leverage the momentum of this meeting were established.

UNDP Challenges

One of the major challenges identified by the meeting participants was UNDP's struggle to bridge the gap between "election" and "electoral"—that is, between providing support to the election day per se versus a more integrated and long-term support to electoral systems, processes and institutions. UNDP of course needs to focus on both, but as an organization is interested at the end of the day in fighting poverty, UNDP should not forget why it is working in the area of elections when working out the how. As they say, "where you stand depends on where you sit" and the meeting also highlighted that UNDP country office and project staff naturally tend to view electoral assistance in terms of their own experience. Meaning that those staff working primarily on event-specific support can tend to view electoral assistance in operational, coordination and resource management terms while those working on between-the-ballot box electoral assistance or on electoral support in countries facing their third or fourth post-transition elections and in countries that do not yet have competitive elections, tend to look at electoral assistance in its broader institutional capacity and political process terms. The challenge here is to develop a shared multi-faceted vision of what, how and why UNDP does what it does.

A related challenge that was identified is how UNDP can bring about policy change in electoral institutions and processes. This requires "between the ballot box" assistance that keeps UNDP engaged over the long term and is integrated into the larger democratic governance agenda (e.g., with links as relevant to other elements of the practice, such as parliamentary development, access to information, public administration reform or anti-corruption). UNDP is providing more and more on-demand "between the ballot box" assistance, but at the same time the increasing demand creates pressure for codified lessons learned that can help us refine our approach.

Even if most of the 40 countries in which UNDP is providing electoral assistance are not actually post-conflict countries, it is equally true that post-conflict elections are usually high-stakes, high-visibility processes. They pose a unique set of challenges and require their own set of responses and hence were also highlighted as a challenge. The meeting identified this area as one needing

more concerted tools and guidance, to help country offices in getting started quickly and planning in a flexible manner. In the case of Afghanistan, to take one example that was discussed in-depth in the practice meeting, UNDP adopted a phased approach to electoral assistance that could flexibly respond to emerging contingencies. Among the challenges identified in the meeting as unique in post-conflict election settings were:

- Political timelines that do not correspond to reality much of the time, yet nevertheless must be adhered to;
- Low country absorptive capacity combined with a high volume of assistance;
- High value of donor-pledged commitments combined with low value of actual received funds, which creates time and delivery pressures;
- Dichotomy between long-term and short-term objectives;
- Elections viewed within peacekeeping as an exit strategy, while viewed within development as the beginning of a long process.

Local elections represent yet another challenge identified by the practice meeting. This is a new and rising area of demand for UNDP as countries begin to put in place or solidify local government structures. But the UN at large and UNDP in particular has relatively modest experience in supporting local electoral processes and linking these to the local governance and decentralization agenda (or vice versa). Because local elections throw local governance, service delivery and other local participation issues into sharp relief, they represent a critical nexus of voice and accountability that thus far has been relatively overlooked. Local elections can also prompt serious cost trade-offs for LDCs and other countries with scant national resources that might be forced to choose between holding local elections, which typically feature far lower participation rates than national contests, and using erstwhile election budgets for other national priorities.

In addition to the substantive challenges raised, the meeting addressed a number of no less important process-oriented challenges. One of these is the perennial question of how to get the right people to the right place at the right time. UNDP has noted a sharp up tick in demand on the Democratic Governance Practice Network (DGPN) and among advisors for electoral expertise, and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (EAD) said it has found that even its central roster of electoral experts cannot adequately respond to all the requests coming for electoral technical experts. This implies that UNDP, EAD and outside partners need to collaborate more in the identification and vetting of qualified experts. But it also points to a potential, yet hitherto underutilized, source of talent within UNDP and raises the challenge of how UNDP can harness this talent to bring it quickly to bear on, for example, post-conflict election scenarios such as Iraq. A number of colleagues suggested that UNDP create an electoral “SWAT” team of staff from country offices, regional centers and projects who would be willing and able to be released from their units for short-term electoral assignments. This would develop internal capacity and knowledge sharing, as well as enhance the reputation of UNDP as a quality provider in electoral assistance.

Two other process issues were discussed in depth, namely the importance of working together—both as the United Nations and with non-UN partners—in a concerted way to leverage our respective strengths and planning electoral assistance in a way that eventually makes us

redundant (as one participant noted vis-à-vis exit strategies, it only takes a good captain to plan an advance, but it takes a great general to plan a retreat).

UNDP Niches

The practice meeting helped to confirm a number of UNDP's traditional niches as well as to point towards new and emerging ones. First, there was a consensus that the "electoral" part of the equation is one of UNDP's most important niches. That is, UNDP should continue to develop its comparative advantages in providing assistance in four major areas: 1) increasing capacities, particularly in inter-election periods; 2) reducing the cost of registration and electoral processes; 3) enhancing participation of underrepresented groups—engendering elections, in particular; and 4) bridging the continuum between electoral assistance and other governance elements, such as parliamentary support.

