Oslo Governance Centre

2013: A Year in Review

March 2014

United Nations Development Programme

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Foreword

2013 was a year of change at UNDP. We developed the new strategic plan "Changing with the World" and prepared to re-realign our organizational structure to deliver on the new vision. Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) adapted to these changes, by building on its strength as a global knowledge hub, facilitating dialogue, knowledge exchanges and new thinking on democratic governance.

We continued our work on political transitions, culminating with the Amman Forum on Think Tanks, organized in partnership with the Foundation for the Future and UNDP's Regional Centre in Cairo (RCC). A think tank directory was produced, and supporting think tanks to generate local knowledge and influence policy reforms has emerged as a key area of work for UNDP. This stream of work also resulted in research on civil-military relations and gender inequality, providing new insights for policy dialogue on topical issues.

Fostering accountability was the focus of our revitalized governance assessment and measurement work. In Oslo, we facilitated the first Democratic Governance fellowship with the FAFO Institute for Applied International Studies and co-convened a Roundtable for policy makers and academics on governance measurements in partnership with International IDEA. We integrated social accountability mechanisms into our governance assessment approaches; a new rapid assessment framework was piloted in Myanmar which helped identify constraints to service delivery and build accountability mechanisms for communities to have their voice heard on local planning issues.

With partners such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Society for Participatory Research Asia, Global Integrity, CIDE Mexico and the Arab Reform Initiative, a new global network was put in place to build sustainable ways to make governance data more accessible to citizens and policy makers.

We extended our focus on accountability to the private sector. In partnership with the Business for Peace Foundation (BfPF), business leaders were recognised for integrating ethics into their work. A roundtable with key business and civil society leaders addressed how to increase trust and strengthen accountability between business and society, based on the concept of *shared value*.

A year away from 2015, the OGC contributed to national and international consultations on governance as part of the post-2015 development agenda. Our focus has been on governance targets and indicators, ensuring that inequalities in-country can also be captured as new goals and indicators are established and monitored.

This also goes for gender equality. In partnership with FOKUS, we developed an initiative to support gender-sensitive democracy indices, with an emphasis on countries undergoing democratic transitions. In partnership with UN Women and RCC, OGC embarked on the development of gender sensitive data collection tools at the local levels in the Arab Region.

Recognizing that governance is shaped by context in any country, we developed a Guidance Note on Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA) for Rule of Law, Access to Justice and Human Rights. This was validated by UNDP colleagues in several country offices as they were developing new programmes. ICA is also a key component of our work on Participatory Governance Assessments (PGA) in the UN Programme to combat Deforestation (UN-REDD). A highlight in 2013 was Indonesia's recognition of UN-REDD's work and the exchange of knowledge with Nigeria, a country also implementing REDD+ against the backdrop of climate change.

We thank our partners for 2013 and hope you enjoy reading this review highlighting some of our stories and publications.

Warm regards,

Heba El-Kholy, PhD.
Director, Oslo Governance Centre

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Panellists at the 2013 'Forum on the Role of Think Tanks in Supporting Policy Dialogue and Consensus Building'
Photo: Foundation for the Future/UNDP

Building local knowledge: Think tanks support reforms and dialogue during political transition

Understanding rapidly shifting realities is crucial during periods of political transition when decisions are highly consequential and societies are often polarized. New realities demand new development responses. Building local capacity for generating policy-relevant knowledge for reform was a central theme of the November 2012 conference, 'Political Economy of Transitions', which the Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre organized in Oslo.

The OGC then followed that discussion with a July 2013 gathering in Amman of experts and activists from more than 20 think tanks to define the challenges and opportunities confronting them in supporting democratic transition processes. Organised in collaboration with the Foundation for the Future and with support from the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, the forum brought together participants (including UN representatives) from Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Myanmar, Norway, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United States.

The participants agreed that research independence, long-term financing, high standards of ethics and transparency, and a strong connection with civil society and grass-roots organizations were necessary for a think tank to work effectively.

Bassma Kodmani, Director of the Arab Reform Initiative, a network of Arab think **tanks, also stressed humility. "To be in a** position to mediate and to influence, humility and independence are key," **she** said.

> *"The Amman forum on think tanks contributed to new synergies between UNDP Tunisia and national think tanks. Some of the think tanks have helped organize regional consultations on the contributions of civil society in the transition, and one is now an implementing partner for UNDP Tunisia in a project to promote dialogue and reduce tensions."*
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> — Abderrahman El Yessa, Governance Team Leader, UNDP Tunisia

Amneh Halweh, Regional Coordinator of KARAMA, a network of women's organizations in the Arab World, emphasized the role of women's groups "as a force to be reckoned with" — not just as consumers of research but also as producers of new forms of knowledge.

