United Nations Development Programme

UNDP AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE:

TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

UNDP Electoral Support Retrospective: Ten Years of Experience

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Executive Summary

Free and fair elections sustain the political legitimacy of democratic governments. They are characterized by, *inter alia,* open registration procedures, secure and secret ballots, universal access to voting sites, the independence of supervisory bodies, and freedom of expression and association. Elections are prerequisites for the establishment of strong governing institutions and good governance—which are, in turn, prerequisites for poverty alleviation and sustaining human development. Elections are also a vehicle for realizing people's participation in decisions that affect their lives. As a result, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played an expanding role, over the course of the past decade, in supporting electoral processes. UNDP's electoral support work should be viewed as a significant component of the organization's governance and democratic institution-development activities.

The *UNDP Electoral Support Retrospective: Ten Years of Experience* was initiated in order to prepare a comprehensive set of electoral assistance lessons learned and recommendations for UNDP country offices. The project was also designed to suggest practical strategies for UNDP Resident Representatives / UN Resident Coordinators and country office staff in the areas of electoral assistance planning and programme execution. Other objectives of the study include: i) background information for UNDP and UN policy bodies involved in electoral assistance; ii) recommendations toward a future UNDP corporate policy on electoral assistance; iii) situating UNDP's electoral assistance work within the broader framework of its governance programming agenda; and iv) an inventory for UNDP institutional memory.

Since 1991, the United Nations has received requests for electoral assistance from 89 countries. The UNDP has assisted 68 of those countries: 40 in Africa, 13 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 in Asia, 5 in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and 2 in Arab States.

Major lessons learned *from the study*

Among the key lessons derived from 10 UNDP electoral support country case studies (Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Guyana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Yemen) are the following:

1. UNDP's approach to electoral assistance has placed great emphasis on the conduct of elections and less on long-term capacity development.

2. Electoral assistance has provided UNDP with a strategic entry point for broader governance programming.

3. Civic and voter education programmes supported by UNDP, both before and after an election, have helped expand democratic participation.

4. Regarding UNDP support to the conduct of elections:

    a) Donor coordination and resource mobilization are valuable UNDP services that are often essential to the preparation of an election;

    b) UNDP provides valuable support to the implementation of technical assistance programmes for elections;

    c) UNDP logistical support has been helpful to the work of international observers.

5. UNDP's electoral assistance has been most effective with a lead time of at least one year prior to elections.

6. Continuity of leadership from the UNDP Resident Representative and Country Offices is important for UNDP to extend its electoral assistance beyond an election and help the programme country build long-term capacity to conduct future elections.

7. The link between electoral assistance and Sustainable Human Development/Poverty Alleviation needs to be strengthened.

8. Information-sharing and evaluation documents are not easily available at UNDP.

Some practical suggestions for UNDP country offices

In response to some of the most commonly raised questions by UNDP staff working in the area of electoral assistance, the study presents a check list of recommended practical steps, including advice on how to: a) design an electoral support project document; b) prepare a realistic and flexible time-schedule both prior to and following election day; c) leverage funds for the project through multiple sources; d) identify key elements of the UNDP-UN Electoral Assistance Division Guidelines for Electoral Assistance; and e) maximize international, and particularly national, partnerships.

Some concluding recommendations

Among the major recommendations of the *UNDP Electoral Support Retrospective* are the following:

Strategic Policy Issues:

•   UNDP should concentrate more attention on long-term electoral assistance capacity building, giving particular emphasis to the development of permanent and independent electoral commissions.

- UNDP should view its electoral assistance activities holistically within the broader governance programming objectives of the organization. High-profile support for elections serves as a key entry point to strengthen a country's institutions of democratic governance and can be used to attract donor assistance for other governance-related interventions.

- Support for pre- and post-election voter and civic education programmes should be strengthened, especially for increasing dialogue among citizens and their political representatives at national, regional and local levels.

- UNDP should increase its support for sub-national elections and referenda in order to broaden the base of democracy and reinforce decentralization processes that seek to empower people, particularly the poor, at the community level.

- UNDP should draft an Electoral Support Policy Paper to guide country office and HQ operations in this important area.

Operational/Management Issues:

- UNDP headquarters is encouraged to maintain its own global programme through a trust fund or cost-sharing mechanism, to support country office project formulation costs for projects to strengthen long-term capacity development of electoral systems.

- Given the limited number of international electoral experts available, broader network collaboration needs to be established among organizations providing electoral assistance to exchange information on qualified electoral experts. Similarly, UNDP needs to take into account the work of international electoral assistance actors and build collaborative relationships where possible to integrate efforts and information. Donor meetings at the country-level have served to coordinate support, but more coordination at the corporate level should be encouraged.

- Unanticipated costs can be mitigated through effective planning and understanding of the electoral rules and regulations in a given country. Better planning in advance (with adequate time given for each stage of an electoral process) usually results in reduced costs over the long-run.

- Electoral programs should be implemented with a lead time of at least one year, especially if assistance in updating the voter registry is required. In general, programs that allow significant lead times are generally better implemented.

- UNDP headquarters should consolidate, in a central repository, studies and evaluations on the organization's electoral support work. New indicators should be developed to help measure UNDP's performance in the area of electoral support.

I.   Introduction

The *UNDP Electoral Assistance Ten Year Retrospective* was prepared in response to several requests for information on UNDP's electoral work made by UNDP Resident Representatives, at the February 2000 Global Resident Representatives Meeting (GGRM) in Glen Cove, New York. For UNDP country offices to be effective in helping countries organize free, fair and peaceful elections, lessons and recommendations drawing on UNDP's electoral support interventions can be valuable complements to a country office's professional expertise. Providing both practical advice and an inventory of UNDP's experience in electoral assistance during the past decade, the study represents a new direction for the Bureau for Development Policy, where performance is judged largely by the quality and speed of responses to country office policy needs.

The two core objectives of the project are:

i)   To prepare a set of electoral assistance lessons learned and recommendations for UNDP country offices, based on case studies of ten UNDP country office experiences and a general survey of UNDP's electoral work over the course of the past decade. The study will examine UNDP's support to the systems and processes managed by electoral management bodies (EMBs) and other actors directly or indirectly involved in national or sub-national elections;

ii)   To suggest practical strategies for UNDP Resident Representatives / UN Resident Coordinators and country office staff in the area of electoral assistance, in order to facilitate UNDP country office planning and programme execution.

Secondary objectives for the project include: i) background information for UNDP and UN policy bodies involved in electoral assistance; ii) recommendations toward a future UNDP corporate policy on electoral assistance; iii) situating UNDP's electoral support work within the broader context of its governance programming agenda; and iv) an inventory for UNDP institutional memory.

Methodology

Prepared during the period April 2000 through July 2000, the methodology for the study consisted of the following steps:

1. The study's proposed objectives were fine-tuned through discussions with election focal points in UNDP's Management Development and Governance Division (MDGD).

2. Materials at UNDP headquarters (MDGD and Regional Bureaux) and the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) were then reviewed to determine countries for

ten case studies. *The rationale for adopting the case study approach is the following: by exploring common patterns of activity and results from the ten case studies, comparative analysis could be undertaken to capture the realities of UNDP's electoral work in a relatively concise document.* This approach also lends itself to the formulation of lessons learned and practical recommendations for the benefit of UNDP country offices. Besides the availability of relevant information, the most significant factors for selecting the case study countries included: regional diversity; variation in the population size of the ten countries; differentiation in the types of electoral assistance; cases that occurred in the early, middle, and latter part of the 1990s; and positive and negative examples of UNDP electoral assistance (see box 1.1).

Box 1.1
Selection of the 10 Case Study Countries

Countries by UNDP Regional Grouping:
Africa: Malawi, Mozambique, and Nigeria;
Arab States: Yemen;
Asia-Pacific: Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Indonesia;
Europe and the CIS: Kyrgyzstan; and
Latin America: Brazil and Guyana

Countries by Population Size:
Large: Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, and Nigeria;
Medium: Cambodia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Yemen;
Small: Guyana and Kyrgyzstan.

Countries by Type of Electoral Assistance Intervention:
Major electoral missions (post-conflict): Cambodia and Mozambique
Standard Electoral Assistance Activities:
> Coordination and Support of International Observers: Cambodia, Guyana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mozambique, and Yemen
> General Technical Assistance (most common): *relates to all*
Long-Term Electoral Assistance: Bangladesh and Brazil
Electoral Assistance as an entry point to broader governance programming:
Bangladesh, Guyana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Yemen

Countries by Year of Electoral Support:
Early-1990s: Brazil '93-'94; Malawi '93-'94; Mozambique '94 **Mid-1990s:** Kyrgyzstan '95; Yemen '97; Guyana '97; **Late-1990s:** Cambodia '98; Nigeria '98, '99; Indonesia '99; Mozambique '99; and Bangladesh '97-present.

3. After selecting the countries for the case studies, background documents (including project documents, needs assessment mission reports, mid-term and final evaluations, conference reports, and general correspondence between EAD, UNDP headquarters and the country office) for the ten cases were collected, interviews were conducted with UNDP and UN staff involved in the country cases, and correspondence was initiated with country office staff.

4. Beginning with the format for the country case studies, a draft outline for the entire report was prepared. Where relevant, the case studies would examine the country's political context, electoral project design and objectives, results of the project, challenges encountered, experience with partners, and the relationship of the electoral support intervention to long-term democratic institution building in the country.

5. After concluding the case studies (section III of the report), initial drafts of the introduction (section I: includes methodology) and the role of UNDP in Electoral Assistance (section II: history, basic statistics, and UNDP profile) were prepared. Additional materials, beyond the scope of the case studies, were collected for section II and the report annex.

6. A series of discussions were then held with the MDGD electoral support focal points on both the lessons learned and practical steps for country offices derived from the case study research.

7. After drafting the sections on lessons learned (section IV) and practical steps (section V), the draft conclusions were prepared, and the entire draft report was presented to the MDGD electoral support focal points.

8. Following further discussions, revising and editing, the executive summary was prepared and the entire report was circulated among all MDGD policy advisers.

Limitations of the data

A basic constraint was the uneven quality and quantity of the information provided for the ten country case studies, both through the UNDP and EAD files and the interviews. When information was limited at UNDP and UN headquarters, supplementary information was often secured from UNDP country offices. Again, however, the quality of the documents and responses to various queries were mixed, particularly on attributional issues: it was at times difficult to assess how large a role UNDP had played in certain electoral support interventions when multiple actors were involved.

Given the importance of the interviews for conducting the study, *self-assessment or qualitative judgments by the individuals involved in the country cases strongly influenced the conclusions presented*. While the study never intended and should not be viewed as a performance evaluation, further cross-checking of sources to ensure

consistency and accuracy would, nevertheless, have been beneficial to this retrospective study. For example, on-site country interviews related to the case studies or the referencing of more project evaluations (few mid-term and final evaluations were available at UNDP and UN headquarters for the countries under examination) would have provided richer amounts of information from which to formulate concrete lessons and recommendations.

II.   Role of UNDP in Electoral Assistance

A.   Evolution of UNDP involvement in electoral assistance

The United Nations began its involvement with electoral assistance during the 1960s and 1970s when the Trusteeship Council assisted with the observation or supervision of some 30 plebiscites, referenda or elections in various regions of the world. Between 1976 and 1990, UNDP financed several small-sized projects that provided electoral assistance on specific technical aspects of electoral processes and on establishment of infrastructure necessary to conduct elections.

Since the introduction in 1988 of an agenda item entitled "Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Periodic and Genuine Elections," the Secretary-General has reported annually on "appropriate ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections, in the context of full respect of the sovereignty of Member States." During 1989 and 1990, the United Nations successfully provided large scale electoral assistance to Namibia (UNTAG), Nicaragua (ONUVEN) and Haiti (ONUVEH). ONUVEN and ONUVEH were the first electoral missions undertaken in sovereign states at their request.

In response to the growing number of requests from member countries for electoral assistance, the General Assembly recommended the establishment of a "focal point" for electoral matters. The Secretary-General designated the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs as the focal point. The United Nations Electoral Assistance Unit was established in 1992, to support the focal point's efforts. In 1994, the unit became a part of the UN's Department of Political Affairs and was renamed Electoral Assistance Division (EAD).

Major activities of the EAD include: evaluating government requests for electoral assistance, conducting needs assessment missions, collaborating in the design of electoral assistance project activities with other UN system agencies and in developing the electoral components of peace-keeping operations. In addition, EAD provides logistical and advisory support to international observer groups, maintains a roster of electoral experts, organizes conferences and training courses; assists in the administration of UN electoral trust funds; and serves as the organization's institutional memory in the electoral assistance field.

Since 1992, EAD's response to requests for electoral assistance have relied extensively on UNDP's financial and personnel resources. UNDP's permanent field presence has proved a *sine qua non* for UN electoral assistance, as UNDP Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator and staff provide established relationships with government, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and political parties, logistical infrastructure, country knowledge and financial resources for the assistance. EAD staff contributes technical and political advice, but remain in-country for brief periods of time.

In August 1992, UNDP and EAD produced the document *Guidelines for Electoral Assistance* for the use of UNDP Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives to reinforce coordination within the United Nations system related to the provision of electoral assistance. This document provided the background for the UN's efforts in providing electoral assistance, described the role of different UN organs in delivering assistance and outlined procedures by UN Resident Coordinators in accessing assistance from the EAD and other UN organs.

The *Guidelines for Electoral Assistance* outlined two types of electoral missions and six categories of UN electoral involvement.

Major electoral missions:
Major electoral missions require a mandate from the General Assembly or the Security Council and are considered exceptional activities of the organization. Such missions are usually part of comprehensive peacekeeping missions that include an electoral component. The following are considered "major electoral missions":

- **Organization and conduct of elections**
  In this case, the UN assumes the role normally fulfilled by national electoral authorities. This mandate requires the establishment of a system of laws, procedures and administrative measures necessary for the holding of free and fair elections, as well as the actual administration of the electoral process. (Example: The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1993).

- **Supervision and control of elections**
  A second and equally rare form of electoral assistance is election supervision, which has been undertaken largely in the context of decolonization. In this case, a Special Representative of the Secretary-General must certify the results of the elections and all stages of the process. (Example: Namibia, 1989).

- **Verification of electoral process**
  In this case, the host government remains responsible for the organization and conduct of the elections. The UN is mandated to observe and verify the legitimacy of the various stages of the electoral process and the compliance of the national electoral authorities with the electoral regulations. International observers are deployed throughout the country to follow closely all aspects of the electoral process and provide the basis for the final statement of the Special Representative of the

Secretary-General on the conduct of the elections. (Example: El Salvador, ONUSAL,1994).

Standard Electoral Assistance

Most electoral assistance provided by the UN takes the form of relatively small-scale technical assistance that does not require a specific mandate from the General Assembly or the Security Council. Following are the standard types of assistance the UN provides:

- **Following the electoral process and reporting to the Secretary General**
  In special cases, a small United Nations observer team, usually composed of UN political affairs officers, may be sent to a country to follow the final phase of an electoral process and issue an internal report to the Secretary-General on its conduct. (Example: Yemen, 1996).