The discussion on capacity development of electoral commissions, in particular, raised corollary concerns from some participants—mostly from the national electoral management bodies represented—that UNDP might not have yet developed the requisite expertise to provide capacity development advice to these institutions. Because electoral management is a professional discipline unto itself, the best-placed persons to provide such capacity development support are often staff and commissioners of electoral management bodies. To help address this, it was recommended that UNDP make use of its established partnerships with electoral management bodies such as IFE-Mexico, Elections Canada and the Australian Election Commission when delivering such advice, and work to develop its partnerships with electoral commissions in programme countries.

The discussion around reducing electoral costs and enhancing participation dovetailed at some points with that on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and elections. While a number of experiences were highlighted—e.g., India and e-voting, Brazil and ATM voting, Venezuela and optical scanners, Switzerland and internet voting—participants and presenters sounded a cautionary note that technology is not a magic bullet solution to the cost question (or the fraud question, for that matter) and the successful use of ICT is very much dependent on the capacity and credibility of the electoral institution applying it and on the political will of the government.

Coordination was another major UNDP niche confirmed by the practice meeting. Participants felt that this was UNDP's traditional "first role" in electoral assistance, which needs both to be retained and leveraged for other areas. However important everyone recognizes coordination to be, however, recognition represents only half the battle. As one participant noted in applying a common adage of development, in an election everyone wants coordination but no one wants to be coordinated. Hand-in-hand with coordination was the identification of resource mobilization and management as a "bread and butter" niche of UNDP's which, like coordination, can build donor and stakeholder confidence in UNDP as a provider of other types of assistance in the post-electoral period.

Political parties are a new and emerging niche for UNDP and one that the October 2004 DGPN discussion explored in depth. The practice meeting took the DGPN discussion as a point of departure to further discuss UNDP's rationale, comparative strengths and methodology in

providing political party support. One participant usefully framed the issue by saying we need to avoid viewing the issues as "UNDP supports political parties" and instead look at it in terms of "UNDP supports a political process—democratic governance—and engaging with political parties is one means of doing so." Practitioners in the area from UNDP and from external organizations such as NDI shared their experiences and recommendations in developing and applying criteria for political party support, as well as in formulating implementation strategies. These included the following:

- Work with party leadership to derive criteria for political party support as opposed to imposing pre-determined criteria;
- Define criteria within the political system that are objective (for example, number of seats held in parliament, offices held, percentage of the vote received in the last election);
- Work continuously to dispell the notion that you are trying to influence the outcome, and focus instead on the process;
- Start early; don't drop in at the last moment. Ownership and buy-in take time; and
- If dealing with a large number of new parties, open up a training or other event to them as a dedicated group alone and separate from the older, established and/or elected parties.

Tools and Products Needed

One important objective of the practice meeting was to identify tools and products that are needed within the sub-practice of elections in order to make the day-to-day work of a UNDP practitioner easier. These were to be identified in conjunction with UNDP partners in the field in an effort to maximize comparative strengths and share experiences.

Thus far, the centerpiece of the sub-practice has been the Practice Note on Electoral Systems and Processes. The meeting briefly examined the note and solicited from participants suggestions on where to take it from its current iteration. The participants broadly validated the usefulness and relevance of the content and approach of the Note and made two sets of recommendations: 1) editorial and additions such as more case studies; 2) identification of "gap" areas where other resources or guidance are needed. A summary of all comments appears in the box below.

Comments on the Practice Note (PN) received during the meeting:

1. PN is good and useful, but it has to be a living document.
2. Add and update every year an annex detailing which programme countries are holding national/local elections to facilitate greater interaction among country offices expected to provide electoral assistance.
3. Include more case studies with more meat on the bones.
4. The PN content, approach, views are more about "elections." Getting into "electoral" process capacity building efforts will require more work. Special attention is required to linkages with public administration, parliamentary development, local governance, etc.
5. Include guidance on how to work on "electoral" assistance in systems where there are no open, "free" and "democratic" conditions.
6. The PN contains a good deal of wisdom, but the people/bodies who need to learn its lessons more than anyone else are the donors.

7. If the money that donors throw at elections was thrown in the 12 months after an election rather than the 12 months before, twice as much could be achieved sustainably.
8. More details on basics/basic types of electoral systems are needed.
9. More tools like the IDEA document on electoral systems are needed.
10. EAD conducts assessment missions but observations need to be shared with country office to proceed on identified areas of support. The country office Governance Team should prepare project documents with the guidance/quality check by EAD and the SURF advisors.
11. Guidance is needed on how UNDP can be more involved in the needs assessments that EAD takes the lead in. Use some countries as good practice examples of the phenomenon and where it has produced a better, more streamlined project.
12. Technically well-run elections in CPC countries are one thing: those elections being able to lay the foundation for accepted results, exercise of power, etc. can be quite another. Link electoral support in the PN more directly to the broader theme of CPR.
13. Include something on how to deal with allegations of intimidation, repression of political parties during candidate registration, campaigning and voting.
14. Include something on the risks inherent in electoral assistance. Conflicts of interest can arise regarding observation, yes, but also in providing assistance per se.
15. The PN should integrate the drivers for development effectiveness more—i.e., capacity development, gender, national ownership, partnerships, etc.
16. Include bad practices as well as good practices.

