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BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE STATE & THE PEOPLE

An Overview of UNDP's Recent and Current Interventions in Public Administration and Local Governance in the ARAB STATES

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DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This paper is part of a series of regional monographs prepared by the *Responsive Institutions Cluster* within the Democratic Governance Group (DGG), Bureau for Development Policy (BDP). The regional papers aim to capture the volume and nature of UNDP's recent and current work on public administration and local governance.

The five regional stock-takings were prepared on the basis of desk reviews of existing project documents, project briefs, UNDP websites, project databases of individual Country Offices, Regional Centres, the Democratic Governance Trust Fund (DGTTF) database and Atlas; complemented with additional inputs from the field. The monographs focus on UNDP's current and most recent interventions, and provide an overview of what UNDP is currently doing in these service lines. The purpose of these papers is not to evaluate the quality of the outputs or the outcome of UNDP's work in public administration and local governance in specific countries or regions. Such evaluations are undertaken by the UNDP Evaluation Office.

In addition to compiling information on all ongoing civil service reform, local governance and decentralization projects, the regional papers also include information on initiatives in other service lines that touch directly on the public administration at the national and sub-national levels, such as:

- Projects that support strategic policy-making at the centre of government;
- Institutional strengthening projects focused on specific agencies or ministries;
- Anti-corruption projects that include initiatives to address the accountability, transparency and integrity of the public administration and local governments;
- Institutional and capacity development projects, focusing on the public sector;
- Aid coordination and aid effectiveness initiatives that deal directly with budget policy and co-ordination;
- Projects that support E-government development and ICTs;
- Access to information projects essentially dealing with the supply of government information;
- Projects that support the streamlining of regulations and administrative procedures; and
- Initiatives that address gender policies in public administration and local governments.

The five regional monographs on public administration and local governance constitute one component of a broader corporate initiative aimed at providing direction and support to meet the increasing demand from the field in these two service lines. The relevance and impact of our work in public administration and local governance will not only be of critical importance for the achievement of the MDGs, it is also central to building and sustaining peaceful, inclusive and tolerant societies, and communities.

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OVERVIEW OF MAIN CHALLENGES

Since their inception in 2002, the Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs) have identified several key challenges to good governance in the Arab States Region, including public administration systems that do not fully meet the needs of citizens, shortcomings in institutional accountability, constrained opportunities for people to participate in the decision-making processes affecting their lives and, in some cases, the lack of enjoyment of fundamental rights such as citizenship and gender equality. AHDR 2009 addressed the negative impact of these shortcomings, amongst others, on strategic planning and service delivery in the context of examining the state of human security in the region[1].

The Arab Region has seen a number of declarations that embody an acknowledgement of the importance of democratic governance for sustainable development. The Declarations of Tunis, Sanaa, and Alexandria and the Arab Charter embody Arab government and Arab civil society commitment to democratic governance principles. However, all these initiatives have not resulted in any framework that sets standards for reform and provides basis for accountability.

Given the extreme developmental challenges facing the region, the lack of a regional framework of standards and accountability for public administration and local governance reform becomes a serious obstacle. The region struggles with some of the highest population growth rates, unemployment rates (especially amongst youth), high urbanization rates and huge urban rural disparities. Alongside these challenges, public administration and local governments suffer from various levels of capacity weakness as well as authority threats. While civil society remains weak and gender empowerment is also lagging, street and media activism are on the rise, putting performance of state administrative units and local government on the line.

Public Administration

The Arab Region displays a very dynamic mosaic of political and administrative systems. The public sector employs a large percentage of the working population, in particular in the Gulf States (up to 95%); hence the importance of public administration in governance reforms. Inheritances of the French and English public administration models can be found, mixed with the Ottoman and Islamic legal and institutional heritage as well as with local tribal traditions and practices.