The participants asked for more dialogue and the sharing of expertise and knowledge, particularly on new methods for generating data and ways to use social media.

The participants also agreed that external actors could support think tanks to convert research findings into policy but that external support must be sensitive so as not to compromise the credibility of the researchers. Open dialogue in first setting and then following research agendas and mutual accountability between donors and beneficiaries are essential.

The notion of knowledge for action, with which think tanks should both target governments and citizens resonated with many participants; such targeting generates more awareness on issues important to the population and thus public demand for accountability.

New hybrid forms of think tanks, in which researchers partner with NGOs or the private sector should not be ignored. "Think tanks need to position themselves politically as a progressive force to support democratic transition," said Mark Orkin, professor at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Two particular challenges for many think tanks is their lack of awareness of the needs of policy makers and the limited incentives for governments to follow a think tank's advice. "We need to build greater trust between the think tanks and the users of their products," explained Mounir Tabet, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Tunisia. "Upholding the principles of professionalism, superior quality of work, independence and stronger communication, think tanks can effectively influence policy."

Following the forum, the OGC and the Amman-based Foundation for the Future jointly produced an online directory of think tanks in the region. Described as one of the first and most comprehensive attempts to systematize the scattered information about think tanks in the region, the directory can inspire the generation of a more in-depth analytical study of think tanks contribution in periods of political transition.

Nader Fergany, Director of the Almishkat Center for Research, indicated that the impartiality, expertise and convening power of UNDP positions it well to facilitate partnerships and knowledge exchanges among think tanks and between policy makers and researchers.

Myat Ko Ko, from the Yangon School of Political Sciences in Myanmar, had described the forum as "inspirational" and expressed interest in a similar process in Myanmar. In response, and building on an earlier consultation in Myanmar in early 2013, UNDP is exploring the possibility of supporting a knowledge exchange in Myanmar in 2014.

Democratic governance after 2015: Not everything that counts can be counted

Less than two years from the 2015 deadline for reaching the Millennium Development Goals, discussions on the development of new goals have begun. An important question in the global conversation is whether there will be a stand-alone goal on governance in the post-2015 agenda, and if so, how will it be measured? In the UNDP contribution to the post-2015 development agenda discussions, the Oslo Governance Centre focuses on how to measure governance.

In June, OGC participated in the experts' meeting, 'Accountability Framework for Conflict, Violence, Governance and Disaster and the Post-2015 Development Agenda', which UNDP, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office and UNICEF jointly organized. The meeting engaged statisticians, political analysts and evaluation specialists along with representatives of member States, national statistical offices and international organizations. They generally agreed that the new goals and targets must be universal yet flexible to capture each country's context.

Measuring development progress remains a complicated endeavour. No single indicator can, in every context, tell a full and fair story about the progress. Some goals, such as those related to peace, may require a range of indicators to capture the situation.

Facilitated by an OGC technical advisor, the working group on indicators at the June experts' meeting concluded that indicators must show more than national averages, including how certain social groups or regions progress. Such differentiation can be incorporated into many targets, particularly those that are survey-based.

Following that meeting, the September conference on 'Global Dialogue on Rule of Law and the Post-2015 Development Agenda' helped increase the momentum on the development of the methodological tools, targets and indicators needed to measure governance for the post-2015 agenda. Two goals considered in the conference discussion centred on access to justice and legal empowerment on one hand and security and violence reduction on the other.

The broader issue of governance also was prioritized in the national Norwegian consultation process on the post-2015 agenda. For that process, UN-affiliated organizations in Norway, with support from

the OGC and the UNDP Nordic Representation Office, arranged 15 thematic consultations that resulted in a 'people's report' that was handed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November 2013. The report highlighted Norwegian priorities for 'The World We Want' after 2015.

The report offers advice on how these priorities could be monitored and measured.

FAFO Institute and UNDP partner on Governance Fellowship

A Fellowship Programme was piloted in 2013 to generate cutting-edge, relevant knowledge on democratic governance and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise between research institutions in Norway and developing countries. Through the programme, practitioners and policy researchers are invited to spend several months at the Oslo Governance Centre, in collaboration with a hosting partner institution, to work on a specific democratic governance issue.

The first Fellow, Shahjahan Bhuiyan, a scholar and professor at the American University of Cairo, spent two months in Oslo and was co-hosted by the FAFO Institute for Applied International Studies. Mr Bhuiyan conducted research on governance in Egypt, focusing on the period after the popular revolution. His paper on inclusive participation in Egypt (forthcoming) was presented at a joint OGC

Shahjahan Bhuiyan, first Fellow in the Fellowship Programme established by the FAFO Institute and the OGC . Photo: The American University of Cairo

and Fafo Institute event in August, attended by around 120 participants and featured in extensive media coverage, such as ABC Nyheter and Nettavisen.