Another important objective of the practice meeting was to identify the need for additional tools or guidance that is not, cannot or should not be covered by the Practice Note. The meeting participants, over the course of the four days of discussions, devised the following non-exhaustive but priority list (including, where relevant, the participant who suggested the idea or who is following up on it):

1. A capacity assessment tool that helps UNDP engage with Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), to be developed in collaboration with national EMBs and EMBs that are corporate partners of UNDP (suggested by Ron Gould and Michael Maley)

2. A checklist that provides guidance to UNDP practitioners on how to take a gender approach in electoral project design and implementation (suggested by Aissata De)

3. An implementation timeline for election that includes guidance on what UNDP does and does not do to support electoral processes; what typically happens when; and operational guidelines for planning an election. Such an annotated timeline would help country offices anticipate the costs and time required for providing support to elections (suggested by Kendra Collins)

4. Elaborated guidance, practices and lessons on how UNDP practitioners can approach electoral assistance in countries that do not hold competitive elections (suggested by Lenni Montiel)

5. An “opportunities in programming” handbook on political party engagement that is based on the practice network discussion and provides to UNDP practitioners key resources on good and bad experiences; professional organizations to be consulted; what country offices in similar situations have done; literature on the issues that may be encountered in providing political party support; and written case studies (being followed up by Linda Maguire)

6. Guidance on execution of electoral assistance projects, including what Direct Execution (DEX), National Execution (NEX) mean and what are the pros, cons, challenges, advantages in using each. Case studies here might also be useful (suggested by Jerome Leyraud)

7. A profile of election procurement materials (suggested by Jamshed Kazi) that includes nuts and bolts practicalities on:
    a. Indelible ink (types, pros and cons)
    b. Zip seals versus padlocks
    c. Quantities to order for everything
    d. Where and how to approach procurement and supply issues

During the last day of discussion, some progress was made towards organizing the elements of an eventual “practice package” on electoral assistance that takes into account the tools and guidance identified above and adds to them. The pieces for the practice package that were identified as immediately relevant were:

- Practitioners’ Guide to the Design and Implementation of Electoral Assistance. This would include:
    - Sample project documents
    - Sample terms of reference
    - Replicable public relations items and materials
    - What DPA, UNV, IAPSO, etc. and non-UN actors offer
- Lessons Learned on Capacity Development. This would be:
    - Web based
    - Filtered/consolidated by headquarters
    - Based on project exit documents, technical advisor emails and reports
    - Inclusive of DPA-EAD and DPKO lessons learned
    - A basis for best/good/bad practices
- Partnership Tools, including:
    - More HQ guidance on interaction with donors and UN agencies
    - Public relations note intended for donors/governments—perhaps a very distilled version of the Practice Note
- Information and Capacity Tools, including:
    - List of countries which recently had or will soon have elections—updating periodically the map of electoral events and UNDP initiatives
    - Regular workshops bringing practitioners together—especially CTAs
    - The identification and use of electoral “SWAT” teams
- Revision of Practice Note that:
    - Expands and includes information for COs in conflict
    - Includes strategic issues that come up from lessons learned exercises

- Support to Research
  - Elaboration of a research agenda on issues that are coming up as policy and practice gaps—from DGPN discussions, from work with partners, from CTAs, etc.
- Regionally based Tools
  - To be developed on a regional basis

As the meeting closed, the participants resolved to take these building blocks forward in a more coherent manner to help build the practice. Progress is being made on some of the initiatives outlined above while a revisiting of, or renewed emphasis on, others is needed. This along with better communication and information-sharing as a community will be the priorities for the practice in 2005.

Annex 1

GLOBAL PRACTICE MEETING ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS & PROCESSES
MANILA, PHILIPPINES, NOVEMBER 15TH – 18TH 2004
PROGRAMME

SUNDAY, 14 November

All day **Participant Arrival and Registration**
Registration in the Renaissance Room, New World Hotel (off of main lobby)

Day 1: MONDAY, 15 November

9:00 – 9:45 **Welcome and Introduction to the Practice Meeting Programme, Meeting Objectives**
- *Deborah Landey, UNDP-Philippines Resident Coordinator/Resident Representative*
- *Gita Welch, Group Leader, UNDP Democratic Governance Group/BDP*
- *Hon. Benjamin Abalos, Sr., Chairman, Commission on Elections, Republic of the Philippines*