- **Coordinating and supporting international observers affiliated with other organizations**

  This form of assistance is most commonly utilized when several governments and organizations have been invited by a Member State to observe an election. EAD and UNDP establish a small secretariat to help coordinate and provide logistical support to international election observers. Throughout the operation, the UN maintains a clear public position of neutrality. (Example: Malawi, 1993 and 1994)

- **Providing technical assistance**
  Technical assistance is the most frequently requested type of electoral assistance and covers a broad range of short and long-term assistance to national election authorities responsible for administering elections in their countries.

- **Support for national election monitors**
  This initiative provides technical assistance to non-partisan members of civil society to monitor elections. (Example: Mexico, 1994 and 1997).

The *Guidelines* were updated in 1996 to include more information regarding UNDP's role in dispensing technical assistance and the role of the Resident Coordinator. The *Guidelines* will be revised again in 2000.

As country requests to UNDP for governance-related assistance increased, UNDP established the Management Development Programme in 1989 and renamed it the Management Development and Governance Division (MDGD) in 1995. The Division, which is part of the Bureau for Development Policy, responds to country requests for technical assistance in governance and public administration issues.

MDGD is the focal point within the UNDP for electoral assistance. As such, its electoral activities include liaising with EAD, managing global programmes for electoral assistance , conducting research on ways in which electoral bodies can be developed into permanent and sustainable governing institutions and providing technical assistance in designing country-anchored capacity development programmes. In the latter part of the decade, UNDP has focused more on providing long-term democratic development assistance, as part of a broader governance agenda.

Other United Nations offices which may be called upon to contribute their expertise in the field of electoral support are the following: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), formerly the Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS), the Office for Project Services (OPS), the United Nations Centre for Human Rights (UNCHR), and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV).

B.   Principal areas of UNDP intervention in electoral support

UNDP plays a singular role in the delivery of electoral assistance. Without UNDP's contribution, the UN's ability to provide electoral assistance globally would be severely restricted. Although the EAD is the designated focal point for electoral matters and provides expertise on political and technical issues, UNDP's permanent field presence, country knowledge and neutrality enable it to forge strong relationships with government officials and international donors, which result in an often high profile role of coordinating donor funds, support for the implementation of technical assistance and logistical support to international observers.

The following include UNDP's types of interventions in support of electoral assistance:

International donor coordination

UNDP's permanent in-country presence and perceived neutrality are significant assets, which allow the organization to develop strong ties with all sectors, including the host government and international donors. Because the government regards UNDP as a neutral partner, it entrusts it with the coordination of donor funds and technical assistance. UNDP's relationships with donors are also strong, allowing the organization to mobilize and manage donor assistance to elections.

Support to the implementation of technical assistance

As coordinator of the donor funds, UNDP also coordinates technical assistance to the elections. UNDP's assistance is typically directed to electoral management bodies. EAD plays a key role in the identification of the types of technical assistance electoral bodies will receive. Typically, international consultants are recruited to provide expertise to electoral bodies in areas including, facilitation of international observers, civic education campaigns, automation of voter registry and vote count, procurement of electoral materials, training of electoral officials, logistics and communications. The

type of assistance provided can range from a large undertaking, in every aspect of the electoral process, to targeted assistance, such as computerizing a voter registry.

Support to international observers

EAD and UNDP support international observers in conjunction with other countries and organizations in Joint International Observer Groups (JIOG). UNDP also offers support to observer teams unaffiliated with the UN. The organization briefs observers upon arrival in a country; arranges logistical support, including cars, maps, routes and emergency procedures; coordinates the deployment of observers on election day, facilitates the collection and analysis of information gathered by observers and organizes a debriefing for observers after the elections where experiences are exchanged.

Trusted and neutral partner, field presence, country knowledge

UNDP is able to deliver electoral assistance because it is regarded as a trusted and neutral partner. UNDP has been able to implement electoral programmes in the most politically divisive countries, because it is viewed as an impartial organization. Neutrality, in addition to permanent field presence and country knowledge, make UNDP a suitable choice for the delivery of electoral assistance.

Facilitate relationship with government, donors, NGOs, political parties

Because of its permanent field presence and perceived neutrality, UNDP is in a position to forge strong relationships with all actors, *e.g.,* government, donors, non-governmental organizations and political parties. These relationships are developed over time and facilitate the implementation of all projects, including electoral projects.

Long-term electoral assistance

More recently, UNDP has begun providing long-term electoral assistance as part of broader governance initiatives. These have included capacity development of electoral officials and civic education campaigns. Although UNDP has provided long-term capacity development of government officials as part of its democratic governance projects for a long time, the organization has only recently begun linking electoral support activities with long-term governance projects.

C. *Basic Statistics on UNDP Electoral Assistance since 1991*

Since 1991, the United Nations has received requests for electoral assistance from 89 countries. EAD has provided assistance to 79 of those countries. The UNDP has assisted 68 countries: **40 in Africa, 13 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 in Asia, 5 in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and 2 in Arab States**.

Of the 68 countries, UNDP implemented electoral support projects in 60. In 8, UNDP followed the final phase of the electoral process and reported its findings to the Secretary-General.

LIST OF COUNTRIES WHERE UNDP PROVIDED ASSISTANCE 1991-1999	
Albania	Namibia
Angola	Nicaragua
Argentina	Niger
Armenia	Nigeria
Bangladesh	Pakistan
Benin	Panama
Brazil	Paraguay
Burkina Faso	Peru
Burundi	Philippines
Cambodia	Romania
Central African Republic	Rwanda
Chad	Sierra Leone
Colombia	South Africa
Comoros	Suriname (ongoing)
Republic of Congo	Togo
Djibouti	Uganda
El Salvador	Tanzania
Equatorial Guinea	Yemen
Eritrea	Zambia (ongoing)
Ethiopia	Zimbabwe
Gabon	
Gambia	Total: 60
Ghana	
Guinea	
Guinea Bissau	REPORTS AND MINOR ASSISTANCE
Guyana	
Haiti	Algeria
Honduras	Cameroon
Indonesia	Democratic Republic of Congo
Kenya	Cote d'Ivoire
Kyrgyzstan	Nepal
Lesotho	Senegal
Liberia	Seychelles
Macedonia	Uzbekistan
Madagascar	
Malawi	
Mali	Total: 8
Mauritius	
Mexico	**Sum Total: 68**
Mozambique	

D. UNDP'S ELECTORAL SUPPORT: MATRIX OF TEN COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Case Study Countries*										
Types of Assistance										
	Bangladesh (1997-present)	Brazil (1993-1994)	Cambodia (1998)	Kyrgyzstan (1995)	Guyana (1997)	Indonesia (1999)	Malawi (1993/1994)	Mozambique (1999)	Nigeria (1998/1999)	Yemen (1997)
Coordination of technical assistance	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
Supporting electoral management bodies	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
Coordination and logistical support of international observers (with EAD assistance)			✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Computerization of Voter Registry	✔	✔						✔		
Voter and civic education	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	
Coordination of donor or government funds		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
Training of election officials	✔	✔				✔		✔		
Support to sub-national elections	✔									
Long-term capacity building of election officials	✔			✔				✔		

*These activities reflect major and minor interventions.

III.   UNDP Country Experience

A.   Long-Term Capacity Development Assistance in Bangladesh
BGD/96/018

Political Context

Following years of military rule in Bangladesh, elections in 1986 and 1988 that were boycotted by the opposition, and widespread political unrest promoted by a broad-based movement, power was handed over to a caretaker government 1990; it then proceeded to organize general elections in February 1991. Political instability, however, continued after the election, and 15 by-elections were held between 1991 and 1992. In early 1994, the situation further deteriorated as mayoral elections were organized in Bangladesh's four largest cities. Alleging unfair electoral procedures at these elections, the opposition parties then boycotted both the parliament and successive elections. The confrontation between the government and the opposition parties escalated as the demand grew for general elections under a new caretaker government. Ultimately, a caretaker government was formed, which then instructed Bangladesh's Election Commission (EC) in April 1996 to organize the next parliamentary election on 12 June 1996 (under the Constitution's 13th amendment), in a tight time-frame of 90 days. The election was viewed to be relatively free, fair and peaceful by international and national observers, and voter turnout rose to 73%, compared with 40% in 1991.

Programme Design and Objectives

Following a request from the Government of Bangladesh in April 1996, UNDP provided extensive support to Bangladesh's 1996 parliamentary election, including training police officials, providing voters with relevant information on the electoral process, and assisting the coordination of international election observers. UNDP's input contributed to the free and fair manner in which the election was conducted, the creation of mass voter awareness that resulted in a high voter turn out—especially among women voters—and the institutionalization of democratic electoral processes in Bangladesh. The heavy turnout was attributed, in part, to an extensive UNDP supported voter education programme, which produced posters, leaflets, copies of the election code of conduct, short films, folk shows, and a range of television and radio discussion programmes.

UNDP's support projects during the period immediately prior to the 1996 parliamentary election underscored the long-term needs of the Election Commission. Immediately following the election, UNDP was encouraged by the Government of Bangladesh to formulate what became BGD/96/018—*Strengthening the Election Commission for Improvement in the Electoral Process.*

With a budget of $10,232,600 for the period late-1997 to mid-2001, the project seeks to help the Election Commission strengthen democratic electoral processes in Bangladesh. More concretely, it aims to develop capacity at three different levels: a) the Election Commission itself, b) election officials with duties at local levels; and c) the electorate. In designing the project, it was envisioned that 400,000 polling officials and 370,200 polling agents, domestic election observers, and members of the Electoral Enquiry Committee, would be trained through Bangladesh's Election Training Institute, thus strengthening the performance of several partners involved in organizing an election.

The project maintains four immediate objectives;

1. REGISTRATION & DATABASE: to initiate reform of the electoral system by strengthening the Election Commission's technical capacity for greater operational transparency, which includes developing a relevant and workable voter registration system together with a national electoral database;

2. MANAGEMENT CAPACITY: to develop the Election Commission's substantive capacities for oversight of election processes;

3. TRAINING: to strengthen the role of the Election Training Institute to train the polling officials, the Electoral Enquiry Committee, party polling agents, election observers, and civic and voter education agents; and

4. VOTER EDUCATION & CIVIC AWARENESS: to create mass awareness of the electoral and democratic processes of the country by providing the voters with relevant information to allow them to vote effectively.

The project is being carried out through national execution (NEX). While UNDP does not station staff in the Election Commission (which serves as the project office), UNDP closely monitors project implementation and provides support on substantive and operational issues. Staffing for the projects consists of government personnel assigned to the project and the direct recruitment of consultants, including a National Project Director, Voter Registration Specialist, System Design Specialists, Election Commission Development and Planning Unit Specialists, an Institutional Development Specialist, a UNV Project Implementation Specialist, administrative staff, and several national sub-contractors (e.g. for the preparation of voter education materials, training, and data entry).

While cost-sharing arrangements were initially envisaged for the project, UNDP has covered the total budget to date through TRAC core resources. The Government of Bangladesh has borne some of the costs through in-kind contributions. Possibilities for direct financial support from bilateral donors are still being pursued, and with the next national parliamentary election scheduled for mid-2001, several donor agencies are beginning to show interest.

Results of the project

Initially, the project was to have been completed during the period 1997-1999, with the completion of a mid-term evaluation sometime in 1998. However, several procedural constraints have dramatically slowed project implementation, and the completion date is now mid-2001. While a full mid-term evaluation has still not been completed, progress in the following areas is reported:

- The Election Commission has utilized project resources to train and prepare information support materials for the municipal elections in February 1999. Project funds were used for similar purposes during the union parishad elections, the city corporation elections, and the bi-elections in 1997;

- The Election Commission has undertaken a needs assessment for the procurement, implementation and operationalization of a nationwide electoral database, with a central database in the Election Commission and district database in 84 districts. The Election Commission is currently exploring the option of receiving assistance from UNOPS in this regard;

- The project has supported the completion of a needs assessment report for the management and planning needs of the Election Commission; and

- Following the completion of a training needs assessment, the Electoral Training Institute has undertaken a comprehensive training programme for electoral officials at all levels of government. As of August 2000, 82,600 election personnel have undergone training.

With the next round of parliamentary elections scheduled for the middle of 2001, the newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner is keen to utilize all remaining project funds for developing capacity within his office. Drawing on direct support from the project staff, consultants and funding, the following election support initiatives are currently being undertaken:

- The process to establish a long-term media-based programme for civic awareness on electoral issues through the ADAB (and association of NGOs) has been initiated. The project team is now working closely with five NGOs in piloting voter awareness programmes for eight districts. This programme is expected to be replicated in all districts in the coming months;

- The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) has been selected to recommend changes in the voter registration process and to devise a system of enumeration and information management to develop an accurate, flexible, and relevant system for maintaining and updating lists of the country's 65 million-plus eligible voters. As of August 2000, however, IFES has yet to resume work;

- Following the project's assistance to the voter registration programme, the Election Commission is now scheduled to soon make public the electoral rolls. After the establishment of the electoral database, the electoral rolls will be available electronically;

- The project is currently supporting the development of electoral standards manuals for use by election officials during future elections; and

- The Election Commission is presently reviewing the feasibility of fully automating the secretariat office with assistance from the UNDP electoral support project.

Long-Term Democratic Institution-Building

The specific development objective of BGD/96/018 is to assist Bangladesh's Election Commission in institutionalizing an efficient and transparent electoral system. Taking a broader perspective, the project is seen as an important input into the Government of Bangladesh's efforts to strengthen the democratic process in Bangladesh, so that all future elections—including by-elections, local elections, national parliamentary elections and presidential elections—are conducted in a free and fair manner that maximizes full citizen participation. The success of UNDP-supported interventions in the preparation of elections has contributed to the development of a broader UNDP governance programme in Bangladesh that includes a $5.5 million parliamentary strengthening programme and a comprehensive local governance programme for supporting capacity development of government managers and civil society organizations. UNDP has also been invited to facilitate dialogue among settlers and an indigenous ethnic group in Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, following more than two decades of conflict over land rights.

B. Automation of the Electoral Management Body in Brazil
BRA/93/035

Political Context

After 20 years of military dictatorship in Brazil, democratic elections took place in 1989. Five years later, the 1994 general elections represented the most complex in Brazilian history, with 90 million voters and 35,000 candidates. These elections were considered a fundamental step in the consolidation of democracy. However, the institution responsible for organizing elections, the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE), was archaic, lacking experience in the administration of elections and unable to handle the needs of a modern electorate. The TSE required an overhaul of its infrastructure and training of personnel to administer free and fair elections.