Partner in Focus: FAFO Institute
The FAFO Institute for Applied International Studies and the OGC established the first institutional partnership in 2013 by piloting a Fellowship programme. (See story). FAFO provided substantive support to the research and was an **obvious partner for OGC. "FAFO** has carried out research related to living conditions and political reform in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East for **more than 20 years", explains Jon Pede**rsen, Managing Director at FAFO. OGC aims to build on this experience and to expand the Fellowship in 2014, possibly to institutions in other Nordic countries, as well. Discussions are underway with a new fellow form Mexico. Innovative partnerships can make OGC more relevant as a global knowledge hub, and enhances UNDP capacity as a knowledge-based organization.

Accountability to whom and for what? The governance results, assessment and accountability model

The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2014–2017 continues placing governance at the centre of our work. By supporting countries in strengthening their institutions, capacities and accountability, UNDP aims to assist in building and addressing new development realities.

But recognizing that "accountability only works when people have the right information, easily available and easy to use,"[1] the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons has emphasized the importance of building institutions that are accountable to all. This requires accountability at all levels and in all directions — from governments to citizens, corporations to shareholders and civil society groups to their constituencies.

To complement this aim, the OGC is pioneering an assessment and accountability model that systematically connects evidence-based knowledge and informs the development of UNDP governance programming at the country level. The model engages the participation of all involved actors in a country context. Using a three-pillar approach, the assessment model helps incorporate accountability mechanisms into governance interventions and programmes.

As part of the process for fine-tuning that model, the OGC with the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in December 2013 in Oslo brought together more than 20 senior

Jon Pedersen from the FAFO Institute for Applied International Studies engages with Round Table participants in December 2013. Photo: UNDP

experts from development agencies, academia and civil society for a round-table discussion, 'Democratic Governance: Can We Measure Up?' The conversation focused on the links among governance assessments, programming and results to reconcile the perceived gap between the donor focus on governance impact and the need for greater flexibility in governance programming.

The participants also discussed how to collectively respond to the reaffirmed need for improved social accountability in governance programming. The OGC presented its assessment and accountability model as one possible approach. The round-table meeting has encouraged future collaborations on the challenges associated with governance results; the OGC plans to support two similar events in 2014.

The outcome of the round-table discussion will was presented during the January 2014 GOVNET meeting in Brussels.

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[1] A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development: The Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Accountability and ethics in the private sector: Incentives and role models for business leaders

In May 2013, the Business for Peace Foundation (BFPF) honoured five individuals for their contribution to ethical business practices. According to Peter Saxegaard, Business of Peace Foundation Chairman, "BFP Foundation promotes the vision of business worthiness and a vision of a future where business is reconnected with society.

The future of business lies in partnering with society, in reconnecting company success with the success of the societies in which one is active. This is not classic social responsibility, philanthropy or even sustainability — it goes beyond, towards a better way to achieve success in business."

The 2013 Business for Peace awardees receive their honour at the Oslo City Hall. Photo: Business for Peace/IHT

The 2013 honourees are business leaders from Brazil, Denmark, Pakistan, United States and Yemen and were featured in the [Global Edition of the New York Times](#).

As a side event to the ceremony, the OGC and the Business for Peace Foundation arranged a round table discussion on ways to increase trust and strengthen accountability between business and society, based on the concept of shared value. A total of 25 senior executives from both the private sector and civil society in Norway joined the discussion, moderated by Jan Egeland, former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and currently the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. The senior executives talked of good practices and further steps to strengthen mutual accountability.

Patrick Keuleers (left), Director, a.i, UNDP's Democratic Governance Group and Pete Saxegaard, BFP Foundation Chairman. Photo: UNDP

UNDP has been a partner in this vision and its follow-through work, through the OGC, since 2012. Highlighting the private sector potential to support rather than undermine sustainable human development fits with the global conversation on the post-2015 agenda.

During the awards ceremony for the five honourees in Oslo, Jordan Ryan, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, spoke of the importance of ethical business in re-building lives and trust, particularly in fragile environments.