9:45 – 10:45 **Key Note Address**
Chair: *Gita Welch*
Speaker: *Hon. Haydee Yorac,* Chairperson of the Presidential Commission for Good Government and 2004 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Government Service
Former Chairperson, Commission on Elections, Republic of the Philippines

10:45 **GROUP PHOTOGRAPH**

COFFEE

11:00 – 11:10 **Meeting principles, logistics**
Facilitator: *Lynn Gray*

11:10 – 11:30 **'Icebreaker'**

11:30 – 12:30 **Becoming a Community of Practice: Tools and Principles**
11:30 – 11:45 Presentation: Tools and Principles
Kim Henderson, Knowledge Network Facilitator, UNDP
11:45 – 12:00 Questions from the Floor and Points of Clarification
12:00 – 12:30 *Group exercise*

Session Objectives: Better understanding of what communities of practice are, how they work; how they relate to the elections sub-practice; and implications for the work of the meeting. Discuss, clarify and begin to define what it means to become a sub-practice – Objectives, Identity, Issues, Tools, Outputs, Roles. Update on the knowledge management project within UNDP; implications for the sub-practice.

LUNCH

13:45 – 14:00 **'Right Brain', Facilitator:** *Lynn Gray*

14:00 – 14:30 **Session I: The Electoral Systems and Processes Practice Event and Note**
Meeting Objectives; Overview of Note and implications for UNDP practitioners
Chair: *Gita Welch*
14:00 – 14:15 Presentation: the Practice Note
Linda Maguire, Electoral Advisor, UNDP
14:15 – 14:30 Questions from the Floor and Points of Clarification

Session Objectives: Common understanding among participants of the meeting's objectives; Introduction to the Practice Note: what it is, what it is not; identification of areas for improvement in the next version and how to do so; identification of areas that need to be addressed through separate products and tools.

14:30 – 15.45 **Session II (Part 1): Thematic Issues within Electoral Systems and Processes: Getting Started**
Chair: *Gita Welch*
14:30 – 15:30 Identifying UNDP's niche in a country, mobilizing resources, cultivating national and international partnerships, division of labor with DPA. *Panelists*: Identifying niche and resources (Eric Overvest, Panama SURF/UNDP-Mali experience), Division of Labour (Hiroko Miyamura, UNDPA/EAD), Coordination (Kendra Collins, Election Proj. Indonesia)
15:30 – 15:45 Identification of issues to take forward (activity)

Session Objectives: Identification of key lessons learned and recommendations concerning the major process points in planning and launching UNDP electoral assistance (e.g., understanding what UNDP does and does not do and how; mobilizing and using resources, coordinating people and processes); identification of issues to take forward during the meeting and to flesh out by last day.

COFFEE

16:00 – 17:15 **Session II (Part 2): Thematic Issues within Electoral Systems and Processes: Support to Electoral Management Bodies as Institutions of Governance**
Chair: *Michael Maley, Australian Election Commission*
16:00 – 16:45 Intro to UNDP support to EMBs and examples of EMB programming and challenges (Gigi Bregadze, UNDP-Georgia; Manuel Carrillo, Head of Intl Affairs Unit, IFE-Mexico; Denis Truesdell, Cambodia election project; Resurreccion Borra, COMELEC-Philippines commissioner)
16:45 – 17:15 Identification of issues to take forward and discussion (activity)

Session Objectives: Understanding the key issues involved in supporting electoral management bodies as institutions of governance both from the perspective of international service providers and national partner institutions; discussion of what UNDP brings to the table; identification of enduring challenges in capacity development that can be revisited in Session VI on New Initiatives in Capacity Development.

17:15 – 17:30 **Summary of Day and Closing**
Facilitator*: Lynn Gray*

19:00 **Welcome Reception**, New World Renaissance Hotel, Lobby Lounge

Day 2: TUESDAY, 16 November

9:00 – 10:30 **Session II (Part 3): Thematic Issues within Electoral Systems and Processes: Voter Enfranchisement and the Credibility of Elections**
Chair: *Joseph Mugore, RSC-Johannesburg*
9:00 – 9:40 Enhancing the role of women (Randa Aboul-Hosn UNDP-Yemen), Post-conflict registration and election processes (Jerome Leyraud UNDP-Afghanistan); Enhancing the credibility of elections (Nguyen Dong UNDP-Mexico)
9:40 – 10:00 Identification of issues to take forward (activity)
10:00 – 10:30 Discussion, Questions from the Floor and Points of Clarification

Session Objectives: Understanding of the key issues involved in promoting voter enfranchisement and election credibility; discussion of what UNDP brings to the table; identification of lessons and recommendations to take forward.