Programme Design and Objectives

The Brazilian government called upon UNDP to help modernize the TSE in preparation for the 1994 general elections. UNDP and the UNDESA Electoral Assistance Unit (formerly UNDDSMS) designed a programme, in conjunction with Brazilian authorities, to computerize and interconnect the electoral system and train TSE personnel in the use of computers and administration of electronic voting and tallying. The long-term goal was to strengthen the democratic process and the TSE's capacity to organize and administer free and fair elections at all levels -federal, state, and municipal.

UNDP was directly involved in a number of activities in relation to this project. UNDP and the TSE jointly established a Planning and Control Unit within the TSE to help implement the automation of the electoral sector and to provide training to TSE, TREs (27 Regional Electoral Courts) and municipal electoral councils personnel. The organization was also responsible for the procurement of high technology goods and services for the TSE, for which it coordinated the design of an elaborate bidding process. UNDP also organized and participated in meetings with regional electoral courts to define their computer needs and contract appropriate consultants.

From December 1993 to October 1994, the TSE worked with UNDP, the National Space Research Institute (INPE), the Brazilian Telecommunication Enterprise (EMBRATEL), UNDESA, Hewlett-Packard Company of Brazil and other private sector enterprises to automate the voter registry and the vote count system and to train personnel in the use of the new system. Until the latter half of 1995, UNDP and the TSE worked together to lay the groundwork for the full automation of elections using electronic ballots.

UNDP's non-partisanship was a key element to the success of this programme. The modernization of the electoral management body was not associated with any political party nor was it seen by Brazilians as a political maneuver. UNDP also played a fundamental role in building partnerships with the private sector. Given that UNDP was respected by all stakeholders and perceived as neutral, the organization presided over difficult negotiations, often preventing impasses between the executing agency (TSE) and suppliers. In addition, UNDP's capacity to carry out a bidding process quickly and transparently contributed to timely delivery of the computers.

 UNDP's financial contribution to the project totaled $72,800. The organization also managed $31 million that the Brazilian government provided in a cost-sharing arrangement to ensure the complete automation of the electoral system.

Results of Project

The project met with tremendous success and had a significant impact on the entire electoral system in Brazil. A modern, transparent system replaced an obsolete infrastructure, which allowed for free and fair elections in October 1994 and a second

round in November 1994. As a result of these elections, the TSE gained credibility among Brazilians, a fundamental aspect of the process of democratic consolidation.

The project succeeded in implementing the following activities:

- Design and implementation of a plan to train personnel in voter registration, electoral laws and norms and the use of computers and information systems for the electoral process. The project resulted in the training of 2,500,000 staff, including permanent staff and temporary workers hired for the electoral period. More than 400 technicians were trained to manage the automation of the electoral system.

- Installation of an automated voter registry, vote count and installation of computers and software in the TSE, the 27 Regional Electoral Tribunals, 260 electoral centers and 2700 electoral districts, covering 66% of the districts, which represented 80% of the electorate.

The project had other significant effects. The elections were more cost efficient. In 1989, the voter registration cost $110 million, because the TSE lacked the capacity to organize the voter registration itself and was forced to contract consulting agencies to administer significant parts of the registration at a very high premium. In 1994, the registration cost $10 million and resulted in a self-sufficient and independent TSE. Furthermore, since the 1994 elections, electoral fraud has been minimized due to the automated registry and vote count system.

Challenges Encountered

The sheer size of Brazil provided a daunting logistical challenge to the automation of the electoral system in time for the 1994 elections. The fourth largest country in the world, Brazil's population is spread across 8.5 million square km. Inter-connecting electronically all of the country's electoral commissions, some in locations that lacked electrical power, would indeed be difficult, but it was absolutely necessary for the TSE to have complete control of the electoral system. UNDP was able to provide the necessary assistance to carry out this project, despite the logistical difficulties.

In the past, Brazil had relied on private consultants to assist in the organization of elections. Its own personnel had little or no training. With no prior experience in implementing every aspect of an election, the TSE required significant training of personnel once the automation was completed. UNDP provided ongoing assistance on this aspect of the modernization of the TSE.

Experience with Partners

UNDP established a strong relationship with the Brazilian government, specifically the TSE, which continues to this day. Because of the strong alliance forged between these two organizations, an efficient overhaul of the TSE was completed in two years, benefiting all Brazilians.

Unlike most UNDP projects, this one did not include international donors. As is the case in all UNDP projects in Brazil, the Brazilian government provided a great majority of the funding for the project.

Long Term Democratic Institution Building

In 1995 and 1996, UNDP and TSE continued to improve the automation of the voter registry, implemented an evaluation system, and automated the voting system at a municipal level. The 1996 municipal elections included an automated voting system in the 26 state capitals and in cities with populations greater than 200,000. The automation has steadily continued in the TSE; in the 2000 elections, 100% of the 106 million registered voters will cast their votes using electronic ballots.

As a result of the strong relationship established with the TSE, UNDP will also be involved in a civic education programme to continue to strengthen the democratic process in Brazil.

C.   Electoral Support after Conflicts: The Case of Cambodia
CMB/98/A01

Political Context

After nearly two decades of political repression and civil war, the UN's Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) oversaw Cambodia's first national elections in May 1993. Political instability continued under the coalition government led by Co-Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh's National Union Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCIPEC) and Co-Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP). A third major political party, the Khmer Nation Party, is led by Sam Rainsy. The arrangement proved unstable, however, and in July 1997, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen imposed his sole leadership through a military operation. Due in large part to political pressure from neighboring ASEAN and Western countries, Hun Sen invited Prince Norodom and his party's leaders back to Cambodia in the autumn of 1997 and announced that National Assembly elections would take place in May 1998.

Project Design and Objectives

In May 1996, the Royal Government of Cambodia requested UNDP's assistance in preparing for Commune elections in 1997 and National Elections in 1998. Beginning in November 1996, UNDP hosted regular Elections Coordination meetings, as a way to ensure an exchange of information among all international partners interested in supporting Cambodia's elections. By January 1997, UNDP had prepared a project document for these two sets of elections with a price tag of $500,000 stretched over two years. The executing agency for the project was UNOPS and the target beneficiaries

were Cambodia's Electoral Commission, Electoral Drafting Committee, officials of the Ministry of the Interior, and selected NGOs and members of civil society. The over-arching objective of the project was to help Cambodia prepare a well-planned and administered free and fair election. In this spirit, two short-term UNDP objectives were to:

- Build capacity among Cambodian electoral personnel to take responsibility for the country's elections and to raise public awareness on electoral matters; and
- to coordinate external technical assistance as requested by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Starting in February 1997, UNDP decided that existing in-house capabilities would be employed to meet these objectives until "activities intensified sufficiently to warrant further, more specialized support." In July 1997, UNDP hired Mr. Robert Drew, on detail from ILO Geneva, to work on electoral assistance issues part-time at UNDP and part-time in the Ministry of the Interior and National Elections Committee (NEC). During this period, UNDP Cambodia redirected project management time away from an already existing governance and human rights project (CMB/95/007), reallocating a substantial amount of staff time from one senior member of UNDP Cambodia. Administration and finance activities for the UNDP staff increased gradually over time, as well as the time afforded to election related activities by the UNDP Resident Representative.

The ousting of Prince Norodom and his party's leaders from parliament in the summer of 1997 was an enormous setback to the election preparations. Eventually, the UN was invited to oversee the return of Prince Norodom's party members, and by October 1998 preparations were once again slowly underway for elections. Initially, the elections were scheduled for May 1998 but then pushed back to July due to logistical and political considerations.

A new project document CMB/98/A01, written for the UNDP Open Trust Fund for the National Elections in Cambodia tentatively scheduled for 26 July 1998, was signed in February 1998. UNOPS was again designated as the executing agency, and Cambodia's National Election Committee served as the implementing agency. Designed to be deliberately flexible in scope and approach, the project document permitted the disbursement of funds in a variety of electoral activities, such as voter education, counterpart training, and equipment purchase. The project document, however, did not specify proportions to be allocated to particular activities and did not limit the use of the trust fund to only these areas.

In May 1998, only three months prior to the National Assembly election, personnel from the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) arrived to set-up an Electoral Assistance Secretariat. Given the limited time, the EAS primarily played a coordination and support role for international observers. UNDP provided logistical support to all consultants and international observers involved in the EAS operation.

In total, $10,383,646 was channeled through the UNDP Open Trust Fund (with Japan donating $6 million) to assist the national electoral authorities during the preparations for, and conduct of, the national elections (the commune elections have yet to take place). The trust fund contributed about 31% of the total funds disbursed through the National Elections Committee. The donor community saw the trust fund as a means to assist in the overall financial coordination for interested donors, particularly those who lacked a formal funding channel themselves, and as a way to enhance financial transparency of expenditures.

Results of the Project

According to the reports of several international election observers, the election was viewed to be handled in a relatively free and fair manner. The election was also conducted in a peaceful manner with few incidences of violence reported[1]—this helped foster stability in the country and a level of normalcy that far surpassed the political climate prior to the election. One major political party, Sam Rainsy's Khmer Nation Party, did challenge the results of the election and, consequently, mobilized its supporters for street protests that ensued for several days after the election. Further, a common criticism shared by many from within and outside the country was that the statements made by international observer groups on the outcome of the election were made prematurely and could have potentially affected the results of the election.

In the opinion of one EAD representative, the UNDP country office oversaw the Open Trust Fund for the Cambodian election with a high degree of skill and professionalism. In this regard, UNDP's efforts helped to promote excellent coordination among all key international actors involved in the elections on the ground in Cambodia. The regular field visits by the UNDP Resident Representative to polling stations during the registration period and on the day of the election were also widely appreciated. At UN headquarters in New York, UNDP actively participated in a task force on the Cambodian election convened by the Director of the Asia-Pacific Division within the UN's Department of Political Affairs.

Challenges Encountered

In the aftermath of a nearly two decades civil war, the UN sponsored and administered elections in 1993 involved an unprecedented number of UN personnel (around 20,000). The executive nature of this assistance did not allow any time for training or institution/capacity-building, other than some on-the-job information. When the Royal Government of Cambodia formally requested that UNDP play the role of coordinator of all technical electoral assistance provided by the donor community in May 1996, it soon became apparent that little follow-through had occurred since 1993 in preparing Cambodia to plan and organize future elections. Coupled with the country's ever-

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[1] The Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) did express concern both for several unresolved killings, which had not been dealt with by the government, and for numerous cases of intimidation of voters and party officials that were brought to its attention at the communal and villages levels. JIOG, Joint International Observer Final Report, finished in Phnom Penh on 6 August 1998, 6.

present political instability, open tensions between the major political parties, and legacy of bitter internal conflict, the country's limited expertise in organizing elections presented UNDP and the entire UN system with an enormous set of governance challenges.

When a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, and UNDP Resident Representative are involved in a field operation, high levels of coordination and a clear division of labor are necessary to avoid confusion and maximize the UN system's efforts in a complex post-conflict situation. Given the strong UN system personalities involved and the political sensitivities associated with the return of Prince Norodom's followers during the autumn month of 1997, it took several months to delineate clear electoral assistance roles among the major UN actors. Changes within the senior leadership of UNDP headquarters during this period created some disruptions for UNDP Cambodia. The late establishment of an Electoral Assistance Secretariat (EAS) in May 1998 (only three months prior to the election) by the UN's Electoral Assistance Division also contributed to some initial confusion regarding the division of labor between UNDP and the UN Secretariat.

The EAS's late start was compounded by the applicability of its "Coordination and Support" model for Cambodia's July 1998 election. As stated in the proceedings of the Roundtable on Electoral Assistance to Cambodia, "The unusually high-level UN presence in Cambodia presented a unique situation for the EAS efforts for which the coordination and support model was originally not designed."[2] Fortunately, the regular consultations in New York between UNDP and the UN's Department of Political Affairs helped to ameliorate working relations between the two organizations on the ground in Cambodia, particularly regarding the management of the Open Trust Fund. In the end, despite the insufficient time for careful planning, as well as the inadequate financial arrangements made initially, the EAD and UNDP were able to provide the services required for international observers to operate efficiently and credibly.[3]

Experience with Partners

Overall, UNDP maintained a positive and complementary relationship with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the UN's Electoral Assistance Division, particularly when their respective roles were clearly outlined by UN and UNDP headquarters. For the first time, UNDP and EAD issued a joint appeal for donor funding that was then channeled directly into the UNDP Open Trust Fund. Moreover, unlike

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[2] "United Nations Electoral Assistance to Cambodia: Lessons Learned and Reflections for the Future" (Executive Summary), proceedings from the roundtable organized by the UN Electoral Assistance Division on 29 September 1998, page 3. Further to this point, the report states, "A clear mandate, sound planning (including contingency plans and a clear operational plan), a timely start-up of the project, early presence in the country, sufficient start-up funds and an adequate security network are among the key issues that dictate success of a [international observation] mission."

[3] UN Electoral Assistance Division, Report on United Nations Coordination and Support of International Observation for the 1998 National Assembly Elections in Cambodia., p. 36.

some UN operations on a similar scale, UNDP was regularly consulted at UN headquarters through a special task force on Cambodia, chaired by the Director of the Asia-Pacific Division within the UN's Department of Political Affairs..

Relations with the European Union (who recruited many observers through UNDP's UN Volunteers programme) and US funded long-term observers, on the other hand, were more challenging for UNDP and the EAD, which was mandated to coordinate all international election observers. Intending to maintain a high profile during the election, some EU technicians gave the impression that they were, in fact, charged with the overall coordination of international election observers and were reluctant to share information with the UN/UNDP.[4] Similarly, despite repeated efforts by the UN, several US funded observers behaved as if they refused to acknowledge their link to the UN structure.[5]

UNDP maintained good relations with several national NGOs working in the areas of civic and voter education. Building on the ties forged prior to the election through the disbursement of funds from the Open Trust Fund, UNDP has made a serious effort to support the work of national NGO-led civic education programmes following the July 1998 election.

Long-Term Democratic Institution Building

Cambodia is among a select group of countries where the United Nations system intends to offer special assistance for the country's long-term democratization efforts. Originally, elections at the local or commune level were to have taken place in 1998 but had to be postponed. They are now expected to be held later this year, and the success of these elections is directly linked to UNDP's current work on decentralization in Cambodia. To support the preparations, the UNDP country office recently hired an expert to assist Cambodia's election commission with the drafting of new electoral laws for commune level elections. As noted earlier, UNDP is supporting the work of several national NGOs working in the areas of civic and voter education, and following the last inter-donor Consultative Group meeting, chair by the World Bank, UNDP was requested to take the lead among donors in Cambodia on the governance issues of public administration and judicial reform.

D. Support to Disputed Elections: The Case of Guyana
GUY/96/001

Political Context

One of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere, Guyana is a multi-ethnic country struggling to achieve democracy. After Guyana gained independence from Great Britain in 1966, Forbes Burnham of the People's National Congress ruled the

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[4] Ibid, p. 4.
[5] Ibid, 4.

country until his death in 1985. In 1992, Guyana held the first elections that international observers considered to have been free and fair. The People's Progressive Party emerged victorious in 1992 and also won the disputed 1997 general elections.