The OGC has documented the work of the 2013 honourees to distil the useful lessons from their innovative and transformative experiences. The insights will be used in drafting a policy research agenda and supporting future work of UNDP on corporate governance. Find the lessons learned at http://businessforpeace.no/

Partner in Focus: Business for Peace Foundation

For two years, UNDP, through the OGC, has supported the Business for Peace Foundation in reaching out and awarding exceptional business leaders and provide valuable lessons learned of innovative and transformative business practices approaches. The objective of the awards is to create global awareness on how good governance and ethics can be integrated into business practices and to demonstrate how business leaders can contributes to sustainable human development — **based on the concept of 'shared value**s'. In addition to UNDP, the Foundation also partners with the city of Oslo, the *International Herald Tribune*, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Oslo Centre for Peace and Human Rights and the UN Global Compact (more recently) in honouring five business leaders each year.

How do we assess local governance and e-governance?

The Oslo Governance Centre developed the Governance Results Assessment and Accountability Framework in 2013 to support UNDP global strategies on local governance and e-governance.

The framework relies on rapid assessments, which can take between two and four months to complete, to respond to the immediate needs of stakeholders. By taking a participatory approach to these assessments, UNDP ensures that the indicators of success for governance programmes are determined by communities. For instance, communities are involved when national actors decide whether and when to carry out the assessments, formulate the rationale and guide the research; community stakeholders are engaged at each stage of the planning and monitoring process.

The framework builds on the upcoming UNDP global strategy for integrated local governance and development, which looks at several UN approaches to supporting local governance and helps see their interlinks. The approaches include those developed by UNDP's ART programme (Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Human Development), the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UN Volunteers. The framework makes it easier to prioritize support to local governance.

The framework was also applied in Myanmar, in 2013, when a rapid assessment kicked off a subnational exercise to identify constraints to service delivery and provide both quantitative and qualitative baseline findings for the national planning and policy-making processes. The rapid assessment, conducted during a period of political transition, helped build accountability mechanisms for communities to have their perspectives heard on local planning issues.

In the Arab region, the OGC is supporting a regional programme for local governance assessments that will shape the development of local governance programmes in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo and Yale University jointly conducted Municipality assessments; a methodology for data collection is being developed with the respective national statistical offices.

In December 2013, the OGC provided support to the UNDP Regional Centre in convening a regional workshop in Tunisia to discuss strategies for strengthening municipalities and local governance in the Arab region.

Allies in brokering knowledge for governance assessments and accountability

In partnership with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the OGC delivered a global consultation on governance assessments and accountability in London in August 2013. Participants included representatives from each region, with strong networks and leadership commitment to carry out governance assessments for accountability at the regional and global levels. The initiative is called the Governance Assessments and Accountability Network (GAAN), and other

partners involve the Society for Participatory Research Asia, International IDEA, the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching Mexico, the Arab Reform Initiative and Global Integrity.

GAAN participants in London discussing governance assessments and accountability
Photo: UNDP

Building on their individual experiences and expertise, the participants agreed to engage in collective advocacy to bridge the gap between governance assessments and accountability at the global level — how to use governance knowledge and data and make it more accessible to the public. GAAN will help lead the international discourse on how to use governance data to foster social accountability. It also will function as a platform for deeper engagement with civil society, governments, the media and the private sector. GAAN will be further consolidated in a consultation in New Delhi in 2014, which will ensure sustainability of the **OGC's m**ethodology for assessing governance issues and measuring results in a participatory manner.

Partners in Focus: GAAN

The OGC partnered with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, a well-established organization supporting good governance and great leadership in Africa, to co-organize the meeting in London to set up the Governance Assessments and Accountability Network (GAAN) with the additional partners — Global Integrity, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, Action Aid, International IDEA, the Arab Reform Initiative and the Centre for Economic Research and Training in Mexico. The group of partners are helping to facilitate the international discourse on how credible and robust evidence and governance data can be used for social accountability.

Participatory Governance Assessments in Indonesia: Most valuable contribution to improving governance of forests, land and REDD+

The Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) approach builds both on UNDP and the **Oslo Governance Centre's knowledge** and experience in a range of sectors and themes (such as anti-corruption, justice and gender issues) as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation**'s experience in data collection and** monitoring in the forest sector by relating this combined expertise to relevant issues within the REDD+ Policy.

In Indonesia, the report of the first PGA used in the country and for the REDD+ process was launched in May 2013. The findings indicated that the subnational systems of governance are less robust than the national systems; more information on law enforcement and forest-related crimes are needed; and civil society is often more active than government actors with law enforcement and the policy reform needed for the REDD+ process.

During the launch, high-level government officials outlined how they saw the findings and recommendations being used in Indonesia. For example, Kuntoro Mankusubroto, **Head of Indonesia's REDD+** Preparedness Task Force and the Presidential Working Unit of Supervision and Management, explained that the PGA results could generate regular updates of the data and help track progress and regression against the baseline and set targets. The PGA results were also a critical reference for local government leaders, both at the provincial and district levels, to improve governance, he added. Mankusubroto characterized the PGA as "the most valuable contribution to the process of improving governance of forests, land and REDD+".