COFFEE

10:45 – l2:00 **Session II (Part 4): Thematic Issues within Electoral Systems and Processes: Cultivating Linkages with other Sub-Practice Areas**
Introduction: *Magdy Martinez-Soliman, Democratic Governance Practice Mgr, UNDP*
Simultaneous Group Work (groups report on paper):
Group 1: Electoral systems, local elections & local governance
Facilitator: Henrik Fredborg-Larson Bangkok RSC
Group 2: Civic engagement and elections
Facilitator: Elizabeth McCall Oslo Governance Center
Group 3: Elections and human rights
Facilitator: Monjurul Kabir UNDP-Bangladesh

Session Objectives: Identification of where current and potential synergies lie between elections and the other democratic governance service lines (in particular, local governance, human rights, access to information, parliamentary development and cross-cutting areas such as civic engagement); suggestions for how to operationalize synergies better, for further discussion in day 4.

LUNCH

13:20 – 13:30 **'Right Brain', Facilitator:** *Lynn Gray*

13:30 – 15:30 **Session III: Thematic Issues and regional dimensions**
Chair: *Henny Matos, UNDP-Mozambique*
13:30 – 14:30 Breakout session: regional dimensions of the sub-practice
Each group addresses two issues: 1) how they can work better together on a regional basis based on current or anticipated electoral events and challenges in the region; and 2) how they can contribute to global advancement of the practice from this perspective.
Group A: Africa and Arab States
(Facilitator: Lucie Luguga, UNDP-Tanzania)
Group B: Asia and Pacific
(Facilitator: Thusitha Pilapitiya, UNDP-Sri Lanka)
Group C: Europe and CIS
(Facilitator: Sezin Sinanoglu, UNDP-Kyrgyzstan)

Group D: Latin America and Caribbean
(Facilitator: Francesco Notti, UNDP-Ecuador)

14:15 – 14:45 Summaries from breakout sessions
Group Representatives

14:45 – 15:30 Open Floor Discussion

Session Objectives: Practitioners from the same region (HQ, SURF/RSC, country office and project) come together in regional groupings to identify 1) how they can work better together on a regional basis based on current or anticipated electoral events and challenges in the region, and 2) how they could then contribute to global advancement of the practice from this regional perspective. Open discussion time for groups to develop their respective strategy elements on both counts.

COFFEE

15:45 – 17:30 Session IV: First Brainstorming on Practical Implications (to be revisited last day)
Focus on Challenges for UNDP, Niche, Proposals for future, Tools and Products needed
Facilitator: *Lynn Gray*

Session Objectives: Identification and categorization of issues concerning UNDP challenges, niche, proposals, tools and products for the future. To be revisited on day 4. Creative thinking, open space.

17:30 – 17:45 Summary of Discussions of Day and Closing
Summary of second day; administrative and logistical details
Facilitator: *Lynn Gray*

Day 3: WEDNESDAY, 17 November

9:00 – 10:45 Session V: Electoral Innovations and Trends: Enhancing Political Participation
Chair: *Benjamin Allen, UNDP RSC Bratislava*

9:00 – 9:10 Introduction to Session

9:10 – 10:15 Current event/trends/innovation in elections address

Panelists: Jeff Fischer, IFES, Participation and the Iraq Elections; Dr. Raul Avila Ortiz, Mexico Electoral Tribunal, Education of Youth for Justice and Democracy; Aissata De, UNDP-Cambodia, Engendered participation

10:15 – 10:45 Questions from the floor and open discussion

Session Objectives: Enhanced knowledge of new methods to promote greater political participation—generally, among women, among the young; brainstorming of how to apply the knowledge to our work.

COFFEE

11:00 – 12:45 Session V Continued: Supporting Political Parties
Chairs: *Dan Dionisie, UNDP-Romania and Lawrence Lachmansingh, UNDP-Guyana*

11:00 – 12:15 Current event/trends/innovation in elections and political parties
Summary by the chairs of context and the recent DGPN discussion
Panelists: "Political Party Brokerage", N.S. Bereng, UNDP-Lesotho; "Africa Perspectives on Party Support", Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

12:15 – 13:00 Questions from the floor and open discussion or breakouts

Session Objectives: Enhanced knowledge of methods to support political parties; further development of DGPN discussion on UNDP's role in supporting parties and how it should do so.

LUNCH

14:15 – 14:30 **'Right Brain', Facilitator:** *Lynn Gray*

14:30– 16:30 **Session VI: Electoral Innovations and Trends: ICT and Elections**
Chair: *Jeff Fischer, IFES*
14:30 – 15:45 Current event/trends/innovations in elections snippets
Panelists: E-governance versus e-voting, Raul Zambrano, HQ ICT for Development Advisor; Demonstration of E-voting, Pradeep Sharma, UNDP-India; Michael Maley, Australian Election Commission on open source; Maria Helena Alves, External expert on topic
15:45 – 16:30 Plenary discussion or breakouts

Session Objectives: Enhanced knowledge of new methods to promote greater political participation—generally, among women, among the young; brainstorming of how to apply the knowledge to our work.