Project Design and Objectives

UNDP has supported the Guyanese electoral system since 1991. The organization provided assistance to strengthen the Guyana Elections Commission's (GECOM) administrative, technical, logistical, public information and monitoring capacity in the 1992 general elections, 1994 local elections and 1997 general elections. In the 1997 general elections, UNDP initiated its assistance well in advance of one year, focusing on supporting the preparation for the elections and assisting in modernizing the electoral and registration processes to ensure a more sustainable electoral system. UNDP activities included the following: 1) developing a needs assessment and electoral budget for the GECOM, in conjunction with the Commission; 2) providing an international legal advisor to strengthen the legal and statutory framework of the Guyana Elections Commission and the permanent merging of the GECOM and the National Registration Center; 3) coordinating donor technical and financial assistance; 4) providing an international consultant to support the GECOM's office coordinating international and national observations.

UNDP/Guyana provided $300,000 in support of the elections and played a strong role in donor coordination. The Inter-American Development Bank provided $500,000 in cost-sharing to strengthen the technical and managerial capacity of the GECOM, as well as the sustainability of the Commission. Other donors contributed to the procurement of ballot paper, election kits, communications equipment and vehicles, promotion of voter education, printing of claims and objection manuals, upgrading of the computer department, and production of voter cards.

UNDP hired an international legal expert to support the GECOM's reforms to incorporate the National Registration Center under the control of the GECOM. The measure allowed for a more efficient registration process, replacing an antiquated system, which had many deficiencies and caused the postponement of elections in past years.

Pursuant to a letter from the GECOM to the United Nations for electoral observation assistance, UNDP also played a strong role in facilitating the observation process. The GECOM sought to improve its accreditation of observers, for in the 1992 and 1994 elections, the accreditation of observers had been disorganized and was a major source of tension between national observation groups and the GECOM.

The EAD undertook a mission to Guyana in August 1997 and recommended hiring an international consultant to take a lead role in this area. The consultant, who was in-country for one month, joined the Support Team for Observation Facilitation (STOF). The consultant supported the efforts of the STOF in the following areas: organizing and

coordinating the logistical arrangements for the observer groups, including the Organization of American States and the Commonwealth; liaising between the international groups and the GECOM; and developing guidelines for national and international observers.

Results of Project

Although UNDP achieved its objectives as detailed in the original project document, controversy over the tallying of votes of the December 1997 national elections led to street demonstrations and violence, casting a shadow over the entire electoral process and leaving Guyana at a political impasse. To overcome the stalemate, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) brokered an agreement between the two leading parties, the PPP/Civic and the PNC, which called for a new constitution and a shortened term of office for the ruling party.

UNDP played a strong, admirable, pro-active role in the pre and post electoral phases. The organization supported the GECOM's efforts to prepare a "needs assessment" and budget for the elections. The document was concluded in September 1996, more than a year prior to the elections, and served as a planning tool for the GECOM. It was of great use for the international donors, as well, who referred to the document to determine which activities to fund.

UNDP's legal assistance was also well received and contributed to a more expedient registration process. A legal expert provided his expertise to the Parliament to support its efforts in drafting Act 12 of 1996, which gave the GECOM overriding responsibility for the National Registration Centre. In addition, the international consultant focusing on observations also ably assisted the GECOM to coordinate the international and national observations. The Commonwealth and the OAS were both thankful to UNDP for its assistance with the observation. Their respective observations were carried out without any problems and a final report was written to document their experiences.

The Commonwealth Observer Group issued a report on the elections stating that "whilst there were shortcomings, most were not significant enough to affect the integrity of the electoral process on polling day" and "The Elections Commission should be congratulated on its preparations for the elections" (p.29). The Group also states that "the tallying process was inadequately handled, which contributed to the problems that subsequently arose."

In the post-electoral phase, UNDP took the lead in supporting the efforts of the CARICOM and a mediator to negotiate an acceptable resolution to both parties regarding the electoral quagmire. In its final report, the CARICOM wrote, "It is also true that without the unstinting support of the donor community and in particular the United Nations Development Programme, through the Resident-Representative Mr. Carlos Felipe Martinez, this exercise might not have been completed in as timely a manner as the situation required." UNDP's assistance was timely and critical to the maintenance of stability and peace in Guyana.

Challenges Encountered

The political aftermath of the elections forced UNDP to redesign its programme objectives. UNDP's electoral project for the 1997 elections included a post-election phase to prepare a needs assessment for the creation of a permanent, independent electoral commission. Given the political situation, that project became impossible, but others, such as constitutional reform, became a necessity as a result of the CARICOM-brokered agreement.

Guyana accumulated some experience in the administration of free and fair elections in 1992 and 1994, but it still required significant donor assistance because of the provisional nature of the GECOM. The GECOM was disbanded three months after each election and reappointed two years before another one. Provisional electoral commissions typically lack qualified, trained personnel, resources, institutional memory, storage facilities, office space and equipment essential to conduct effective and periodic elections. The autonomy and independence of the GECOM were also key to long-term free and fair elections.

Another challenge was capacity development. The international consultant who facilitated the international observation process explained in his final report that "in terms of transmission of know-how, the impact was modest due to the small size of the team and the limited number of electoral personnel involved. Nevertheless, daily presence at the Commission's Headquarters allowed for informal exchange of information and experience."

Experience with Partners

UNDP/Guyana developed a strong relationship with the GECOM and the donors. These bonds allowed UNDP to play a significant role in raising the funds necessary to support the elections and the efforts of the CARICOM in a critical moment in Guyana's history.

Long-term Democratic Institution Building

UNDP reacted quickly to the changing political situation, financing the CARICOM audit and other consensus building measures, and redesigned its programmes to reflect the circumstances of the country. The organization postponed plans to establish a permanent electoral commission and addressed the most important issue confronting Guyana at the time, constitutional reform. Providing $400,000 in core resources, UNDP was the main international contributor to the various committees and commissions focusing on constitutional reform and the drafting of a new constitution between 1998 and 2000.

UNDP's long-term plans also include assistance to the 2001 elections. The organization anticipates providing support for training of electoral officials, civic education, media monitoring and international and national observation.

E. Coordination of Comprehensive Electoral Support in Indonesia
INS/99/001

Political Context

In May 1998, Indonesian President Suharto resigned after 32 years in power. Amid economic, social and political upheaval, the successor government pledged a more democratic form of government and initiated the transitional process by calling for elections. Legislative elections were held in June 1999. Presidential elections were held in October 1999, in which a 700-member People's Consultative Assembly chose the next president. The elections were viewed as the first open and competitive elections in Indonesia since 1955.

Project Design and Objectives

In February 1999, UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Indonesian Government on technical assistance for the June 1999 legislative elections. In the MOU, the government gave UNDP the role of coordinating all technical and financial assistance for the election in support of the electoral commission (KPU). UNDP subsequently designed a project, which focused mainly on the management and coordination of donor assistance with a view to accomplishing the following goals:

- The widest possible participation by voters;
- Participation by all major political parties;
- The peaceful conduct of the elections;
- Popular acceptance of the election results to reinforce the legitimacy of the new government.

UNDP committed to mobilizing sufficient resources to support an election involving an electorate of 111 million and 320,000 polling stations spread over 1,826,440 sq. kilometers of land. The organization coordinated the funding and technical assistance for the following efforts:

- Providing expertise to the Parliament to help draft electoral laws;
- Strengthening the capacity of the Independent Electoral Commission;
- Training poll workers;
- Setting up a transparent vote counting and tabulation system;
- Supplying electoral materials such as indelible ink and ballot paper;
- Establishing voter information campaigns to inform the electorate on balloting procedures;
- Providing voter education for special target groups such as women, first-time voters, and people living in remote areas;
- Supporting, training and deploying independent national election monitoring groups;
- Creating a facilitation center for consultation and debate for national partners and an information hub for the international community and international observers.

UNDP provided sub-grants to 21 Indonesian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and block grants to 71 NGOs to assist with voter education and information and to monitor the elections. The organization also coordinated the work of international non-governmental organizations, such as the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), which trained pollworkers and organized the voter education programme.

Results of Project

UNDP's largest accomplishment was the mobilization and coordination of $60 million in six months for these historic elections. International donors pledged a total of $90 million to the elections, of which $30 million were managed directly by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Of the $60 million UNDP managed, Japan provided $34 million and the rest was divided among 15 countries.

International and national observers judged the election free and fair. Although delays in the vote count and tabulation caused concern, according to international and national observers, they did not reflect tampering with the outcome. In assisting to safeguard Indonesia's first free elections since 1955, UNDP helped plant the seeds for good governance. These elections provided much needed political legitimacy and were a stepping stone to the rest of the transition process. By funding the training of pollworkers and national observers, UNDP also contributed to building the capacity of Indonesians to manage and oversee these elections, as well as future ones.

As described by the UNDP Report on the Indonesian elections, some of the results of the electoral programme included the following:
- 86% turnout of registered voters
- 546,000 national monitors deployed
- 1.9 million poll workers trained
- 420 million ballots printed and distributed
- no party boycotts
- minimal violence and disruption

International and national observers ultimately judged the election to have been free and fair, but noted several significant weaknesses in the electoral process. The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) report on the Indonesian elections states that, " a new government took over in the most democratic and peaceful transfer of executive power in Indonesia's history," but it also states that "The slow pace of the tabulation of election results has caused concern. It has been further delayed as a result of the very limited training received by election officials in advance; the need to correct mistakes made earlier in the process, for example errors in handling the voter register or late distribution of election materials." These and other factors "have given rise to confusion and some suspicion."[6]

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[6] Statement of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the Carter Center International Observer Mission, "Indonesia's June 7,1999, Legislative Counting and Tabulation of Votes," 20 June 1999, p.1.

In its report on the June 7, 1999, Indonesian elections, IFES emphasizes that Indonesia could have held better elections. The reports states that, "The June 7 parliamentary elections in Indonesia represented a decisive step forward in Indonesia's transition from authoritarian rule to democratic governance. However, the election did not represent a significant break from the past in terms of election administration. This election process was marked by administrative inefficiency, non-transparency, and a lack of accountability." Election day was "considered successful due to a lack of violence and to the enthusiasm and patience of the voters. These factors alone do not make a successful election and serious flaws in the process should be addressed before future elections." IFES further states that "Despite the open competition between parties, a free press, and a large deployment of domestic observers, the manner in which the election was administered severely reduced the credibility of the process."[7]

Challenges Encountered

Although the election was ultimately a historic achievement in Indonesia's transition toward democracy, delays in the vote counting and tabulation period and a seven-week delay in announcing final results caused serious concern and began to cast doubt on the credibility of the election. The delays were blamed on a number of factors, including the limited training election officials received and the late distribution of election materials. It is possible that UNDP could have contributed to a more expedient process had it initiated its programme earlier and disbursed funds sooner.

UNDP started its programme at the same time that the election commission was formally established, six months prior to the election. The organization accomplished a great deal in those six months, but it should have given itself more lead time and been more pro-active. The Foreign Ministry first explored the possibility of signing an MOU with UNDP in September 1998; in November 1998, UNDP was formally asked to sign the MOU, yet the official signing did not occur until February 1999.

Experience with Partners

UNDP forged a strong relationship with the Indonesian government and the electoral commission, which resulted in the government's request for UNDP to coordinate all international assistance. The strong relationship also led to requests for assistance after the election, including in the area of legislative reform. UNDP also established ties with Indonesian non-governmental organizations, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and the International Foundation for Election Systems.

Long-term Democratic Institution Building

As a follow-up to the electoral programme, the Indonesian government has requested that UNDP assist in a parliamentary reform process. UNDP aims to assist the national parliament (DPR), as well as its secretariat and newly elected members, to prepare for

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[7] International Foundation for Electoral Systems, *Report on the 7 June 1999 Parliamentary General Election: Republic of Indonesia.* Washington, DC, February 2000, p. 1.

the body's new pluralistic role and to enhance the capacity of the legislative body. The organization also plans to implement similar activities with the provincial and regional legislatures. In addition, UNDP anticipates helping civil society organizations to strengthen Indonesia's developing system of democratic checks and balances. Finally, UNDP also plans to help redesign the electoral system and its administration.

F.   Kyrgyzstan: Special Needs for Countries in Transition
KYR/95/004

Political Context

Kyrgyzstan was the first Central Asian state to declare its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Led by President Askar Akaev, the republic has developed an international reputation for attempting to implement systematic changes toward a democratic society. New political parties have been able to form and register, a new constitution was adopted in 1993, and the republic boasts an active community of journalists. In short, the framework for the establishment of a democratic state based on the rule of law was in place when the 1995 presidential election was announced.

Project Design and Objectives

While the official government request for electoral assistance from UNDP did not come until 6 October 1995 for the 24 December 1995 Presidential election, the UNDP Resident Representative and his team had begun providing advisory and logistical support to the government of Kyrgyzstan during the first half of 1995. Prior to this period, no electoral assistance had ever been provided to the government of Kyrgyzstan by UNDP, although the UN`s Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) had offered some advice during Kyrgyzstan`s February 1995 parliamentary elections. UNDP`s initial activities and then preparation of an official project document grew from a special working relationship forged between the UNDP Resident Representative with senior government officials and members of the Central Election Committee (CEC). The 22-29 October visit of Mr. Anders Eriksson, an electoral expert hired by UNDP with the help of EAD, was also valuable for providing the CEC with an "Electoral Needs Assessment" and laying the groundwork for UNDP's subsequent interventions.

Drafted in October 1995, the aim of "KYR/95/004/A/01/99 National Capacity Building in Electoral Administration" was to support the Kyrgyz Republic in strengthening its institutional capacity to carry out an effective electoral process for the Presidential elections and to help establish long-term national mechanisms for future electoral processes in the country. The project was structured in the following two phases:

- Phase I (with a budget of US $100,000: UNDP & cost-sharing) covered a technical support programme for the Central Election Committee during the period prior to the December 1995 Presidential Elections; and

- Phase II (with a much larger budget of US $550,000: UNDP and cost-sharing) provided longer-term cooperation in the development of institutional and human resources capacity building in those areas of public administration relevant to national elections.

For the immediate institutional capacity-building needs under phase I of the electoral assistance programme, UNDP assisted in the provision of equipment and training services to the CEC, as well as hired Mr. David Aasen, an elections expert, to directly advise the government from inside the CEC. UNDP also assumed the central leadership role in the coordination of donor assistance and in the provision of logistical support to international observers. For phase II following the presidential election, UNDP long-term electoral assistance concentrated on the following:

- capacity building of central and oblast-level electoral commissions;
- a long-term public education campaign on issues related to the conduct of elections; and
- a review of the election law, including the preparation of a draft for a new election law, rules and regulations.