The Indonesian Minister of Forestry, Zulkifli Hasan, remarked that the PGA report for REDD+ will be important for developing the next strategic forestry plan and will add particular value to aspects dealing with forest governance. The PGA also will be used as a model to conduct forest and REDD+ governance in the future.

Abdon Nababan, Secretary General in the Alliance of Indonesian Indigenous Peoples (AMAN) commented that the PGA process helps build a constructive space for dialogue among stakeholders and that AMAN has already used the baseline findings and recommendations in its strategic planning for 2013.

As part of South–South Cooperation and sharing of lessons learned, the PGA report was launched in English in June during a UN-REDD Pre-Policy Board Information Session in Lombok, Indonesia. In particular, the report was presented to government representatives from Nigeria.

The full English report is available here and the executive summary is available here.

There are two positive spin-offs in particular from the PGA process in Indonesia. First, governance shortcomings have been addressed constructively, particularly corrupt practices and corruption risks, in collaboration with the National Corruption Eradication Commission and the Forest Concession Holders Association. Second, one of the ten PGA provinces, Jambi, requested a province-specific forest governance index by building on the PGA work to date. An Experts' Panel, mirroring the stakeholders at the provincial level (similar to the national level PGA Experts' Panel) has been set up to take this work forward, building on the revised PGA indicators following a kick-off workshop in December 2013. This province

Mr. Iman Santoso, Head of Research and Development within the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry, presents a copy of the Indonesian PGA report to his PGA counterpart in Nigeria, Odigha Odigha, of the Cross River State Forestry Commission.

specific index will act as a basis for planning and monitoring forest governance.

The additional governance activities make use of the PGA platforms, spaces which previously were unavailable. The 'spin offs' indicate that the PGA has generated more openness in admitting and dealing with governance challenges and that stakeholders see the PGA approach as a valuable way to tackle governance challenges in a constructive and open manner.

Engaging citizens for local service delivery

The enhancement of local governance and empowerment of municipalities could be a powerful driver of political, social and economic inclusion, particularly for countries undergoing political transition. This was the theme of a workshop in Tunis on 'Strengthening Municipalities and Democratic Local Governance in the Arab Countries in Transition' in December 2013. Organized by the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo with support from the Oslo Governance Centre and in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Human Rights Tunisia, UNDP Tunisia and the Yale University Programme on Governance and Local Development, the workshop brought together more than 80 participants from eight countries, including deputy ministers, mayors and governors.

Participants reflected on knowledge and experiences from the Arab countries, and discussed key issues and challenges related to strengthening municipalities and local governance in Arab countries in transition. It was acknowledged that decentralization is a crucial component of the democratic transition.

Recommendations included requests for UNDP to continue leading the local governance discourse at national and sub-national levels, by engaging with citizens, officials and local elites and providing a platform for constructive dialogue between the state and the citizens on the quality of local governance institutions.

Participants in the workshop on local governance in Tunisia. Photo: UNDP

Who wants what and why? Institutional and Context Analysis to enhance programming

For pro-poor interventions to succeed, we need to understand who wants what and why, and which incentives drive people to act. Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA) targets this need — understanding where the real power to change the state of affairs lies, what keeps it there and how it can be shifted. In the three Guidance Notes on ICA produced by UNDP thus far – a general one (2012), one on ICA for Rule of Law (forthcoming) and one for Elections (forthcoming), special consideration is given to women's situation and the power dynamics that affect gender equality.

In 2013, more than 100 UN and UNDP staff members were trained on Institutional and Context Analysis for use in their daily work. A webinar for UN-REDD led to such analysis carried out in Africa and Latin America, both supported by the OGC. Support was also provided to analyses in the Arab States and the Asia–Pacific region.

To learn from the various applications of the analysis to date, an e-discussion was organized with participants from a range of offices, units, development partners and consultancies. The exercise generated useful lessons and more than 1,000 views. Along with the Guidance Notes for ICA for Rule of Law and Elections, specific guidance on ICA was developed for the *Poverty-Environment Initiative Handbook.* The publications encourage ICA in the new UNDP Strategic Plan.

The Guidance Note for Rule of Law was validated by staff from eight country offices in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in collaboration with the Democratic Governance Group/Bureau for Development Policy in New York and the Bratislava

Regional Centre. "This is very timely, as we develop new programmes for rule of law in Georgia," noted Sophie Kemkhadze, Head of Programme and Assistant Resident Representative in UNDP Georgia. "The training and the note will allow us to apply the ICA in practice, better informing our programmes."

