GOVERNANCE
QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS
IN THE ARAB REGION

26 November 2012
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“UNDERSTANDING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITION”?
Selected Sources on Governance in Transition

- Arab Development Challenges Report 2011, UNDP
- Arab Human Development Report 2004, Toward Freedom in the Arab World, UNDP
- Pathways to Democratic Transitions: Summary Report on Country Experiences, Lessons Learned and the Road Ahead 2011, UNDP
- Countries at the Crossroads 2012, Freedom House
- Governance and the Arab World Transition: Reflections, Empirics and Implications for the International Community 2012, Daniel Kaufmann
- Jadaliyya website: http://www.jadaliyya.com/
- Carnegie Endowment (Middle East) website: http://www.carnegieendowment.org/regions/?fa=list&id=120
- Etc.
ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

They're now chanting "Bread, freedom and human dignity." That pretty much sums it up. #jan25
What do we define as governance in the Arab region, what are the key elements, and who are the key actors?

- Access to information and e-governance
- Access to justice and rule of law
- Anti-corruption
- Civic engagement/education
- Electoral systems and processes
- Human rights
- Local governance and development
- Parliamentary development
- Public administration reform
- Inclusivity (particularly of youth and women)
- Etc.
How Much of a Role Does Islam Play in Politics?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>Large</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Overcome Notions of State-Centrism?
Economic growth does NOT equate with well-being, unless premised on decent work and inclusion.....

Figure 2. Trends in Official Gross Domestic Product per Capita versus Well-Being (percentage of citizens who report “thriving” in Gallup Polls)

INCLUSION OF ALL....
How to balance stability with freedom of expression and the very high expectations during transition?

Tension between the desirable vs. feasible changes
CIVIL SOCIETY MUST ILLUSTRATE CIVILITY

- “If men [people] were angels, no government would be necessary.” – James Madison (4th President of the USA and political theorist)
- “NGOs that seek to make a virtue out of highlighting the failures of governments, business, and other institutions should be subjected to the same degree of scrutiny that everyone else faces. They too need to be accountable for their actions” - Anthony Adair (1999)
NEW VS. OLD – HOW TO HOLD ACCOUNTABLE?
How to weigh the need to consolidate governance gains whilst not neglecting other important areas of need?
“Arab economies continue to unsustainably deplete renewable natural resources, motivated by short-term profits, causing environmental impoverishment of scarce land and water resources while discounting the value of these resources to future generations. The average annual cost of environmental degradation in Arab countries has been estimated to be $95 billion, equivalent to 5% of their combined GDP in 2010.”

- Arab Forum for Environment and Development, 2011
WHAT IS SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION?

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2012
FIVE QUESTIONS

- What do we define as governance in the Arab region, what are the key elements, and who are the key actors?
- How to overcome notions of state-centrism?
- How to balance stability with freedom of expression and the very high expectations during transition?
- How to weigh the need to consolidate governance gains whilst not neglecting other important areas of need?
- What is social accountability in a period of transition?