COFFEE

16:45 – 18:00 **Session VI Continued: New Capacity Development Initiatives**
ACE (Administration and Cost of Elections) Global Network Programme
Chair: *Ron Gould, Elections Canada (former Assistant Chief Electoral Officer)*
16:45 – 17:45 Introduction of ACE as a concept and its trajectory
Interactive presentation of ACE's parts (by IDEA, IFES and UNDESA/UNDP); live demonstration of component 1
Panelists: Reps of IDEA, IFES, UNDESA/UNDP, EC, IFE, EISA
17:45– 18:15 Q&A and Plenary discussion

Session Objectives: Introduction to ACE: what it is, how it works, what the future vision is, and how it can promote the work of UNDP election practitioners and their national and international partners.

18:15 – 18:30 **Summary of Discussion of Sessions V and VI, and closing of third day**

19:00 **Group Dinner**, New World Hotel, Cats Lounge

Day 4: THURSDAY, 18 November

9:00 **Presentation of the Democratic Governance Workspace**
Presenter: Kim Henderson

9:10 **Presentation on UNV and Elections**
Presenter: Kevin Gilroy, Chief, Special Operations, UNV

9:20 – 12:30 **Session VII: Electoral Systems and Processes Programming - Opportunities and Challenges for UNDP, its Niche, and Proposals for second edition of Practice Note**
Chair: *Sanaka Samarasinha, RSC-Bangkok*
9:20 – 9:30 Introduction to Group Work
9:30 – 11:15 Group Work: Each group revisits Day 2 UNDP challenges, niches and

partnerships with a view to operationalizing responses to challenges, leveraging the niche and cultivating partnerships
Reports propose 3 concrete initiatives for 2005 (traditional and sensible, bold but expected and wild, unexpected)
Group A—Facilitators: Henrik Larson-Fredborg and Kim Henderson
Group B—Facilitators: Dumisani Mngadi and Eric Overvest
Group C—Facilitators: Lenni Montiel and Munday Makoko
Group D—Facilitators: Antonio Spinelli and Jamshed Kazi

COFFEE

11:30 – 13:00 Reporting back and synthesis

Session Objectives: Identification of what the sub-practice still needs in terms of positioning, products, tools and programming, what it intends to do in the next year or so to develop itself as a community, and how it plans to do both. Validation of approach, suggestions for change and/or identification of next steps involved in finalizing or developing key tools, knowledge products and programmes, some of which are already under research and development.

13:00 – 13:30 Closing Remarks
Linda Maguire, Electoral Advisor, Democratic Governance Group, BDP
Mark Suzman, Policy Director, Office of the Administrator
Kyo Naka, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP-Philippines
Gita Welch, Group Leader, Democratic Governance Group, BDP
Shoji Nishimoto, Assistant Secretary-General and Director, BDP

CLOSE OF PRACTICE MEETING

Annex 2

GLOBAL PRACTICE MEETING ON ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Manila, Philippines, 15-18 November 2004

PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

		1-2 Excellent	2-3 Good	3-4 Adequate	4-5 Poor
1.	**Overall, how do you rate this Practice Meeting?**	19	9		
2.	**How well did the Event meet its objectives?**	13	13	1	
3.	**How well did it meet your objectives?**	19	8	1	
4.	**Please rate each of the following aspects:**				
	• **Meeting Design**	12	15	1	
	• **Preparations and Planning**	18	9		
	• **Facilitation**	9	10	6	2
	• **Resource People**	15	12	1	

5.	**What sessions were the most useful and interesting for you, and why?** - All round tables of discussion during the sessions - Electoral systems and processes: lessons learnt and innovations - Electoral systems and processes – found it focused and relevant - Support to EMBs / ICT and elections / first part of the ACE presentation - Support to EMBs, credibility of elections, enhancing political parties, ICT and elections are issues dealt with at the CO level; It was very enriching to hear various experiences - The sessions where people related their experiences in building democratic governance in their country was very interesting—Yemen, Mexico, Georgia, Cambodia provided useful insights into civic participation, institution building, election processes and consultative mechanisms, respectively - Discussion on Practice Note was useful - Review of Practice Note; Political Parties - Identifying synergies w/ other governance service lines most useful as most participants managed multi-functional governance portfolios - Discussion on challenges, niche and proposals – very dynamic and creative - Discussions on UNDP niche, proposals for the future, tools and products needed - Electoral Innovations/Trends which provided the practical knowledge for use in future programming - Electoral Innovations, support to political parties, political participation - Sessions on thematic cross-linkages, specially attempt to view election beyond election day - Breakout Questionnaire was very useful, focused, well guided with clearly-defined objectives and questions; The session on Gender/ICT was dynamic - Session II – Parts 1, 2, 3; Session V - Small group session for the region; sessions on credibility of elections and EMBs - All thematic sessions where people actually talked about what they do - Group discussions and the ACE presentation was excellent + most useful + the comparative analysis by Michael Maley was very informative in terms of real lessons learned - Breakout sessions gave the opportunity for active participation in small groups and for input by “specialists” - Sessions that ‘dreamed’ new approaches, such as Sanaka’s facilitated final session - Day 4 breakout discussions really interactive and helped better structure/prioritize ideas flowing during the meeting. It was important for taking stock of such ideas and make sense out of some of them - Session VI on new capacity development initiatives + ACE redevelopment covered matters of major significance to work. However, PPT images were difficult to read from a distance. Suggest presenters be given some guidance on font sizes, etc for future meetings - Session VII on opportunities/challenges very worthwhile, and would have been useful to have another hour in which to work; all sessions were good - Gita’s general introduction set the context effectively especially for those who do not have an extensive background in international electoral management or the UN and its operations - All were important since they all impact on the elections - All were of much interest, particularly the ones on electoral innovations and the ACE Project - The initial discussions on legal/formal/informal relationship between UNDP and DPA/EAD with the clarity of roles was crucial for UN, UNDP, and partner perception - All sessions; very well informative