Overall, the public service in the Arab Region still has difficulties profiling itself as a service provider that serves the citizens and interacts in a constructive manner with society. The majority of state employees in the region have been used to operating within authoritarian systems and lack the initiative for change, including at senior and middle management levels. In several countries, there remain large numbers of public servants with limited qualifications and low efficiency and productivity, and limited career development prospective. Low wages add to the causes that reduce the performance of public administrations, and also explain the high levels of petty corruption. Women's participation in public life remains weak, even though several countries have appointed women ministers and the number of women in senior executive positions is on the rise.

Public Sector Integrity

Allegations of severe corruption at the upper echelons and the spread of petty corruption at the administrative levels have damaged the reputation of a number of countries in the region. Many forms of favouritism, nepotism, misappropriation of public money and abuse of public position continue to impact many sectors of

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[1] For more information, see: http://www.arab-hdr.org.

Arab societies. Reactions to those allegations would stress that much is based on rumours and public opinion and less on tangible evidence. Notwithstanding this debate, anti-corruption is emerging as a new critical policy area and a governance reform priority articulated by governments and non-governmental actors, albeit in varying degrees and forms. Key elements in this area are tightly connected with public administration reform and local governance.

This new reality is mainly attributed to the advent of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), which is acting as a rallying factor for the vast majority of Arab countries. It is also connected with the increasing awareness among key stakeholders of the various linkages between corruption, development and human security in the region.

Features of UNDP's Support

In general, UNDP has few non-track resources available for public administration and local governance programming in the middle income countries. However, sluggish MDG progress may present in the years to come some opportunity to mobilize resources to increase state effectiveness and responsiveness in these countries.

The situation differs in the region's conflict affected countries. There, non-track resources may be easier to mobilize for state and peace building initiatives in public administration and local governance. Security concerns, however, can concentrate support in some areas rather than others, e.g. in border security rather than holistic human security.

The number of UNDP supported public administration projects in the Arab States region has significantly increased in the last few years. At the end of the 1990's, 72% of all governance interventions in the region were in the area of public sector management, economic and financial management and decentralized governance, as well as in assisting governments in improving information management. In 2008, 78% of all project outputs in democratic governance were in the area of "responsive institutions", of which 53% were related to national and sub-national public administration. Access to information to promote transparency and accountability counts for another (small) percentage of projects. Even though there is limited reporting on anti-corruption initiatives under key results area 3 (grounding democratic governance practices in international norms and standards, including anti-corruption), work in this sector is rising. At least five country offices (Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen) will start to work in 2010-2012 on anti-corruption. But compared to the 1990's, there is also a trend to work gradually on other aspects of democratic governance in this region.

The rationale varied from support to democratisation, socio-economic development, to MDGs achievement to support reconstruction efforts and state building in conflict and post-conflict environments. Many attempts have been made in the region to modernize the national public administrations, with considerable successes in some countries and less progress in others. Some countries (e.g. Tunisia) have made a lot of progress and currently are tackling a new generation of public administration improvements, introducing greater use of ICTs, improving evaluation and monitoring of the performance of the administration, and improving also the quality of regulations and procedures etc. Nevertheless, serious challenges remain in terms of overly-centralized bureaucratic structures, overlapping mandates between government institutions, redundant functions, outdated processes and procedures and lack of specifications regarding the quality of services.

A general trend in the process of modernisation is the introduction of ICTs. Challenges remain, as the region sees low levels of internet penetration, high cost of telecommunications, privacy versus security concerns and limited ICT skills in several countries, and lack of standards for the process of government automation, leading to problems of interoperability.

The strengths of public administration support in the region include programming for effective government through simplified regulations, more inter-ministerial coordination and increased use of ICTs. Several UNDP interventions support coordination committees either for national policy making (Egypt) or for sectoral interventions (Jordan and Saudi Arabia). Effectiveness

of public finance management, whether for taxation, customs or courts of account, are also good cases for UNDP involvement. Aid effectiveness support is another area for increasing state effectiveness and accountability. Finally, enhanced awareness of government programs and simplified administrative services are objectives that UNDP supports partially through e-governance projects.