Results of the Project

The UN/OSCE observers deemed the electoral process as "free and open" and reported no major violations, such as violence or systemic disenfranchisement of certain sectors of the electorate. While technical concerns focused on the continuation of family voting and control over list verification, ballot access, mobile boxes and reconciliation procedures, the observers did not feel that these factors altered the final outcome, and overall, the observers were impressed with the organization of the polling sites. The election results stood in contrast to Kyrgyzstan`s February 1995 parliamentary election, in which international observers mentioned several serious problems, including the handing out of multiple ballots, the adding of names to polling lists, and proxy voting.

Through the Resident Representative's strong working relations with the CEC and senior members of government, UNDP opened doors for other external actors, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and EAD; UNDP further served effectively as the chief coordinator of all international donor assistance. Moreover, on several occasions foreign donors, including the OSCE, were requested by the government of Kyrgyzstan to first consult UNDP prior to the provision of any type of election-related assistance. UNDP was acknowledged for its leadership among donors and its logistical support throughout the election preparations, and when the statement of the UN/OSCE international observers on the outcome of the presidential election was issued, the Resident Representative even took the unprecedented step of endorsing the statement.

In the area of logistical support, UNDP provided valuable assistance toward the establishment of polling stations, the monitoring of the campaign, and voter registration. In addition, UNDP offered field transportation during the election to ensure that voters in remote areas of the country could be reached. Fuel shortages for the winter months was another major concern on which UNDP advised the government.

With the continued support of UNDP and other donors after the election, Kyrgyzstan has built up the capacity to independently organize future elections. As a result, foreign donors have chosen to steer additional technical assistance and financing toward longer-term projects that seek to more firmly entrench the democratic gains achieved by Kyrgyzstan's multi-party elections (e.g., media training, decentralization, and civic education in the schools).

Challenges Encountered

Kyrgyzstan maintains a low per-capita income and, unlike several neighboring countries, is deficient in most major natural resources, including oil. At the time of the election, the new republic was, and continues to be, highly dependent on the donor community. Since Kyrgyzstan's independence in 1992, it has had little experience in undertaking elections based on internationally accepted democratic practice and utilizing modern technology. These factors combined to create an atmosphere of uncertainty in a region already fraught with challenges to the emergence of new and genuine democratic institutions.

The official request for UNDP assistance from the CEC, made on 6 October 1995, came too late for a full-scale project to be organized prior to the 24 December 1995 election. As the UNDP hired consultant noted in his electoral needs assessment, "There is little time left to set-up the structure for a mission with a lot of people involved, particularly when the legal work is finished and the nomination process has already started." While UNDP made significant contributions to Kyrgyzstan's pre- and post-election activities, particularly in the area of generating support from and coordinating international donor assistance, UNDP could have made a greater impact had it been permitted to invite technical specialists into the country at an earlier date. This is especially the case regarding the republic's electoral legal framework, which even today requires an extensive overhaul to ensure greater fairness in the conduct of elections.

Experience with Partners

In much of the region covered by UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC), UNDP maintains a strong working relationship with the OSCE, and they often alternate as the electoral assistance focal point from country-to-country. With the OSCE Central Asian regional office in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the OSCE had no ground presence in Kyrgyzstan at the time of the 1995 presidential election and, consequently, relied considerably on the UNDP field office in Bishkek. UNDP maintained excellent relations with the OSCE during the electoral process and gave the OSCE substantial

support in such areas as logistics and briefing OSCE observers on the political situation in the country. Similarly, UNDP served as the chief partner of EAD during two short visits by an EAD staff member prior to the presidential election.

Other major partners working with UNDP included the U.S. government, which provided the CEC with an Election Information/Civic Education Adviser, and the Finnish government, which supplied ballot paper to the election. UNDP also played a major role in generating support for the presidential election among several non-resident donors. The government of Kyrgyzstan trusted UNDP in this position as it maintained a reputation for delivering. UNDP was also seen as an advocate for the people of Kyrgyzstan, and UNDP served effectively as an objective adviser to the government: it unapologetically expressed when things were right as well as wrong.

Long-Term Democratic Institution Building

Following its successful experience in supporting the 1995 presidential election in Kyrgyzstan, UNDP turned to activities that would help to consolidate the country's democratization process. As part of phase II of its electoral assistance project, UNDP worked closely with national and international NGOs in emphasizing civic education, giving particular attention to the special needs of Kyrgyz women. Drawing on lessons from other regions, UNDP has also spearheaded training programmes to strengthen the role of political parties in deepening the country's democratic foundations. Besides electoral activities, UNDP supports the development of democratic institutions in Kyrgyzstan through a broad governance programme that involves projects on decentralization, public opinion polling, human rights training, and public sector management reforms.

G. Comprehensive Electoral Support for Malawi's First Major Election
MLW/93/006

The Political Context

Drawing strength from a growing national debate on poverty and several neighboring national democratization movements, Malawian pressure groups began to challenge the country's single party system in the early 1990s. Along with these pressure groups, the support of the international community to the demands of justice, equity, and better livelihoods led the former Life President of Malawi to organize a referendum to determine whether the one-party system of government should be retained or replaced by a multi-party system. Malawians voted for multi-party democracy in June 1993 and brought a new government to power in May 1994.

Project Design, Objectives, and other UNDP Interventions

Following the announcement to hold a national referendum on the issue of a one-party vs. multi-party system, the Government of Malawi requested the United Nations'

assistance in the organization and funding of the referendum scheduled for 14 June 1993. Electoral Assistance for the referendum, as outlined in the UNDP project document, consisted of:

- the provision of technical assistance and material support to the electoral authorities, and
- the provision of logistical support and coordination of international observers invited by the Government of Malawi.

Similarly, during the general election (May 1994), the main objective of the project document, prepared by UNDP, was to contribute to the organization of free and fair elections, as a "first step in the building and consolidation of a multi-party and democratic political system in Malawi."[8] Two secondary long-term "development objectives" were the transfer of technical know-how for the management of future elections and the provision of preparatory support for medium-term human rights reforms. For both the referendum and the general election, UNDP's financial contributions were supported through IPF (UNDP directly allocated $178,600), Cost-Sharing and Parallel Funding Arrangements.

While UNDP played a significant role during the general election preparations, overall coordination and support was provided, beginning in January 1994, by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat, under direct supervision of the UN's Electoral Assistance Unit/DPKO (later to become EAD/DPA). With logistical and political support from UNDP, the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat undertook a political assessment mission prior to the referendum and provided technical advice to Malawi's Electoral Commission and coordinated the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG). The Electoral Assistance Secretariat depended heavily on UNDP Malawi's Operations Manager for managing the finances of both the referendum and general election projects, as well as handling procurement of materials. UNDP also provided leadership in the recruitment and placement of UN Volunteers as election observers. The UNVs provided a large share of the 300 observers from 40 countries, who made up the Joint International Observer Group (JIOG).

Prior to the preparation of the project documents, UNDP had started playing a key role in facilitating the process of democratization in Malawi. Early in 1992, the UNDP Resident Representative established a weekly forum for donor consultation which was attended by the ambassadors of major donor countries. Non-resident donors were also kept in the picture with regard to developments within the country. When preparations for the referendum and general election commenced, the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative would also meet weekly with deputy ambassadors from the donor countries to discuss more technical-related issues.

UNDP further organized special ad-hoc fora during the preparations, to bring the political actors together to discuss and debate specific issues and to agree on solutions. Especially during the early stages, pressure was placed on all parties (including the

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[8] UNDP Project Document MLW/93/006/A/01/01, p.7.

former government, opposition parties, parliament, the private sector, NGOs and grassroots organizations) to use established mechanisms of consultation, dialogue and negotiation to settle their differences. Key fora sponsored by UNDP and funded mainly by donors during the transition period were:

- The National Roundtable on Democratic Transition, which enabled all political parties to come to a common understanding and agree on basic democratic principles;
- The National Constitutional Conference, which enshrined human rights and democratic principles in a new draft constitution subsequently adopted by parliament.

Most of the national fora organized during the transition were directly supported through UNDP's project documents, as were part of the technical and logistical costs related to the running of the National Consultative Council, the National Executive Council, and the Electoral Commission.

Results from the Projects

Perhaps the most visible results of UNDP's interventions were, according to the JIOG, the holding of both a peaceful, free and fair national referendum on June 14, 1993 and peaceful, free and fair general election on May 17, 1994. Among the 4,699,527 voters for the referendum, 63% supported the creation of a multi-party system and only 2% of the votes were declared null and void.   [add voter turnout here for general election] On the other hand, the JIOG did raise some concern about unfair conditions in the early period before the referendum, including instances of intimidation and harassment, the unequal use and distribution of resources among the special interest groups, and unequal access to the radio. For the general election, the JIOG concluded that "The International Observers are unanimously satisfied that the election results will reflect and express accurately the wishes of the Malawian electorate on polling day.

By convening weekly donor meeting and regularly briefing non-resident donors, UNDP helped to ensure that international political and financial support to the democratization process was maintained before and after the general election. After the May 1994 election, UNDP played a leading role in preparing a democratic consolidation programme for Malawi, and this resulted in resumed donor support, beginning in September 1994, for civic education on democracy and human rights issues, as well as support for the Electoral Commission.

Drawing confidence from the successful public fora organized by UNDP, Malawians began developing their own groups and strategies for promoting dialogue and consultation for building consensus and solving problems. Key examples included the Public Affairs Committee formed before the referendum, and the National Consultative Council and National Executive Council, formed as consultative bodies to prepare for and supervise the elections. Over time, the

democratic transition progressively became a national process that involved a wide range of national partners, with international ones in a supporting role.

UNDP Malawi's Operations Manager received praise from the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat for his professionalism in handling finances and procurement of materials for both the referendum and general election. At times, his role entailed responses to bills and requisitions ranging from tire punctures and computers to an urgent order for 5,000,000 envelopes and a chartered cargo plane. As a result of UNDP's contributions to the electoral process in Malawi, relations between UNDP and the UN's Electoral Assistance Unit in New York were strengthened.

Challenges Encountered

For decades, political stability and economic buoyancy had been achieved in Malawi at the price of single-party politics aimed at stifling dissent. Public debate on basic governance issues was not allowed in the country until 1992, and even then it was only limited to how certain public sector deficiencies represented obstacles to social development. Hence, while Malawi's Life President felt obliged to organize a national referendum in 1993 on the fate of the one-party system, the process of political liberalization presented multiple challenges and instability for the government—complicating, at times, the work of UNDP.

Building a broad base of support for Malawi's democratic process required tremendous human and financial resources, as well as creativity and the flexibility to alter programmes during implementation. The preparations for the referendum and general election were often hindered by the country's lack of decentralization and devolution in terms of decision-making and financial autonomy at the local level, limited trained personnel, logistical problems, and a limited interaction with the villagers to promote their participation.

While the UNDP Resident Representative maintained an open and productive relationship with the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat Coordinator in Malawi, the general election follow-through programme in 1994, involving both UNDP and the UN, was initially delayed with the arrival of a new UNDP Resident Representative shortly after the election. On the whole, UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Secretariat carved out mutually acceptable and complimentary roles in the area of electoral assistance.

Experience with Partners

UNDP worked with and helped to facilitate inputs from a large number of partners before and after the 1993 referendum and 1994 general election. Within government, UNDP worked most closely with the National Consultative Council, the National Executive Council, and the Electoral Commission. Other national partners included several pressure groups (which later became political parties), the private sector, NGOs (particularly the Public Affairs Committee), religious organizations, and grassroots organizations. Due to the amicable relations between the donor community and the

government, as well as the consensus-building skills of the UNDP Resident Representative, UNDP's partnerships with civil society groups and government bodies in Malawi were beneficial to the stakeholders in the democratization process.

From the international community, UNDP worked closest with the UN's Electoral Assistance Secretariat, the UN Centre for Human Rights, the International Jurist Centre, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). The pivotal and productive relationship between the UNDP Resident Representative and UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat Coordinator has been described earlier, and the key to this partnership was the definition and maintenance of complimentary functions. While UNDP's long-term presence and networks in Malawi made it indispensable, the Electoral Assistance Secretariat led on all electoral issues that were technical in nature.

Long-Term Democratic Institution Building

The case of Malawi exhibits the important role UNDP can play in advancing democratic processes after elections are held; indeed, UNDP's efforts to promote sound governance, decentralization and popular participation after the general election in 1994 helped ensure that the peaceful transition continued and that subsequent elections were held. At the center of UNDP's post-election strategy was the "United Nations Integrated Programme of Assistance for Democratic Consolidation, Human Rights and Good Governance in Malawi", prepared in collaboration with the UN Centre for Human Rights and the UN Electoral Assistance Unit. With the support of international (particularly IFES and NDI) and national groups, such as Malawi's Public Affairs Committee, the democratic consolidation programme gave particular emphasis to establishing strong electoral authorities and to country-wide civic education on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society. As a study on UNDP's experience in Malawi concluded, "Civic education is a continuous process. Long-term programmes are necessary for Malawian society to fully absorb those concepts associated within a truly democratic society." The UNDP country office efforts in Malawi reinforce the view that electoral assistance must be viewed and approached within the context of UNDP's broader governance programming agenda.

H.   Second Election in a Post-Conflict Country: The Case of Mozambique
MOZ/98/018

Political Context

Following a 16-year civil war, Mozambique held its first multiparty elections in 1994. The elections were a success, providing a solid base for a consolidated and enduring peace. Mozambique's second multiparty presidential and parliamentary general elections were held December 3 to 5, 1999. Although better prepared for the 1999 elections than it had been for the 1994 elections, Mozambique once again requested the assistance of UNDP to coordinate all technical and financial assistance to the

elections. UNDP regarded these elections as an opportunity to make further important progress toward consolidating the democratic process and to build upon the electoral assistance it had provided to Mozambique in 1994.

Project Design and Objectives

One year prior to the election, UNDP, in coordination with International IDEA, developed a framework for technical assistance to the Mozambican National Elections Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat for Electoral Administration (STAE). In March 1999, the U.N. Electoral Assistance Division undertook a needs assessment to Mozambique and endorsed UNDP's draft project document for electoral support to the CNE/STAE.

UNDP was responsible for the overall technical and financial coordination of donor assistance to the election. The organization arranged biweekly coordination meetings for bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as diplomats and internationals interested in the electoral process. UNDP managed a cost-sharing arrangement, to which eight donors contributed a total of $9.7 million, of which $6.8 million was directed to voter registration, including a portion of the computerization of the voter registry.

The European Union contributed $20 million in parallel financing directed to civic education initiatives and equipment, training activities, air transport, vehicles, voting materials and computerization of the voter registry. In addition, the Mozambican government provided $9 million to the electoral process, 20% of the total cost of the election, which covered the salaries of electoral workers and the operational cost of the CNE and STAE. The total cost of the election was approximately $40 million.

UNDP's objectives for the electoral process were as follows:
- Strengthen the CNE's and STAE's capacities to organize and implement a new voter registry.
- Assist the CNE and STAE in the organization and holding of free and fair general elections.
- Consolidate and strengthen national capacity in electoral administration and strengthen institutions, structures and procedures for the organization of future elections.