6.	**What sessions were the least useful and interesting for you, and why?** - The keynote address; From experience, keynote addresses seldom provide the keynote of a meeting, being by their nature rather stylized and generic - Opening session was too long; not enough on HQ vision on elections - Opening session; too long/detailed presentation of ACE website - Working groups could have been improved by increasing level of debate and discussion - Thematic presentations, i.e. India ICT/e-voting, ACE, etc, were too long, too much packed into too little time - Session V – Support to political participation/partners – not useful for the organization in general - Political parties – not well animated + only descriptive - Knowledge Management session – too long, not new; ACE prospective website – way too much detail; - Identifying key lessons learnt on specific events and logistics for such events could have been shared over e-mail - Long presentations which did not build up a team; IFES presentation not "culturally sensitive" on the Iraq elections - Session VIII – Electoral systems (unfocused) - ICT & e-Governance less relevant, not clear if there was a value added role of ICT in elections; - Those where "personal" experiences or activities were described - Session on new capacity development initiatives; took too much time to explain ACE project - Session on ACE project - ACE Project: Practitioners know this resource inside out, and generally need little incentive to use it; - ACE presentation; And having used the ACE website before, familiarity with the subject matter was felt - Setting next year's agenda as no concrete actions were arrived at; All we had was a wish list - Some of the "breaking the ice" sessions; Was okay for the first day, but not necessary at so many intervals; Rather spend that time on proper discussions - None; good informative content

7. **What recommendations do you have for next elections practice meeting?**

- Maintain a space for external institutions and experts to the UNDP
- Maintain balance Partners/CO/Experts
- Focus more on sustainable/continuous character of electoral assistance and practice implementation
- Review case studies of recent comparative examples (best and worst), to distill lessons
- Allow more time for practice development issues and definition of follow up
- Suggested criteria in selecting participants: (a) practitioners involved in electoral assistance who can share experience/insights; (b) practitioners from COs likely to get involved in electoral assistance (to be correlated w/ electoral calendars; (c) people who can intellectually contribute to the discussions and have an interest in this regard
- With all due respect to the need to learn, have novices stay home or be more quiet; have external organizations present only for first portion of meeting, then close it off to UNDP staff for the remainder
- More discussion at policy level; advice to governments, for example, on reforming electoral systems to respond to conflicts, minority representation, peacebuilding; other concepts such as formation of constituent assemblies, from a presidential to parliamentary electoral system
- Reduce presentations, more work groups
- Fewer issues, more time for discussions; more emphasis on lessons learnt to inform COs initiatives
- Showcase experiences; benchmark/analyze progress of election projects; test tools developed resulting from this meeting
- Devote a section on elections in different situations: post conflict, regular development situations, etc.
- Ideally hold one practice meeting every 2 years; starting point: conclusion from last workshop
- Next meeting should seek to build on the initiatives coming out of this one and use it to reinforce the strengthening of practice resulting from this meeting; there is great value in the links being built between practitioners in different organizations, hopefully future meetings will again draw participants from diverse sources; the activity-based methodology worked very well and should certainly be used again
- Sub-group should meet at minimum annually, and hold such in the 4th quarter, again in Nov 2005; Do practical exercise during meeting, e.g. update language in Practice Note for annual renewal and re-publishing; Suggest if next meeting could be more UNDP focused especially on operational realities and constraints; Events and practical issues around them would be a good focus next time
- Shorter discussion; better facilitation
- Three days instead of four; be less ambitious; more time for excursions
- Have it in Africa
- Bring in more experiences/lessons learnt from the Africa region
- The suggestion to have this meeting as a virtual CO while the practice develops is a good idea
- Have more EMB participation; Overall, this was an extremely informative and interesting meeting
- Give opportunity to participants to have some input into the Agenda as there might be critical issues they feel should be addressed; Such input might help in the allocation of time to various topics
- Formation of a PrepCom with CO practitioners well before the actual dates of the meeting
- Revise the Practice Note
- Solicit participants' inputs on the Practice Note as well as what they would like to get out of the meeting
- Have longer, substantive meetings on issues like whether or not the UN should be involved in political party support and under what conditions; Not sure how the Practice Note is to be updated/improved based on short presentations which only touched on the surfaces of various issues. Since participants were mostly serious project managers and experts, more in depth presentations/discussions would have been beneficial
- Have evaluation done immediately after meeting to avoid recall