In December, the OGC co-organized a Political Economy Analysis Working Group meeting with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UK Department for International Development, with 60 participants from bilateral and multilateral agencies, think

Participants at the Tbilisi workshop on 'Institutional and Context Analysis for Rule of Law, Justice and Human Rights'

tanks and academics to map initiatives on both types of analyses and find ways to improve the implementing tools. The participants agreed on the need to learn more about working and thinking politically, going beyond the tools and that local and national capacity for political economy analysis must be developed. The meeting's outcomes will be shared with the OECD GOVNET in 2014.

OGC Director Heba El-Kholy addresses the public at the commemoration of Women's Day in Oslo, March 2013, together with Norwegian MP Marit Nybakk, FOKUS Board Director Rina Mariann Hansen and Vidar Helgesen, who at the time was the Director of International IDEA. Photo: UNDP Nordic Representation Office

Keeping promises: Positioning gender equality at the centre of democratic governance

The Oslo Governance Centre continues to strengthen its focus on gender equality and **women's empowerment as a core part of its** governance policy agenda. In 2013, the OGC produced a literature review, *Gender Equality in Political Transitions,* which captures important writing on experiences of democratic transitions from a gender perspective. The review draws on examples from the Arab region, Latin America, Eastern and Central Europe, Indonesia, Namibia, South Africa and Turkey. The focus is on the early involvement of women in popular uprisings and what the transition might bring in terms of gender equalities and inequalities.

The review was intended to identify policy research gaps and to drive forward a research agenda that can improve the understanding of the kinds of policies and actions that can best support greater gender equality in different contexts. The literature review was widely disseminated at various forums, including the November international conference on 'Women, Power and Politics' in Oslo to celebrate the centenary of women's suffrage in Norway.

Also in 2013 and through a partnership with UN Women and the Regional Centre in Cairo OGC agreed on a proposal to develop gender-sensitive data collection tools and methodologies at the local and municipal levels for use in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, building on its governance assessment expertise and experience. Gender-focused research will be conducted in 2014 to assess **women's political and legal empowerment.** It includes **analysis of women's** participation in various political institutions at the local level, the institutional and cultural barriers they face and their access to and experience with legal services.

The Norwegian umbrella organization, Forum for Women and Development

Partner in Focus: FOKUS
In 2013, UNDP, through the OGC, crafted a partnership with the Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS)**, Norway's largest umbrella organization of women's groups, to** help support greater political and economic participation of women with a focus on countries in transitions. The draft gender and governance programme, in collaboration with the UNDP Regional Centre and UN Women, will provide technical support to global and regional institutions to make regional democracy indices gender-sensitive. At the global level, the programme will focus on South–South knowledge-based advocacy and exchanges as well as policy research to expand reform options and influence actions at the national level.

(FOKUS), invited the OGC director to participate in a panel discussion to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March 2013. A substantive partnership ensued with the OGC, including participation of FOKUS in the July 2013 think tank forum in Amman (see previous story), which included several women's groups. [You can read the Director's reflections here.](#)

On Democracy Day 2013, an op-ed written by OGC Director which stresses that there is no Democracy without Diversity was published on the UNDP public website. [Read the op-ed here](#).

OGC contributes to the global policy dialogue on democratic governance

As part of its mandate within UNDP, the Oslo Governance Centre organizes and participates in several global, regional and national forums t shape policy discussions on democratic governance. Below are some of internal and external policy dialogue events OGC staff participated in:

External Events

- The GOVNET meeting on **OECD's** post-Busan role, in Paris, April 2013
- Training of political youth organizations in Finland, Helsinki, April 2013
- A training workshop on institutional and context analysis for students of international relations at the University of St Andrews, UK, April 2013
- The AfriGAP Strategy Meeting in Dakar, June 2013
- Informal consultations on governance after2015, hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo, June 2013
- A seminar on the connection between the post-2015 agenda and local governance in Oslo, August 2013
- A multi-stakeholder conference on **'Good Local Governance and People Centred Services'** in Ney Pi Taw, Myanmar, August 2013
- Launch of the *User's Guide on Assessing Water Governance* in Stockholm, September 2013
- The Launch of the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights' twentieth anniversary Report in Oslo, October 2013
- Seminar on post-2015, organized **by Christian Michelsen's Institute in** Bergen, Norway, October 2013
- The third phase of the launch of the V-Democracy Index in Gothenburg, Sweden, October 2013
- The formal launch of the Open Government Partnership in London, October 2013
- The UNESCWA/OECD/Arab League Conference in Bahrain, December 2013
- The 'Summit on the Effectiveness of Think Tanks in MENA' **in** Istanbul, organized by STRATIM and University of Pennsylvania, December 2013

