

UNDP and Governance in Africa

Since the early 1990s, a majority of African countries have undergone transitions from one-party, military or autocratic rule to multiparty democratic systems based on majority rule and popular participation. Improved governance has created opportunities for citizens' engagement in public affairs, made governments more accountable and contributed to improved macroeconomic policy-making, leading to unprecedented levels of economic growth and commendable improvements in human development.

Nonetheless, considerable challenges remain, epitomized by post-election stalemates, unconstitutional changes of government, violent conflict and persisting fragility. The challenge for Africa will be to produce leaders, institutions and processes capable of promoting long-term, sustainable development while responding to the needs of ordinary citizens.



UNDP in action

1. We help involve people in Decision-Making: In 2012, UNDP supported 19 largely peaceful elections across Africa. In 2012, with UNDP's support, **Sierra Leone** successfully organized elections in a critical milestone for the country's transition from civil war to peace and long-term development. Among other deliverables, UNDP trained election staff and officials, enabling them to register 2.7 million voters, as well as successfully print and distribute voter identity cards across the country. For the 2013 poll in **Kenya**, UNDP managed a \$36

MATTERS OF FACT

- Africa has the highest number of countries with democratic systems to date since the 1960s.
- The independence of South Sudan and peaceful and credible elections in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Senegal, as well as approval of a new constitution by an overwhelming majority of voters in Zimbabwe are among the positive developments observed in 2012 and 2013.
- One of the biggest challenges in Africa will be to foster democratic principles and practices in fragile countries characterized by instability, conflict and poverty.

million electoral fund, with efforts geared towards preventing violence. Among other activities, assistance went towards training 240,000 polling staff, setting up an early warning system to detect incidents of violence and hate speech, and dispatching nearly 3,000 volunteers to educate voters and spread messages of peace.

UNDP strives to ensure that African women have a real voice in all governance institutions, enabling them to participate equally with men in decision-making.

In **Nigeria's** 2011 elections, 2,043 female politicians and candidates were trained in how to engage in electoral processes at the national and state levels, while more than 350 women from seven rural regions of **Kenya** were trained on leadership skills ahead of the country's general election in 2013. In 2010, close to a million **Burundians**, 59 percent of whom were women, received identification cards through a UNDP-supported programme.

Constitutions are key to ensuring good governance, defining the principles upon which States function and laws created and passed. Over the past three years, UNDP supported constitution-building mechanisms in **Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Uganda and Mozambique**. In **Zimbabwe**, voters turned out in large numbers in 2013, approving a new constitution that offers a comprehensive Bill of Rights, imposes limits on presidential powers, strengthens the cabinet and parliament and introduces partial devolution of power to

Political parties are needed for promoting strong democracies and healthy public debates, ensuring a variety of perspectives are included in the formulation of policy and in public office. During the **Senegalese** elections of 2012, UNDP worked with a network of 20 influential women's groups who set up meetings among civil society organizations, encouraging them to call for calm. The groups brought together political parties, encouraging them to maintain a dialogue with one another. The elections took place peacefully, resulting in a new president being sworn in.

2. We help make public institutions work: UNDP's support for national and local institutions contributes to building more efficient and accountable public administrations, fighting corruption and ensuring public services reach those who need them the most.

UNDP manages the \$115 million **South Sudan** Recovery Fund, part of the largest state-building exercise of a generation. It sponsors major infrastructure projects in insecure areas, helping to extend government services and mitigate conflict. New police posts, water reservoirs, radio stations and roads have reached 1.6 million people across four states. In **Rwanda**, more than 700,000 people in the rural districts of Gicumbi and Rulindo have benefited from this programme of institutional reform, which has promoted government decentralization and local development through supporting participative, transparent and equitable local administration.

The poor and marginalized are too often denied the ability to seek remedies in a fair justice system. UNDP promotes effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems as a pillar of democratic governance.

The **Ethiopian** Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has established some 111 Free Legal Aid Centers across the country, with support from UNDP and other international donors. These centres have provided legal assistance to more than 12,000 people since 2010.

E-governance involves a public investment in information and communication technologies (ICTs) to accelerate governance processes.

E-governance is a pillar of **Cape Verde's** public administration reform agenda. With USD 1.4 million from the government of Spain, UNDP helped the country to conduct an electoral census, deploying biometric technology and training 600 census officials to use the new software. The initiative resulted in the establishment of a voting register for the general election of 2011.

3. We help promote norms and principles of Governance:

UNDP promotes the integration of international and regional norms and principles of democratic governance, including anti-corruption, human rights, women's empowerment and equal opportunity for all.

Through the **African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)**, African countries monitor each other's compliance with a wide range of African and international human rights treaties and standards. UNDP has so far supported 17 countries to conduct self-assessments, strengthened the capacities of its operational and technical unit to manage the process, supported peer review processes and managed a multi-donor trust fund that finances the reviews. UNDP has also supported the **African Union** to develop and advance important regional principles, standards and norms through the adoption, domestication and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The Charter came into force in February 2012, ratified by 15 countries.

Our experts in Dakar have been training public administration officials and **Regional Economic Commissions** on how to adopt results-based budgets and poverty plans, use public funds more transparently and evaluate the impact of their public policies. Reaching out to wider audiences, we are in the process of deploying a series of online training courses for public institutions, national schools of administration and training centres. Fiscal policy as an instrument for growth and development and gender-sensitive budgets will be additional areas of focus for the second phase of the programme (2014-2017).

4. We promote knowledge and sharing of best governance practices:

UNDP and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) published the third edition of the African Governance Report, a bi-annual publication that assesses and monitors progress towards good governance in African countries. In addition, both parties organized the eighth African Governance Forum, a yearly event that has brought together representatives from African countries to discuss key challenges in the area of capacity development for social, economic and political development.

In 2012, in collaboration with the Government of Germany and the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP helped organize dialogues on governance and the post-2015 agenda, including a two-day African Regional Dialogue.

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