8. **What recommendations do you have for practice meeting follow-up that you wish to highlight?**

- Maintain the network of contacts active and in permanent touch
- Maintain "the momentum"; share conclusions w/ COs and bring to the attention of RRs
- Carry out an e-vote to decide on the priorities for next year
- Discussions of meeting be incorporated on strategy documents, including update of Practice Note (PN)
- Further refinement of the Practice Note which is already a useful piece of guidance
- Focused e-discussion/survey to decide concretely what the practice should do
- Continue/finalize discussion on engaging with political parties with a conclusion/set of clear recommendations to practitioners; mobilize a selected group (BDP/NY, RCs, COs) to create a task force to carry the debate further; the finality should be a Knowledge Management product – a Practice Note
- Put in practice resolutions and proposals arrived at
- Continue discussions started through e-mail; regional meetings under regional programme to discuss regional issues and implement regional programmes; identify electoral issues through a bottom up approach (country, regional, global) so that the next meeting becomes more of a "summit"
- Meet periodically so as not to lose focus; cluster these meetings that people from one region could come up with the "do's" and "don'ts" which are region specific and can be systematically applied to country situations
- Formation of a Core Practice Group; e-Newsletter at least every 2 months; regional subpractice meeting;
- Follow up with meeting participants on the development of tools
- Regional meetings and elections "by type" activities should be promoted
- Getting conclusions drawn; documents on net; participants list with e-mail
- Establish a community of practice; inviting external partners like IDEA, IFES, NDI made the workshop interesting and useful; This partnership must continue and further strengthened
- Involve practitioners and SURFs; make a clear agenda for internal and external experts; work at short notice on 1 or 2 concrete initiatives to establish the community of practice; use more MSI for electoral support
- A brief note on what actions will be taken, by whom following the meeting, and some indication of the timeline for launching the revised Practice Note or other tools suggested by participants
- Develop a SWAT Team for electoral support – package info for MMB to "sell" to donors with calendar of elections needs on the ground
- Focus on short/long term support for elections and election-related capacity building – the most effective areas for support in each case and the governance implications in relation to long-term support
- Keep the network going via regular e-mails and create an extranet for non-UNDP staff
- Issues raised on rules and procedures governing UNDP's involvement in electoral activities (as specified in the PN), and their impact on effectiveness of our support as well as the need for improving existing mechanisms – tools, networks – should be addressed
- Create a website with all documentations related to meeting; invite participants to contribute election-related docs to the corporate knowledge based in this area; set up a WG composed of practice members to suggest (a) how to further improve the PN, and (b) new areas for policy analysis by UNDP at the corporate level in the electoral field; send out the final draft ACE prodoc to practice members for review and comments
- Contribute to the next revision of PN including making note of use of UNDP's UNVs as a best practice, and adding more in text to clarity of EAD's mandate, role, etc. in relation to UNDP
- On UNDP's niche + on looking into sustainable electoral assistance/processes so that post-conflict countries and LDCs can conduct elections with minimal cost and outside support; Review of how points raised in first meeting was implemented/not implemented
- Interesting ideas raised on the final day deserve specific follow up; More important than content is the process: how to move the ideas forward: One way is thru the Practice Note, but that is limited; Perhaps a core practice group of less than 12 can serve as advisors to the practice? Look forward to receiving the meeting report and then get back into this question

8.	**What recommendations do you have for practice meeting follow-up that you wish to highlight?** - In terms of substantive issues, address the **timing of electoral assistance:** The single greatest obstacle to the provision of fully effective electoral assistance and capacity development is the tendency of major players, particularly donors, to see themselves as funding events, rather than the institutions and systems which underpin those events. Too much funding comes too late, and consequently is spent on evanescent things such as unsustainable computer hardware, or international election observation. **Sub-practice staff development strategy:** One of the key challenges which the sub-practice faces is that staff who may never have worked in a well-sustained and established EMB are expected to help turn the counterparts with which they are working into well-sustained and established EMBs. This is like asking non-military people to train soldiers. **Generic computer software system:** Far too much money continues to be spent on the development of *ad hoc* computer systems to meet short term needs of developing EMBs. Such systems tend to be poorly documented, relatively unsystematically tested, and lacking in long-term technical support. Having been developed as one-off exercises, they tend not to be improved or re-released in any reliable way.