There is, however, also room for improvement. Principles of responsiveness, participation and inclusion could be further enhanced in UNDP programming. Work on state effectiveness may consider more involvement of civil society stakeholders in planning, budgeting and monitoring of delivery. Work on public finance management may consider enhancing resource allocation for the poor in order to emphasize the equitable and inclusive nature of growth trajectories. Work on web based top down communication could be used as entry point to enhance bottom up accountability and freedom of information laws.

Local Governance

Despite legislative developments towards greater decentralization in the region, several countries face difficulties due to the fragility of deconcentrated structures, weak civil society, and occupation by a foreign power, and lack of resources for the newly established local governments. As is the case in other regions, the emergence of mega cities needs to be addressed carefully as poverty, crime, exclusion and related governance challenges will be increasingly visible at these urban levels.

Limited support has been provided to the improvement of governance systems at the local level resulting in an environment of weak local governance leading to the emergence of a culture of unethical conduct, misman-

agement and corruption within local authorities (nepotism, inadequate financial controls, lack of transparency in procurement, weak information systems), all amplified by limited understanding of accountability and transparency principles and limited public partic pation in the local decision making processes.

The level of involvement of actors other than the government in the management of state affairs at the local level remains limited. This is also due to limitations in the way these actors (civil society, etc.) are organised.

Public Administration & Local Governance in Conflict Affected Contexts

This region also has a number of countries that are vulnerable to conflict, with four of them high on UNDP's conflict/post-conflict agenda (Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and the oPt). Since 2002, DGTTF funding has been highest to conflict and post-conflict countries. Hence, in cooperation with the Oslo Governance Centre, the Regional Centre in Cairo conducted an indepth study of the DGTTF projects in the conflict countries of the Arab States region. The objective was to study the complex context in which local governance programming takes place in a conflict country. In four of the five countries, special analysis of four DGTTF projects was undertaken as an illustration of catalytic and innovative programming in conflict contexts.

The regional programme in RBAS is planning to study trends, challenges and entry points for anti-corruption in post-conflict countries with a view to support interventions in this area. BCPR has also included several countries in the region in their review of state building experiences in post-conflict studies where some of the aforementioned challenges are being considered.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

In 2000, the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) launched the **Programme on Governance in the Arab Region (POGAR)**. POGAR works in partnership with key governance institutions in the region, including legislatures, judiciaries, ministries, civil society organizations to identify needs and solutions. It delivers a wide range of services and activities to further the triple pillars of good governance: participation, rule of law, and transparency and accountability.

An evaluation of the programme took place in 2004, which recommended a stronger focus on "Public Financial Management" and "Decentralised Governance"[2] considered as critical issues for the region. Additional assistance was also suggested in the area of "information management" to further enhance the prospects for transparency and accountability in the region and build on the findings of the studies conducted in six Arab countries under the collaborative efforts of UNDESA and POGAR[3].

POGAR was also evaluated in 2008 as part of the RBAS Outcome Evaluation of Regional Projects. The Evaluation report also stressed that "Public Administration reform for effective, responsive, pro-poor public services, performance improvements in public sector institutions, formulating E-government strategies and local administration, were areas that did not receive the requisite level of attention in regional programme implementation and suggested this deficit to be addressed in the forthcoming regional programme planning exercise".

Two of POGAR's flagship initiatives and partnerships are the "Good Governance for Development Initiative" and the "Anti-corruption and Integrity Network". In 2005, with the support of 18 Arab countries and the member-states of the OECD, POGAR partnered with OECD to launch a regional initiative for the Arab region called **"Initiative for the Development of Good Governance (GfD) in the Arab Countries"** which is part of the umbrella OECD-MENA Initiative on Governance and Investment[4].