With the aid of four international experts in the fields of elections administration, civic education, logistics and communications and 30 United Nations Volunteers, the organization's activities focused on the following: 1) computerization of voter registration, which had not been done in the 1994 elections and should make the next elections less costly; 2) purchase of voter registration materials; and 3) technical assistance for electoral management and training in civic education. The organization helped train 73,000 polling clerks.

The civic education campaign had three objectives: explain the purpose of the elections, urge participation and explain how to vote correctly. UNDP, with the assistance of the

European Union, recruited, trained and deployed 1,200 civic education agents in all provinces. They distributed t-shirts, hats, manuals and brochures to promote voting. In addition, UNDP posted advertisements in newspapers, ran radio spots and sponsored concerts to promote voting.

Results of Project

International observer missions from the Carter Center, the European Union and the Commonwealth and national observer missions declared the elections to have been free and fair. In a press conference on December 6, 1999, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter stated that based on more than 20 elections that his Center has observed, these elections were the best organized. Nonetheless, the opposition party RENAMO contested the elections, claiming fraud and lack of transparency in the tabulation of results. Following an investigation, the Supreme Court subsequently validated the results announced by the CNE.

Building on its electoral capacity-building and institutional development project from 1994, UNDP's electoral assistance for the 1999 elections was relevant and well-received. The organization's project goals were met. UNDP contributed to the following achievements:

- From a total electorate of 8.3 million, approximately 7.1 million (85.5%) were registered in a computerized system.
- 70% of registered voters voted in the presidential elections and 68% in the parliamentary elections.

These elections also cost less than those held five years earlier. In 1994, 17 donors provided more than $59 million to implement the first general elections. The 1999 elections built on this assistance and required $30 million in external funding. In 1999, UNDP also played much more of an advisory role than in the 1994 elections, in which the organization was doing much of the implementation itself.

Challenges Encountered

Eight years had passed since the end of the civil war, by the time the 1999 elections were organized. Vestiges of the distrust between the government and the former insurgent movement and current main opposition party, RENAMO, remained and were evident at the CNE. Decision-making in the CNE was often slow and made along party lines. UNDP and the technical assistance team carefully navigated the politics of the CNE.

The lack of a permanent electoral commission also brought its share of difficulties. It is important that the STAE maintain at least a core of trained staff for future elections, for a major challenge for the coming years will be to organize cheaper elections. The international community has invested $120 million in the last three elections. The chance that the next elections will get massive external financing is minimal.

The gradual donor contributions to the electoral support also provided a significant challenge for UNDP. The organization did not count with all the necessary resources before initiating the project. This strategy could have posed serious problems if UNDP had not mobilized sufficient funds to cover all of its activities. Luckily, the organization was able to raise all necessary funds and meet all financial requirements. However, the simultaneous implementation of a project and resource mobilization is risky.

Experience with Partners

UNDP and the Government of Mozambique maintained a strong relationship, which originated in 1994. Both the ruling party and the opposition party trusted UNDP's neutrality, a significant feat in a country as politically divisive as Mozambique.

UNDP also strengthened its relationship with the CNE/STAE and continued a constructive, open relationship with international donors. Since UNDP did not contribute financially to the electoral process, the organization shared the chair of the donor meetings with Norway, a major contributor to the electoral process. UNDP convened the donor meetings and facilitated the relationship between the CNE and international donors, while the Norwegian Ambassador presided over the donor meetings.

Long Term Democratic Institution Building

Following UNDP's coordination of international electoral support for the country's first multi-party elections in 1994, the Mozambican government and the international community requested the organization's assistance for numerous anticipated government reforms. The organization helped establish Mozambique's Democratic Development Programme, which was initiated in 1995. The programme supports strengthening the justice sector, parliament, national police, decentralization and media.

In the future, UNDP intends to promote the establishment of a sustainable, independent electoral commission. The organization anticipates placing greater emphasis on capacity building, particularly on advising and assisting the CNE/STAE in the training of permanent electoral staff on all aspects of electoral administration --planning of electoral processes, legal issues, automation of voter registry and inventory management. UNDP also plans to assist in the implementation of a low-cost civic education programme and in the design of a work plan to update and maintain the voter registry.

I. Confronting Multiple Challenges in Nigeria

Political Context

Since achieving independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, Nigeria has been ruled by military regimes for all but ten years. The recent transition, involving the

transfer of power to an elected civilian government, was not Nigeria's first attempt to join the community of democracies. An attempt to hand over power to civilian rule was annulled as recently as 1993 with the military take-over of General Sani Abacha. The Abacha years were marked by widespread repression against the opposition, which peaked in the hanging of nine Ogoni leaders and two alleged coup attempts.

General elections were planned for mid-1998, but initial preparations suggested that the military regime in power sought to engineer the self-succession of Abacha from military dictator to head of an elected civilian government. When Abacha died of a heart attack in June 1998, a new spirit of hope for democracy emerged. Abacha's successor, General Abdusalami Abubakar, quickly moved to renew the transition process. In July 1998, Abubakar announced that local, state, national, and presidential elections would be scheduled between December 1998 and February 1999.

UNDP's Limited Response in Support of Nigeria's Elections

When the Nigerian authorities established the time-table for the local, state and federal elections, General Abubakar invited the international community to support the electoral preparations and, in particular, to participate in monitoring the elections. While UNDP already maintained a presence in Nigeria during the turbulent 1990s, the electoral process and transition programme launched in August 1998 constituted an important "entry point" to external cooperation efforts, particularly in new governance areas such as democratic institution-building and human rights. With UNDP's functional networks throughout Nigeria, as well as an understanding of the country's political dynamics and recent history, UNDP was well-placed to make a significant contribution to Nigeria's transition programme. Unfortunately, untimely leadership changes within both the UNDP country office and headquarters, as well as other unforeseen factors, precluded UNDP from undertaking major electoral support initiatives prior to and during the elections.

In the case of Nigeria's 1998 and 1999 local, state and federal elections, UNDP's support to the electoral process was limited compared to the role UNDP has played in countries of comparable size facing highly complex political situations. Traditional UNDP electoral activities, such as convening donor meetings, maintaining a trust fund, facilitating the work of consultants and UN Volunteers, and providing basic logistical support, were either ceded to other actors, poorly performed, or carried out only in the days just preceding the elections. Beginning in August 1998, the UNDP Nigeria country office—along with UNDP headquarters—failed to provide the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) with adequate support or cooperate in delineating specific roles. Consequently, a UNDP project document for electoral assistance was never drafted, and EAD was compelled to rely on other partners for tasks typically performed by UNDP. With only a few weeks remaining until the presidential election on 27 February 1999, UNDP brought in an experienced Interim Resident Representative. Although his interventions were helpful, particularly in overseeing general logistical support, little could be done prior to the election to reverse the situation on the ground between UNDP and other electoral support actors.

Given the complexities involved in organizing four separate elections (local, state, National Assembly and Presidential) in a country as poor—by per-capita standards—and populous as Nigeria, the time-frame for holding genuinely free and fair elections in less than six months was unmanageable and unrealistic. Nigeria's new Independent National Election Commission (INEC) assumed chief responsibility for conducting the elections, and following an EAD political assessment mission, INEC requested EAD to establish an Electoral Assistance Secretariat (EAS) in Nigeria by December 1998. While the EAS was broadly involved in coordinating the international community's pre-electoral support and in offering technical assistance to INEC, the ultimate focus of its work was the coordination of international observer delegations.

UNDP provided a financial contribution of US $200,000 to the elections, while donors such as Japan, Canada, and the EU (with the largest contribution of US $2 million) donated several million dollars. Since UNDP was unable to mobilize and manage funds from the donor community (as usually performed through an open trust fund or cost-sharing arrangements), the EAS established an open account for these functions through the UN Office of Project Services (UNOPS). Managed from UNOPS headquarters in New York, the open account's oversight and complicated implementation procedures were often a source of friction between EAD and UNOPS.

Results of the Election

Each of the elections (Local elections on 5 December 1998, Governor and State Assembly elections on 9 January 1999, National Assembly elections on 20 February 1999, and presidential elections on 27 February 1999) were deemed by most international observers to be relatively "free and fair"; they were also, for the most part, peaceful. Nine out of several dozen political parties qualified to participate in the local elections, and the following three parties ultimately contested the state, national, and

presidential elections: the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and the All People's Party (APP). The Independent National Election Commission conducted the elections according to the programmed schedule, and on 1 March, General Obasanjo of the PDP was the declared winner of the presidential election through a comfortable margin of 62.7% of the total votes.[9] Composed of members from the main political parties, the INEC was viewed to have executed its duties in a professional and impartial manner.

External support for the National Assembly and Presidential elections was greatest in the area of international observation. Under the leadership and coordination efforts of EAD, UNDP provided some logistical support to the international observers. For example, UNDP office space and vehicles in Nigeria's 36 states, as well as the Federal Capital Territory, were shared with the international observers. In addition, UNDP Nigeria's Field Security Officer provided field security to the international observers (e.g., radios, briefings, etc.).

Both the contributions of international and national observers were appreciated by the INEC and the government of Nigeria. With the arrival of the Interim Resident Representative in January 1999, UNDP began to convene, albeit belatedly, donor meetings that were appreciated by donor countries, especially those with limited experience in the country.

Challenges Encountered

As noted earlier, the leadership gap within UNDP Nigeria and UNDP headquarters, coupled with Nigeria's politically volatile situation, impeded the execution of traditional electoral assistance roles typically undertaken by the UNDP country offices in similar situations. UNDP Nigeria provided limited logistical, financial and political support to the elections, causing friction with many partners who depended on UNDP to fill the lacunae that inevitably appear when preparing for a major election. One episode indicative of the country office's unwillingness to assert itself was the decision of the first electoral expert hired to discontinue his assignment after three weeks due, in part, to the lack of co-operation he received from UNDP Nigeria (note: the expert was also said to have faced difficulties with UNOPS concerning his contract).

The UNDP country office posed several challenges to an effective electoral support effort by the international community. At the same time, the establishment of the Electoral Assistance Secretariat in December 1998—during the same month as the local elections and only a few short weeks prior to the presidential elections—was, to a certain extent, undertaken too late to provide serious substantive help to INEC, except in the area of electoral observation. Further, Nigeria's electoral laws failed to provide a level playing field and to position INEC better to help ensure free and fair elections.

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[9] Immediately after election day, Chief Olu Falae, defeated candidate of the AD/APP alliance, complained of alleged massive fraud. However, his petition before the Court of Appeals, requesting the annulment of the elections, was dismissed after three weeks of court consideration. The AD and APP decided not to appeal the decision before the Supreme Court in order to avoid giving "any pretext" to prolong the military's rule beyond May 1999.

One major follow-through task will be to conduct a serious review and overhaul of Nigeria's legal framework for future elections.

Experience with Partners

Except for the short period following the arrival of the Interim UNDP Resident Representative in late January 1999, UNDP maintained a less than optimal relationship with its chief partner, the UN's Electoral Assistance Division. Failing to provide traditional support functions, such as establishing cost-sharing arrangements with donor countries and providing more extensive support to EAS consultants, UNDP undermined its credibility and left EAD no choice but to rely on other partners for assisting Nigeria's large and complex election. Even the UN Volunteers tasked as international election observers were directed by a support unit in Nigeria that was completely separate from UNDP. Further, the European Union and several international NGOs, such as IFES and NDI, made significant contributions to the preparations and observation of the elections.

Long-Term Democratic Institution Building

When UNDP brought in an experienced Interim Resident Representative during the final weeks preceding the election, it appeared that UNDP would begin to play a leadership role on electoral assistance issues once again, particularly in the post-election follow-through stage. The seasoned Interim Resident Representative, however, was unable to continue his assignment for more than a few weeks following the elections, and the momentum he generated on post-election civic education strategies soon dissipated. While funding from UNDP and the European Union was secured for UNDP-led work in the area of civic education after the elections, time consuming amendments in the contract agreement have continuously delayed the project. At present, UNDP is overseeing one pilot project in the area of civic education, which was rolled out in May 2000.

Following the elections, UNDP did undertake a major governance assessment mission that eventually led to the appointment of a governance coordinator in the country office in March 2000. The governance assessment mission established an excellent framework for new governance initiatives, but follow-through has been slow largely due to factors outside of the UNDP country office's control. Nevertheless, UNDP continues to be active in the area of donor coordination on issues of governance.

Charting out a new role in the area of post-electoral assistance, EAD is currently spending some $400,000 on a pilot project to build capacity within INEC's local level electoral management bodies. UNDP hosted the EAD mission tasked with designing the comprehensive electoral assistance strategy, as well as an earlier EAD mission that prepared a civic education strategy for Nigeria. In collaboration with EAD and UNDP, IFES has further conducted a comprehensive post-election needs assessment and

continues to provide INEC with technical assistance targeting INEC's operational needs at headquarters.

J.   Yemen's 1997 Legislative Elections
YEM/96/002

Political Context

In 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) united, forming the Republic of Yemen. The north-based General People's Congress (GPC) and the south-based Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) ruled jointly until parliamentary elections in 1993, in which the GPC secured a plurality of the votes. Rising tensions between the GPC and the YSP led to a brief civil war in 1994, which concluded with a victorious GPC and a largely marginalized YSP.

Despite the violence, Yemen remained committed to democracy and held its first parliamentary elections after the civil war in April 1997. These elections were welcomed as an important step toward the further development of democracy and democratic institutions. The elections gave the GPC a clear majority in the parliament, while the Yemeni Congregation for Reform Party (Islah) emerged as the strongest party in opposition. Although a beleaguered YSP boycotted the elections, they were considered to have been largely free and fair.

Project Design and Objectives

In June 1996, the Supreme Elections Committee (SEC) of Yemen requested assistance from the United Nations to organize the April 27, 1997, parliamentary elections. In response, UNDP designed a project to support Yemeni efforts in the following areas: 1) coordination of donor assistance 2) coordination of UN technical assistance; 3) logistical support to the Joint International Observer Group.

The UNDP Resident Representative (RR) played a leading role in coordinating donor assistance. The RR held weekly donor meetings to update the international community on the progress of the election preparations and to request funds for the SEC. In attendance at these meetings were representatives from the following countries: The Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Turkey, Poland, Indonesia, and the European Union. The resources channeled through UNDP for these elections included $400,000 from the European Union for the purchase of computers, $100,000 from the German government for the printing costs of ballots and $68,050 from UNDP for technical assistance to the SEC. The Government of Yemen contributed $5,627,631.

Pursuant to the UN/UNDP Guidelines for Electoral Assistance, UNDP/Yemen called upon the EAD to determine what technical assistance the SEC would require. An EAD needs assessment mission to Yemen in October 1996 recommended hiring an international consultant to provide technical assistance to the SEC, including organizing

its operational and logistical plan for the 1997 elections. The consultant, who remained in Yemen from December 1996 to May 1997, provided assistance to the SEC mainly with regard to the electoral observation and relations with the media. Lacking experience in dealing with observation missions, the SEC relied on the consultant's advice regarding procedures and guidelines for observers. The consultant also provided ad hoc assistance in areas including the operational plan and the elections law.