UNDP Events

- The UNDP Community of Practice on ICT, Governance and Conflict in Istanbul, May 2013
- The 'Expert Meeting on an Accountability Framework for Conflict, Violence and Disaster' in New York, June 2013
- A workshop on Governance for Peace Building and State Building in Bangkok, July 2013
- A meeting on 'Governance Results, Accountability and Measurement Frameworks' **in** New York, August 2013
- A workshop on the global UNDP strategy for integrated local development in Iguazú, Brazil, November 2013

Publications 2013

Most recent publications are available online and can be downloaded from the UNDP website at UNDP/Governance, which also features information on the Oslo Governance Centre.

User's Guide on Assessing Water Governance
During recent years, the international water community has focused on governance as the most important challenge to improve water management and service provision. Most developing countries have initiated new water laws and policies, but many face significant challenges in implementing them. Comprehensive assessments of the governance of water resources can guide the design of effective policy interventions by helping to determine where changes are needed and what actions can make them happen. This guide is a resource for stakeholders to conduct water governance assessments more productively within their local or national context. It provides practical advice on what to consider when designing and implementing an assessment. It also offers guidance on a number of concrete topics, such as which governance aspects are important to look at, the choice of indicators, data collection, how to manage multi-stakeholder processes and how to use the findings to influence policy. You can find it online here.
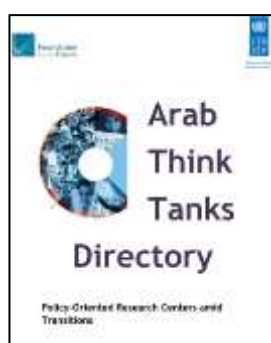
Partner in Focus: Stockholm International Water Institute
The OGC collaborates with the Water Governance Facility of the Stockholm International Water Institute, the Water Integrity Network and the UNDP Global Programme on Anti-Corruption to develop improved methods for assessing and measuring water governance performance.

Literary Review on the role of the Military in political transitions (forthcoming)
In line with the OGC focus on democratic transitions, this annotated bibliography defines and maps the economic role of the military in political transitions. The publication takes forward recommendations from the 2012 joint OGC and the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre conference, 'The Political Economy of Transitions: Analysis for Change', and focuses on military entrepreneurship in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Paraguay, Philippines, Russia, Tunisia, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Yemen. The sources reviewed date from the 1980s to the present day, and the bibliography highlights their main themes, sub-themes, basic concepts and notable gaps. The review should help build up knowledge, consolidate mapping processes, advance the field of expertise and support those involved in the practical management of political transitions.

Issue Brief: Role of the military in the economy (forthcoming)

In a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, the removal of the military from positions of political power often is prioritized over divestiture of economic interests the military may hold. Yet, transitions to democracy require comprehensive defence sector reforms. Neglecting reforms that **affect the military's economic interests can empower it in ways that undermine achievements of** democratic civilian control in other areas of defence sector reform. This issue brief highlights some of the challenges but also opportunities for reform and changes in policy.

Directory of Think Tanks in the Arab Region

After the Amman forum on the role of think tanks during political transitions (July 2013), jointly organized by OGC and the Foundation for the Future, the first directory of Arab think tanks in the Middle East and North Africa region was compiled. This work was initiated in part because there was no single comprehensive source of information on think tanks in the region. Much work and collaboration are still needed to produce a more complete picture of this budding ecosystem. The hope is that the directory and the forum mark a new step in the commitment to research and public debate to better understand the potential of civil society and its crucial roles in democratic transitions. You can find it online here.

Participatory Governance Assessments for REDD+: A Practical Guide (forthcoming)

This handbook is a response to a UN-REDD Programme partner country demand for practical guidance on participatory governance assessments for REDD+. It is for use at the country level — both in existing and new PGA processes. It outlines the main steps of a PGA process while allowing flexibility for variances across regions, countries, peoples, communities and circumstances. The guide also draws on lessons, challenges and practical solutions drawn from the experience of the four PGA pilot projects within the UN-REDD Programme to date: Ecuador, Indonesia, Nigeria and Viet Nam. The intended primary users are stakeholders who are or will be engaged in a PGA process, including civil society, government, academia and private sector is for use at the country level — in particular, PGA coordinators in partner countries. For more information on the PGA approach, see the PGA Fast Facts online.

Issue Brief: **Open Government and People's Participation**

This Issue Brief was developed by the OGC and the e-Governance Team of the UNDP Democratic Governance Group in anticipation of the Open Government Partnership Annual Summit. The Issue Brief features the UNDP role in facilitating inclusive participation and harnessing ICTs for human development — shedding light on how governance assessments can complement the **Open Government Partnership'**s independent reporting mechanism. The Issue Brief was widely disseminated at the summit, which took place in London in September 2013 (not yet online).

