

# FAST FACTS

United Nations  
Development Programme



## Democratic Governance

The response to the recent global economic crisis by many countries around the world, particularly developed nations, has demonstrated that the State has an important role to play in addressing critical challenges. This is also an important lesson for developing countries as public institutions must have the capacity to address these difficulties while at the same time delivering the benefits of human development.

In response to these demands, UNDP is focusing on enhancing the capacity of the state to make it more responsive, capable, and inclusive. UNDP's Democratic Governance Global Community of Practice meeting, held in Dakar in February 2010, brought together former heads of states and practitioners and corroborated this approach. UNDP is supporting this agenda by fostering inclusive participation and promoting responsive institutions, underpinned by internationally agreed gender, human rights and anti-corruption principles.



Locally elected officials take literacy classes in Burkina Faso.  
Photo: Giacomo Pirozzi, UNDP Burkina Faso

Working with scarce public resources to target people in need means that governments need to improve the delivery of services while ensuring equity and inclusion at the economic, social, and political levels. Similarly, charting a sustainable course out of crisis without abandoning human development targets requires increased stakeholder participation in governance processes and strong public institutions that can effectively respond to any challenge. It also requires a civil society that can hold their governments to account. Together, these elements set the agenda for UNDP's work in Democratic Governance.

### MATTERS OF FACT

- **Over one third of UNDP's budget is committed to furthering democratic governance initiatives in the field.**
- **Over half of the Democratic Governance programme targets assistance to Least Developed Countries.**
- **Jointly with six regional centers spread across all five continents, we support 177 countries and territories in their efforts to strengthen democratic governance.**

### Our integrated approach

UNDP is the lead UN agency on democratic governance, serving 177 countries and territories worldwide - responding to country specific requests and concerns - while providing support for countries to achieve their Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, UNDP launched a number of flagship global programmes and initiatives from helping enhance access to justice in Kazakhstan, to helping women in the Arab States become confident participants in the political process. UNDP delivers on the ground, in every region, often under trying circumstances.

We aim to build and enhance the national capacity of each country by concentrating our efforts on **three main areas**.

1. **Expanding people's opportunity to participate in decision-making processes, particularly women, marginalized groups and the poor.**  
UNDP supports an election somewhere in the world every three weeks; encourages women to engage in the political process; fosters a free and informed media; and promotes the use of new technologies to give voice to those who previously had none.
2. **Making democratic institutions more accountable.**  
UNDP supports one in three national parliaments around the world; helps national and local administrations deliver basic services, fosters open dialogue between communities and local governments, and legal systems that work for all.
3. **Promoting international principles of democratic governance.**  
UNDP furthers anti-corruption and human rights principles; women's empowerment; and equal opportunity for all.



A woman votes in legislative elections in Indonesia.  
Photo: Dita Alanakara. AP Photo.

### Innovating in democratic governance

In 2010, UNDP's Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund allocated over US\$12 million to support innovative and catalytic projects across the globe. In **Lesotho**, UNDP helped persuade all 22 political parties to integrate Millennium Development Goals (MDG) commitments into their party manifestos. Parties are now considering how they can position MDG-related development priorities in their platforms, in preparation for the 2011 and 2012 elections. In **Bangladesh**, UNDP is enabling the population to uphold government accountability through new mechanisms for feedback on public services. The project has engaged over 7,200 stakeholders, including local citizens, journalists, civil society and service providers primarily in Barisal, Panchagarh, Rajshahi and 10 other districts in Bangladesh. Public officials have agreed to systematically respond to citizen reports on gaps in services; citizen groups have formed to monitor progress.

### South-South cooperation and exchange

UNDP makes a concerted effort to transfer and build capacity, and encourage its transferability among states. By doing so, sustainable, transformative change can flourish. **Mexico** - a former recipient of UN electoral support - now provides south-south electoral training with UNDP under the aegis of the Mexican Federal Electoral Tribunal and Federal Electoral Institute. The training programme has achieved real electoral gains, reform and institutional development in multiple countries including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and even further afield, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon, the Philippines and Zambia.

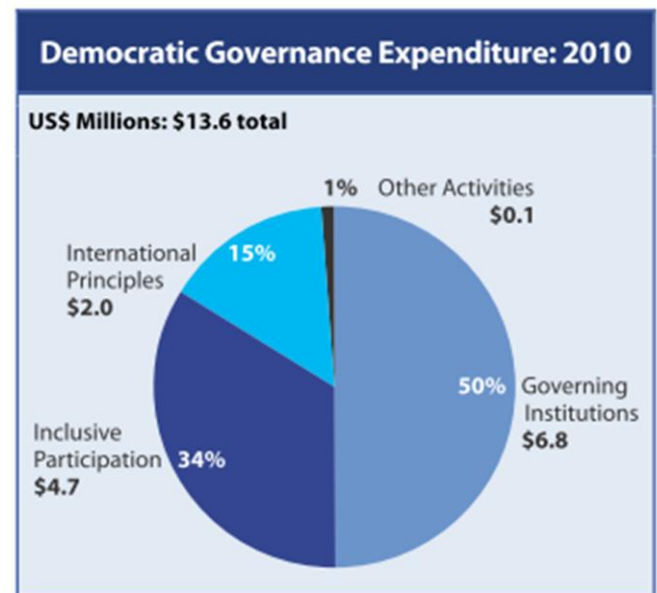
### Strengthening accountability in national institutions

In **Indonesia**, UNDP supported the Government in formulating a comprehensive national strategy on access to justice. UNDP also provided legal information, advice and other forms of assistance to over 450,000 people facing problems such as land disputes, discrimination and corruption.

### Supporting justice and equal rights for development

In **Seychelles**, UNDP worked with the Committee of Judges to introduce the widely endorsed Bangalore Principles on Judicial Conduct, which later became the basis for a new national code of conduct. These are moves towards a longer term objective of building an efficient system to monitor and manage court cases. In **Lao Democratic Republic**, UNDP and the Lao Bar Association are providing free legal aid clinics, a pilot mobile legal aid clinic and a legal aid hotline. In addition, the capacity development activities of the programme benefit lawyers; while a community radio provides legal education to the public.

Global Programmes (GP) in Democratic Governance	Budget 2011
GP-Electoral Cycle Support	US\$14.9m
GP-e-Governance and Access to Information	US\$3m
GP-Parliamentary Strengthening	US\$2.5m
GP- Human Rights	US\$3.9m
GP-Access to Justice for Human Development	US\$2.4m
GP- Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness	US\$3.2m
Global Governance Assessment Programme	US\$2.7m



Source: UNDP Operational Support Group, August 2011

For more information:

[www.undp.org/governance](http://www.undp.org/governance)

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Resilient nations.

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