UNDP established a small secretariat to provide logistical assistance to a Joint International Observer Group (JIOG), in conjunction with the Government of The Netherlands, in its capacity as Representative for the European Union Presidency in Yemen, and the national non-governmental organization the Arab Democratic Institute (ADI). UNDP, with the assistance of the international consultant, prepared standard observation forms for voting and counting and made logistical preparations, such as renting cars, booking accommodations, gathering maps and travel information identifying translators and drivers and preparing security plans. UNDP and the consultant also briefed international observers on their mandate and role in the elections.

Results

UNDP largely accomplished the goals set forth in the project document. UNDP began providing support to the SEC ten months before the election. The organization successfully coordinated the donor and technical assistance, maintained good relations with the international community and served as a liaison between members of the international community and the SEC. UNDP's good relations with the SEC also helped to smooth over disagreements between the international community and the SEC on issues pertaining to the preparations of the elections.

The international observers who operated under the JIOG were successfully supported throughout their stay and a detailed report on their mission was issued. The observers viewed the elections as largely free and fair and were pleased with the high turnout of voters. In its final report, the JIOG noted that "the elections have taken place at an early stage of the country's democratic development and in complex circumstances." The group concluded that the elections could be judged to have been "on balance reasonably free and fair." The JIOG recommended that for future elections the SEC update the voter registry, issue a deadline for both candidate registration and withdrawal, and provide voter education. The JIOG was composed of 85 international observers from 15 countries and organizations including: Denmark, European Commission, European Parliament, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Poland, Russia, United Kingdom.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) also fielded an international observation delegation, in coordination with the JIOG. NDI's delegation viewed the elections "as a positive step in the democratic development of Yemen."

Challenges Encountered

Given Yemen's early stage of democratic development, coupled with the recent civil war, an environment of uncertainty and anxiety prevailed in the south of Yemen, where the YSP had lost the war. UNDP navigated Yemeni politics well and remained neutral throughout the electoral process.

UNDP confronted some challenges in the course of providing technical assistance. According to an "end-of-mission" report on the project, a significant shortcoming was that the international consultant recruited with the help of EAD did not speak Arabic.
A second challenge pertained to a lack of communication between EAD/UNDP and the SEC. EAD recruited him principally to support the SEC's efforts to design an operational plan, yet the head of the Planning Division was unaware that the consultant was there to help him and his division. Although the SEC did not have a "formal" operational plan, the "end-of -mission" report states that "the absence of a formal operational plan, prepared following imported methodologies, did in no way prevent the SEC from keeping track of all activities. Indeed, all operations were completed in time for election day." According to the same report "in view of the repeated complaints related to registration, it might have been appropriate to have brought the consultant, or longer-term international observers, in country during that phase."

In addition, international assistance for the printing of ballots was hampered by the election law, which provided that candidates could register until one week before the election. UNDP and the international community adjusted to the late schedule and ballots were printed in time for the election.

Experience with Partners

As a trusted partner to the international community and the SEC, UNDP played a strong role as a liaison, and intermediary when problems arose. For instance, UNDP and the international consultant intervened to settle a disagreement between the SEC and the Canadian Government over the delivery of ink for the elections.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Yemen expressed his gratitude to the United Nations for its assistance in the preparation of the 1997 parliamentary elections and looked forward to a possible extension of similar assistance in the post-electoral period.

Long-Term Democratic Institution Building

After the elections, UNDP initiated a programme with NDI to build the internal capacity of the Yemeni Parliament. The joint endeavor addressed legislative mechanisms and resources such as staffing, budget process and analysis, parliamentary procedures, and the role and operations of committees. NDI began the programme with a seminar on Executive-Legislative Relations, which brought together senior members of the Cabinet

and Parliament to discuss procedures to improve cooperation between the two branches of government.

Although UNDP did not provide electoral assistance for the 1999 presidential elections, the organization anticipates supporting the 2001 parliamentary elections.

IV.   Lessons Learned from UNDP's Experience in Electoral Support

1. *UNDP's approach to electoral assistance has placed great emphasis on the conduct of elections and less on long-term capacity-development.*

The primary goal in providing electoral technical assistance is to help establish a country's ability to organize future elections with little or no external help. Although UNDP's electoral support has been valuable, the organization has not placed sufficient emphasis on the institutional capacity development of electoral management bodies' systems, structures, management, legal framework and budget.

The assistance provided has typically been restricted to periods *before* elections, but not *after* elections. This assistance has been effective in supporting the conduct of the election, but not in developing institutional capacity. International consultants recruited to support elections, are under tremendous pressure to meet deadlines in the electoral calendar, which often translates into doing the work themselves, instead of *advising* nationals on how to do it. In effect, capacity-development becomes secondary.

It is understandable that long-term capacity development has not been the main goal in first time elections, especially in post-conflict countries, where there was no electoral experience or infrastructure. However, assistance to countries holding second and third multi-party elections also has not focused sufficiently on long-term institutional development. Although UNDP has been successful in initiating long-term democracy building programmes after elections are held, these programmes have not been geared toward the strengthening of electoral commissions.

The establishment of permanent, independent commissions must go in tandem with the professionalization of electoral staff. Professor Rafael Lopez-Pintor, an expert in the electoral field, has concluded that historical trends and specific case studies indicate that better prospects for free, fair and effective elections exist where electoral bodies not only are independent from the executive branch, but also where they can rely on a permanent professional staff. This enables the commission and its staff to develop experience and expertise in basic planning and cost-effective techniques.

To promote permanent commissions, UNDP must first support efforts to strengthen the management, structures, budgets and legal frameworks of electoral management bodies. These institutional development measures can be accomplished by hiring

international consultants to advise on the best methods and train electoral officials and by sponsoring in-country and international conferences focusing on electoral matters. Without long-term capacity development, it is doubtful that countries will be able to conduct elections without external assistance. Of the ten countries studied, UNDP is providing long-term capacity development in three, Mozambique, Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan.

Elections and Costs

The least cost elections (in U.S. dollars), at around $1 to $3 per elector, are held in countries with a long electoral experience, such as the United States and most Western European countries. Other recorded examples include: Chile ($1.2), Costa Rica ($1.8) and Brazil ($2.3) in Latin America; Botswana ($2.7) and Kenya ($1.8) in Africa; India ($1) and Pakistan ($0.5) in Asia; and Australia ($3.2). At the other extreme, elections held as part of broader peace-keeping operations, as could be expected, are the most costly.[10]

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2. ***Electoral assistance has provided UNDP with a strategic entry point for broader governance programming.***

Successful elections are critical to establishing political legitimacy within countries seeking to make a transition towards democracy. By supporting elections, UNDP prepares countries for accountable governance and cultivates the relationships required to support governance reform efforts in sensitive areas such as human rights and judicial independence. Building on UNDP's (albeit limited) involvement in Nigeria's local elections in December 1998 and presidential elections in February 1999, UNDP undertook a mission that paved the way for the adoption of a comprehensive "Governance for Poverty Reduction and SHD" programme which focuses, inter-alia, on strengthening democratic governing institutions, human rights and decentralization. Similarly, in Indonesia, UNDP's coordination of an internationally recognized free and fair election in June 1999 led to a national effort, aided by UNDP, to reform the country's parliamentary machinery.

In the case of Bangladesh, the success of UNDP-supported interventions in the 1996 election preparations contributed to the credibility of political processes, expanded people's—and most notably women's—participation in the political process, and led to the development of a broader governance programme. Moreover, Mozambique's "democratic development programme (1995-present)", consisting of support to the judiciary, parliament, police and the independence of the media, is built upon UNDP-led international electoral support for the country's first multi-party elections in 1994.

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[10] Lopez-Pintor, Rafael. *Electoral Bodies as Institutions of Governance.* (UNDP Bureau for Development Policy: New York, 1999), 57.

3. ***Civic and voter education programmes supported by UNDP, both prior to and following an election, have helped expand democratic participation.***

Civic and voter education programmes can create a general awareness of the electoral and democratic processes of a country; this is usually achieved by providing citizens with relevant information—through various creative media—to defend their rights, promote their interests in electoral and other democratic fora, and contribute to society through civic actions. As illustrated by UNDP`s sponsorship of national democratization fora prior to Malawi`s 1994 General Election, and the post-election civic education strategies supported by UNDP in Cambodia, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, awareness-raising programmes—that highlight the rights and responsibilities inherent with citizenship in a democratic polity—can empower people to influence governing institutions, hold their representatives and government officials accountable, and take initiative for their community's development. Programmes that target women and other segments of the population that have hitherto not participated in elections can be particularly effective for advancing the interests of the poor and disadvantaged. In the long-term, successful civic education programmes can increase political participation in diverse areas of governance across a broad cross-section of society.

4. ***UNDP support to the conduct of elections:***

   a) Donor coordination and resource mobilization are valuable UNDP services that are often essential to the preparation of an election.

Multi-party elections are highly complex and expensive undertakings that often require a sophisticated electoral capacity and level of resources beyond the reach of many developing countries. External technical and financial assistance can therefore be crucial to an election's outcome, particularly for first time elections undertaken by "democratic transitional" countries. In this regard, UNDP has often assumed a central role through its strategic position as convenor of donor countries for external electoral assistance. By taking initiative in its capacity as facilitator of donor coordination (as expressed most skillfully in the cases of Kyrgyzstan 1995, Malawi 1994, Mozambique 1994 and 1999, Indonesia 1999, Guyana 1997, Yemen 1996), UNDP plays a significant role for the mobilization of foreign assistance, including among non-resident donors interested in contributing to an electoral process. Cost-sharing arrangements are often preferred to the establishment of multi-donor trust funds, as cost-sharing entails a more decentralized structure that places the UNDP country office in charge of managing donor financial support. Multi-donor trust funds, on the other hand, usually involve "sub-trust fund agreements", which require separate accounting and skill in dealing with the complexities associated with earmarking individual donor funds.

Elections are organized by independent electoral commissions in 77 countries or 52% of all democracies. In 29% of democracies (or 43 countries), elections are conducted by the government, under the supervision of an independent electoral authority. In 19% of democracies (or 28 countries), elections are run exclusively by the executive branch.[11]

b) UNDP provides valuable support to the implementation of technical assistance programmes for elections.

Given their experience and knowledge of the country, and their established relationship with government officials, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and political parties, Resident Representatives/Resident Coordinators and the country office staff play a central role in the delivery of electoral assistance to countries. UNDP manages donor funds and normally provides funds of its own to electoral support, advises the elections commission on donor and technical issues, assists NGOs working on civic and voter education issues with funds and technical advice, provides logistical support to consultants, and coordinates with the EAD and the Chief Technical Advisor on all technical matters pertaining to the elections. The technical assistance can range from comprehensive assistance covering all aspects of the election, as in Mozambique 1994 and 1999, to targeted assistance, such as a civic education campaign or computerization of the voter registry, as in Brazil 1994. UNDP provides some element of support to the implementation of technical assistance in virtually every electoral support project.

c) UNDP logistical support has been helpful to the work of international observers.

UNDP, usually in cooperation with EAD, has coordinated numerous international observer missions as part of its electoral assistance work. Based on a request from a Member State, EAD and UNDP may establish a small secretariat in the host country to coordinate and provide logistical support to international election observers, that together comprise a joint international observer group or JIOG. The JIOG is sponsored by member states and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. UNDP and EAD can share the responsibility of organizing a secretariat with another organization or country. JIOGs have been organized in countries including Yemen, Cambodia, Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan. Observations typically begin just prior to the registration period and continue throughout the campaign period, concluding with the announcement of the election results. The JIOG may issue a joint statement of its findings, but the United Nations does not express a view. UNDP also provides assistance to non-JIOG observer groups, such as the Commonwealth or the Organization of American States, which was the case in Guyana in 1997.

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[11] Ibid, 11.

UNDP's extensive field presence and country knowledge are valuable assets to observer missions. UNDP briefs observers upon arrival in a country; arranges logistical support, including cars, maps, routes and emergency procedures; coordinates the deployment of observers on election day; facilitates the collection and analysis of information gathered by observers; and organizes a debriefing for observers after the elections to exchange experiences.

5. UNDP's electoral assistance has been most effective with a lead time of at least one year prior to elections.

Appropriate lead time is key for the provision of comprehensive electoral support. Depending on the size and types of assistance, the most successful electoral projects were initiated at least one year prior to the elections. In the case of Mozambique 1999, Cambodia 1998, and Guyana 1997, UNDP initiated the design phase well in advance of one year. Projects with shorter lead times run the risk of having to cut corners in order to meet short deadlines and can result in mistakes, higher costs of procurement, inadequate consultation time, and reducing important activities such as training.

Sufficient lead time is also important in reducing the costs of an election. Election materials will inevitably cost more and procurement options will be limited with shorter delivery time prior to the elections.

6. Continuity of leadership among UNDP Resident Representatives and Country Offices is important for UNDP to extend its electoral assistance beyond an election and help the programme country build long-term capacity to conduct future elections.

Besides the need for adequate knowledge and basic management skills to continue post-electoral programmes, committed leadership among senior country office staff members is crucial to ensure programme coherence and sustainability, particularly when democratization processes confront possible bottlenecks. The importance of strong leadership qualities in the UNDP Resident Representative can not be overstated in the area of electoral assistance. According to the cases reviewed in this study, the Resident Representative can be instrumental in preparing a strategic framework and facilitating coordination for effective external assistance to an election. Similarly, as clearly expressed following Kyrgyzstan 1995 and Malawi, Resident Representatives, along with the UNDP country teams, are needed to take ownership and assert leadership within the post-election programmes (e.g., civic education and capacity support to the elections commission), otherwise the programmes risked being relegated.

7. *The link between electoral assistance and SHD/Poverty Alleviation needs to be strengthened.*

Elections are prerequisites for the establishment of strong governing institutions and good governance—which, in turn, are prerequisites for poverty alleviation. Elections are also direct vehicles for realizing people's participation and advancing their most significant concerns (e.g. poverty alleviation) in the governance process. Successful decentralization programmes that empower people at the community level are best underpinned by free and fair local elections. As programme countries move into more advanced stages of their democratic development, local electoral support is an area that can benefit from growing UNDP involvement. In the future, UNDP should undertake all electoral assistance initiatives with the explicit goal of promoting an enabling environment for sustainable human development and poverty reduction.

8. *Information-sharing and evaluation documents are not easily available at UNDP.*

Although project documents are easily found in UNDP, evaluations, final reports and quantitative information on the conduct of a project have proved difficult to locate. There is no systematic flow of information on electoral projects between country offices and headquarters, and there is no systematic filing of information on electoral projects in the regional bureaux or the policy bureau, creating a serious problem maintaining institutional memory.