Assessing Governance to Achieve Health and Education Goals – A Discussion Paper

The Governance Assessment Framework presented in this paper proposes a range of methods for assessing governance inputs and outcomes in the health and education sectors. At a time when new sustainable human development goals for a post-2015 context are being considered, lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals monitoring processes can be extremely useful for informing the new agenda, whether related to monitoring, types of indicators used, stakeholders involved or governance bottlenecks. The Framework delves deeper and gathers more nuanced information by providing a set of tools with which to diagnose and monitor governance problems that are specific to the health and education sectors. It presents simple assessment methods that can be used by national stakeholders to conduct diagnostics of governance obstacles that affect specific social sector outcomes. The Framework can help assess to what extent certain deprivations or disparities in these sectors can be traced back to specific public policy failures, which in turn may be driven by governance problems. You can find it online here.
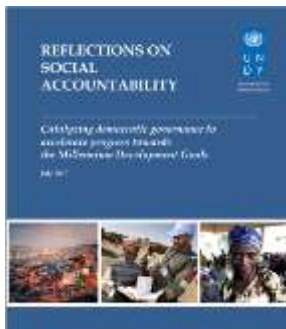
Gender Equality in Transitions (a literature review)

In 2013 the OGC produced and widely disseminated an annotated gender bibliography that was conceived during preparations for the November 2012 conference on 'Political Economy of Transitions'. The rapid review of the literature brings together more than 70 sources into a single resource for practitioners, policy researchers, academics and gender activists. It covers specific themes, including the complex and dynamic processes of change — and resistance to change — across the phases of democratic transition, from the critical occurrences that initiate transition processes to the consolidation of democracy. You can find it online here.

Analysis of Selected DGTTF Projects (forthcoming)

The Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF) was established in 2001 as a tool to foster progress in democratic governance. The Fund was created to align the UNDP global, regional and country programmes around the democratic governance thematic area and to mobilize donor resources for thematic priorities. It is a quick-disbursing alternative to traditional project-by-project co-financing. In response to country demand and in alignment with the UNDP Strategic Plan Outcomes in the context of democratic governance, the Fund has approved, since its inception (and excluding 2012), approximately $125 million across 818 projects in 151 countries through the annual competitive call for proposals to UNDP Country Offices. The two evaluations of the Fund found that it has been successful as a 'venture capital fund', promoting innovation where it is typically hard to make progress and yet extremely important to do so. As part of its mandate to collect and codify lessons learned, the OGC has produced a compilation of 10 **of the Fund's** project reviews, covering innovative and catalytic initiatives in the areas of political analysis, performance-based budgeting, decentralization, legal empowerment of the poor, e-governance, accountability and transparency.

Reflections on Social Accountability

This paper presents comparative experiences of social accountability initiatives across four themes — the use of information and communications technology; issues affecting the urban poor and the informal sector; countries in or emerging from conflict; and social inclusion. This paper supplements the UNDP Guidance Note on Fostering Social Accountability, which explains the agency's approach to social accountability and provides direction for programming. The four chapters capture diverse examples of adopting a social accountability approach to programming and showcases new initiatives in which social accountability principles and tools promote dialogue between citizens and the State to address social exclusion or to increase citizen engagement in service delivery. They also illustrate the possibilities for making democratic governance more effective in delivering development outcomes. The publication was produced by the OGC and the Civil Society Division in the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy. You can find it online here.

Animation: **UNDP's Approach to Strengthening** Democratic Governance

To reach out to development partners, programme countries and the general public, the Democratic Governance Group, with OGC support, produced an animated video that features UNDP work in democratic governance. Linking it to the global campaign 'The World We Want', the animated feature presents in two minutes examples of UNDP work on anti-corruption, rule of law, parliamentary development and more and takes the audience through the world of democratic governance. You can view the animation on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOkxPgt5YNA

Guidance Note: Marginaliz**ed People's Participation in Policy Processes** (forthcoming)

Marginalized people's participation in policy processes is a critical arena for change: If marginalized people are to shift the drivers of their marginalization, they must be able to influence crucial decisions and practices through which public life is governed. Their participation in policy processes is an accessible arena of change because of increasing opportunities to pursue more inclusive participation. This Guidance Note supports UNDP staff and others to integrate critical elements for marginalized people's participation in policy processes at the national, regional and local levels and can be adapted by both practitioners and policy makers who might have no or only some previous experience in this area of programming.

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