V. Practical Suggestions for Country Offices

While each election presents new challenges to the providers of external technical and financial assistance, and each UNDP country offices operates in a unique, national context (politically, historically, culturally etc.), several practical issues cut across most instances of UNDP electoral support. Although no perfect models exist, the following suggested steps can help to answer many commonly raised questions by UNDP staff working in the area of electoral assistance:

1. ***Invite the UN's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) to conduct a political assessment mission to determine the suitability for UN/UNDP involvement in the preparation of an upcoming election.***

Providing support to an election can sometimes be a politically risky undertaking. <u>In accordance with the EAD-UNDP *Guidelines for Electoral Assistance*, UNDP must inform EAD, as the designated UN elections focal point, of any requests for electoral assistance by the host country before offering support of any kind</u>. A political situation assessment can help determine whether the environment in a country is suitable for the organization of free and fair elections. If the political situation in a country is volatile and elections that meet international standards are unlikely to be organized—regardless of the level of external assistance—then the UN Secretariat, on behalf of the entire UN

system, will issue a decision against the provision of any type of UN/UN agency electoral support. UNDP should provide EAD staff members a detailed political briefing and schedule appointments for them with appropriate political actors.

2. ***Prepare a comprehensive check-list when outlining your projected needs for the project document.***

Drafting a project document, after a needs assessment is completed, for an electoral assistance package is a complex and time-consuming affair, and as a chief coordinator of external electoral assistance, UNDP country offices may find it difficult to project the fixed costs of an election. The check-list will often include: a) consultant for a needs assessment of the electoral commission; b) salaries of electoral commission personnel; c) election equipment and materials (including ballots, voting booths etc.); d) transportation; e) registration period materials and logistical support; f) civic and voter education (e.g., training, television/newspaper/posters/radio announcements); g) international and national consultants providing technical assistance; h) national and international elections observers; and i). drivers and interpreters.

3. ***Recruit an elections expert to carry out a comprehensive "needs assessment" mission, and based in part on this person's findings/advice, determine needs for all stages of the electoral process.***

The UN's Electoral Assistance Division may offer an expert from its staff or assist in identifying a suitable consultant from its roster. The elections expert will be helpful in the preparation of the UNDP project document for electoral assistance, as well as providing advice when drafting a detailed time-schedule. Besides the elections expert for the needs assessment mission, <u>experienced staff (both international and national) may need to be recruited for either an independent electoral assistance secretariat or to work and advise the programme country's electoral commission</u>. Donor funds may also be requested for the following staffing needs: i) hiring of electoral officials to assist the voter registration process, ii) civic education trainers (international and national); iii) long and short-term election observers (international and national); iv) drivers; v) interpreters; vi) accountants/finance officers; and in special circumstances, vii) the hiring of electoral officials, including poll workers for election day (note: the wages of civil servants involved in elections should be handled through a separate government budget).

4. ***Prepare a realistic and flexible time-schedule in conformity with the country's electoral law that includes necessary steps with goals before and after election day.***

To prepare a schedule of projected activities, the country office should use the electoral management body's electoral calendar or, if one is not available, create its own calendar with the time frame of the drafting of the electoral law, the registration period, the campaign period, election day and the post-election period. Depending on the size and scope of the assistance, a chief technical advisor will often take the lead in many of the planned activities. UNDP country offices should focus on the design of electoral

support at least one year prior to the elections. At this point, the offices should also begin meeting with international donors to mobilize funds early in the electoral process. The country offices should also encourage government officials to focus on the electoral process with significant lead time, especially if a request for assistance will be made and if the voter registration process needs to be updated. The procurement of election materials should also occur early in the process to ensure cost efficiency. Partnerships with the electoral management body, international NGOs and local NGOs should also be established with significant lead time. A last minute civic education campaign will not be nearly as effective as one implemented over the course of many months. The best approach is to start electoral projects early and always keep the lines of communication open with government officials, international donors, political parties and non-governmental organizations.

5. ***Leverage funding for the project document through multiple sources and approaches (cost-sharing, multi-donor trust fund, parallel financing, and the EAD trust fund).***

UNDP country offices should not limit their resource mobilization efforts to one source of financing. As noted in section four of this study (lessons learned), *cost-sharing arrangements are often preferred by UNDP country offices* to the establishment of "multi-donor trust funds"; cost-sharing entails a more decentralized structure that places the country office in charge of managing donor financial support. On the other hand, while open trust funds often require separate accounting, donors may find this type of relationship more amenable to their needs. Parallel financing, such as direct in-kind support from donor countries (e.g., supplying vehicles or ballot paper), is another form of external support that should be pursued where possible. Finally, the UN's Electoral Assistance Division maintains a trust fund that can be drawn on to support the role of international election observers.

Box 5.1

Election-Related Resources

For further practical resources on electoral support, please visit the following websites:

1. **The Administration and Cost of Elections (The ACE Project)**

ACE is a partnership initiative of the UN (UNDP, UNEAD, UNDESA) in cooperation with International IDEA and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). This electronic publication contains extensive information about alternatives in election administration. It covers nine areas: electoral systems; legislative framework; electoral management; boundary delimitation; voter education; voter registration; voting operations; parties and candidates, and; vote counting. This information is available at <**www.aceproject.org**> and also in CD Rom format from the sponsors.

2. **The UNEAD Website**

This site provides information about UNEAD's electoral assistance worldwide, its mission and mandate and UN Secretariat documents on electoral assistance provided to specific countries. It also provides contact information for UNEAD staff. The site is found at <**www.un.org/depts/dpa/docs/eadhome**>.

3. The **UNDP/BDP/MDGD Website "Magnet"**

This site contains information and links on a wide range of governance and democratization issues. It includes a specific feature on electoral assistance that provides technical papers and links to 109 election-related websites worldwide. It is found at <**http://magnet.undp.org**.>.

4. **Websites of Key Partner Institutions Involved in Electoral Assistance**

The most comprehensive list is located on the UNDP Magnet website through the "links" to electoral assistance. Among the principal institutions in the electoral field are International IDEA <**www.int-idea.se**> the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) <**www.ifes.org**> and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)<**www.ndi.org**>.

5. **Election Process Information Collection (The EPIC Project)**

EPIC is a global election data site created by UNDP, UNEAD, International IDEA and IFES. Currently under construction, the site establishes an online database of country-by-country information on electoral systems, laws, management and administration and facilitates the analysis and comparison of electoral systems. The site can be found at <**www.epicproject.org**>.

6. ***At times, it may be advantageous to include the participation of members of the national electoral management body in regular donor meetings.***

Discussions regarding electoral matters can be most effective with the inclusion of national electoral officials. As the lead coordinator of donor meetings, UNDP should include the participation of national electoral officials in some of the regular donor meetings. These meetings present an opportunity for greater dialogue between national election officials and donors on political, technical and resource mobilization issues, as well as electoral concerns.

7. ***Review the EAD-UNDP Guidelines for Electoral Assistance and understand the responsibilities of UN actors with relation to electoral assistance, particularly UNDP country offices' official relationship with the EAD and, in certain circumstances, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG).***

In 1992, UNDP and EAD produced the document *Guidelines for Electoral Assistance* for the use of UNDP Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives to reinforce coordination within the United Nations system related to the provision of electoral assistance. This document provides the background for the UN's efforts in providing electoral assistance; describes the role of different UN organs in delivering assistance, the types of assistance the UN can provide and the preconditions required for electoral assistance; and it outlines the procedures UN Resident Coordinators must follow to receive assistance from the EAD and other UN organs. The *Guidelines* were updated in 1996 to include more information regarding UNDP's role in dispensing technical assistance and the role of the Resident Coordinator. A revision of the *Guidelines* is currently under discussion.

The document establishes that the United Nations Resident Coordinator has, in most cases, a crucial role in the coordination of electoral activities at the country level. However, major mission operations will usually be managed in-country by a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, with the Resident Coordinator playing a supportive role. In all situations where there is not a Special Representative, the Resident Coordinator will be the principal liaison between the Government and the United Nations System.

Box 5.2　　　　　**Some forms of electoral fraud and misconduct**

- *Manipulating computerized registration lists*
- *Impeding equal access of political parties to the media*
- *Delaying public finance for political party campaigns*
- *Disenfranchising voters by limiting the registration period or failing to provide polling booths with sufficient electoral materials*
- *Setting unreasonable registration requirements for political parties*
- *Misusing State resources for promoting a political party*
- *Neglecting to use modern security features to limit the scope for reproducing ballots*
- *Physical intimidation (or coercive tactics)*
- *Vote buying*
- *Ballot stuffing*
- *Lack of impartiality and independence by those institutions charged with resolving electoral disputes*

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8. ***Review options when selecting an executing agency.***

The executing agency is responsible for the issuing of contracts and the procurement of goods and services associated with the provision of external assistance. Country offices have the following options: 1) In most cases, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) serves as the executing agency for UNDP electoral assistance projects; 2) Some country offices solicit the services of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which maintains experts with considerable experience; 3) National execution (NEX) may be a suitable option when a country has the capacity to effectively and efficiently execute a project. 4) Direct execution (DEX) by the UNDP country office is also a possibility, but it must be approved by headquarters.

9. ***Appoint skillful accountants and finance officers to oversee the management of electoral assistance funds.***

The provision of electoral assistance may require the UNDP country office to manage and account for large amounts of currency, particularly for first time elections or when the foreign donor community maintains a limited presence in a country. Country office experience has shown that this can be a taxing burden on existing staff. Additional accountants and finance officers, who are competent and trusted, may need to be hired and carefully trained.

10. ***Maximize international, and particularly national, partnerships at every stage in preparing for and following through an election.***

No one external actor, including UNDP, maintains the financial, political and technical resources to address all the electoral support needs of a programme country. Many partners, both national and international, are critical to the preparation of free, fair and peaceful elections, and *UNDP is well-positioned to facilitate the building of mutually*

beneficial relationships in support of an electoral process. Partnerships can help prevent repetition in the work of multiple actors, and to achieve this, it is important for UNDP to develop a strong understanding and level of trust among electoral support groups and to move beyond simple "contractual relationships" under UNDP auspices.

In the context of electoral support, UNDP has benefited from strong country-level partnerships with organizations including national NGOs, the media, bilateral donors, the European Union, the OSCE, the UN Electoral Assistance Division, and international NGOs, such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).[12] Along with national NGOs involved in organizing voter education programmes, the UNDP country office should afford special attention to its relationship with the electoral commission, in an effort to build long-term capacity within the country for the organization of future elections.

VI.   Final Recommendations for UNDP Country Offices and Headquarters

This study has demonstrated UNDP's enormous contribution to the success of transition elections in the past decade. UNDP's assistance has been extremely valuable, but in the coming decade, UNDP will need to undertake some changes in the design and delivery of electoral support to meet new challenges. The most important of these changes will focus on long-term electoral assistance. With the ultimate goal of providing electoral assistance such that countries are able to organize future elections with little or no external assistance, following are some key recommendations.

Strategic Policy Issues:

- UNDP should concentrate more attention on long-term electoral assistance capacity building, giving particular emphasis to the development of permanent and independent electoral commissions and supporting elections which are less costly over time.

- UNDP should view its electoral assistance activities holistically within the broader governance programming objectives of the organization. High-profile support for elections serves as a key entry point to strengthen a country's institutions of democratic governance and can be used to attract donor assistance for other governance-related interventions.

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[12] Within the context of elections, IFES specializes in the training of election officers and the organization of voter education programmes. NDI specializes in the organization of voter education campaigns, training of political party poll watchers and the training of national observers. International IDEA sponsors seminars on electoral issues and organizes capacity-building workshops for female political candidates.

- Support for pre- and post-election voter and civic education programmes should be strengthened, especially for increasing dialogue among citizens and their political representatives at national, regional and local levels.

- UNDP should increase its support for sub-national elections and referenda in order to broaden the base of democracy and reinforce decentralization processes that seek to empower people, particularly the poor, at the community level.

- UNDP should draft an Electoral Support Policy Paper to guide country office and HQ operations in this important area.

Operational/Management Issues:

- UNDP headquarters is encouraged to maintain its own global programme through a trust fund or cost-sharing mechanism, to support country office project formulation costs for projects to strengthen long-term capacity development of electoral systems.

- Given the limited number of international electoral experts available, broader network collaboration needs to be established among organizations providing electoral assistance to exchange information on qualified electoral experts. Similarly, UNDP needs to take into account the work of international electoral assistance actors and build collaborative relationships where possible to integrate efforts and information. Donor meetings at the country-level have served to coordinate support, but more coordination at the corporate level should be encouraged.

- Unanticipated costs can be mitigated through effective planning and understanding of the electoral rules and regulations in a given country. Better planning in advance (with adequate time given for each stage of an electoral process) usually results in reduced costs over the long-run.

- Electoral programmes should be implemented with a lead time of at least one year, especially if assistance in updating the voter registry is required. In general, programmes that allow significant lead times are generally better implemented.

- UNDP headquarters should consolidate, in a central repository, studies and evaluations on the organization's electoral support work. New indicators should be developed to help measure UNDP's performance in the area of electoral support.

APPENDICES

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Elections: Entry Point to a Broader Governance Agenda

UNDP's contribution to electoral assistance consists primarily of support for the conduct and preparation of elections, as well as the design of electoral legal frameworks consistent with international standards. Country offices are increasingly adopting a holistic approach to electoral assistance, where high profile support for elections serves as a key entry point to strengthening the institutions of democratic governance. UNDP's recent lead coordination efforts in Indonesia and Mozambique underscore this new direction, by transcending the organization's previously narrow focus on electoral democracy. Further, with UNDP's growing involvement in local municipal elections, new opportunities are emerging for UNDP to help fortify gains made by local governments in securing political, economic and administrative authority. UNDP's help with referendums is also an area of electoral assistance where democratic institutions and values are promoted.

Roughly 72% of the 29 country offices reporting express some degree of progress in their electoral assistance activities. Among the 12 countries reporting in UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, 10 exhibited progress, particularly in the areas of capacity-support for election bodies, training and electoral legislation. Activities in the RBEC and RBLAC regions placed greater emphasis on the computerisation of electoral rolls and assistance in drafting electoral codes, and whereas no clear patterns emerge in the RBAP and RBAS regions, several successful examples are cited. Moreover, considerable emphasis is now being placed on UNDP's role in the training of female candidates and newly elected representatives.

While UNDP's electoral assistance activities are shown to afford limited attention to increasing the participation of political parties, civil society organizations and the public at large in electoral processes, the relationships forged between UNDP and programme countries during the lead up to an election are helping UNDP to enter new areas of governance, such as legislative support and human rights; this can, in turn, help to "deepen" and "entrench" democratic institutions, especially in fragile post-conflict situations. Preparing democratic institutions for responsible governance, even prior to the casting of ballots, can be as important for maintaining legitimacy as executing a free and fair election. In helping to coordinate electoral assistance, UNDP often enters into partnerships with several bilateral donors and NGOs, including the International Foundation for Electoral Assistance. In the RBEC region, UNDP often collaborates with the OSCE.