At the last Steering Group Meeting at Ministerial Level in Sharm El Sheikh (Egypt) on 19-20 May 2006, Arab countries expressed their wish to continue working and collaborating[5] towards the modernisation of the public sector[6]. The initiative has initiated and supported a number of Regional Centres that act as a regional hubs for workshops, training events and conferences, such as the "Tax and Financial Management Training Centre" (Cairo, Egypt); the "Centre for Public Policy Evaluation" (Rabat, Morocco); and the "Centre for Expertise on Regulatory Quality" (Tunis, Tunisia). The OECD and UNDP-POGAR also aim to support the member countries of the initiative with the establishment of a framework for collecting and presenting data on the public sector to provide a separate dataset and

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[2] This area has recently been given attention by donors who realised that concentration on central government machinery and other central institutions did not give the expected results relative to the funds invested in projects to reform the central public agencies.

[3] Public Sector Transparency and Accountability in Selected Arab Countries: Policies and Practices (New York 2004, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/71).

[4] MENA-OECD Ministerial Conference held in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco, on 23 November 2009 on policy responses to the crisis, concluded that effective government, ensuring compliance with sound regulatory frameworks and high quality of public services is fundamental to economic recovery and long-term growth. The declaration also reaffirmed the commitment to involve citizens and civil society in policy-making and to use consultation mechanisms prior to decision-making as an effective means to ensure better public services and successful policy implementation. Te need to develop public interest values was also acknowledged as well as the importance of a fair and transparent tax system.

[5] Tunisia engaged in an in-depth peer learning exchange with Switzerland on multilingual law drafting to improve regulatory quality. Belgium has provided advice to Jordan and Lebanon for the review of job classification systems in the public service. Canadian budget practitioners have reviewed Bahrain's budgeting system

[6] Ten Arab countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen) established national co-ordination teams, composed of key policy makers from ministries and agencies, to formulate and implement governance reforms.

key indicators across Arab countries, to help governments better plan, monitor, and measure their public policies and governance reform agendas.

The OECD-MENA GfD will focus on public sector management and modernization through several working groups such as the Working Group on Civil Service Reform and Integrity, the Working Group on E-government and Administrative Simplification, the Working Group on the Governance of Public Finance and the Working Group on Regulatory Reform, Public Service Delivery and Public Private Partnerships.

The initiative will also support capacity development for decentralization reforms. In line with the initiative's commitment to the principles of sustainable development, public participation and the respect of human rights, as declared by Arab Prime Ministers and Ministers in the Dead Sea Declaration (2009), gender, involvement of civil society in policy-making and improved policy-making capacities for sustainable management of natural resources are also high on the agenda.

In July 2008, at the end of a major regional conference organized in Amman, the **Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET)** was established with POGAR support. The initiative builds on the positive results achieved by the Good Governance for Development in the Arab Countries (GfD) initiative. ACINET has developed a Charter and Rules of Procedure to detail the substantive and procedural framework, which will work to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of Arab stakeholders in relation to integrity andanti-corruption for the development of effectiveness in the Arab Region. This work will be rooted in the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and other global and inter-regional agreements.

The "Regional Support Unit" of ACINET is administered by UNDP-POGAR, in coordination with the League of Arab States (LoAS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Network will undertake studies on topics related to integrity, transparency, accountability and anti-corruption; and organize an Arab annual forum to promote integrity and anti-corruption.

Even though POGAR's involvement in PAR is still modest, it is important to mention its involvement in the production of the "Global Guide on Measuring Public Administration Reform" developed by the Oslo Governance Centre[7].

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[7] http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/docs09/MeasuringPublicadministration.pdf

MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Public Administration & Civil Service Reform

As part of its efforts to improve service delivery in pilot government institutions, UNDP **Jordan** supported a project entitled "Support to Building the Capacity of Government in Implementing the Service Delivery Improvement" (2006-2009, US$ 624,000), funded by the government of Jordan. The project was implemented by the Ministry of Public Sector Development (MoPSD). The main aim was to pilot the development of mechanisms for improving the delivery of services in rural areas with selected governmental service delivery entities.

The largest public sector reform and institutional capacity development programme is the "Capacity Development Initiative" in the occupied **Palestinian** territory (**oPt**), for a total budget of US$ 14.6 million[8]. The programme covers a wide area of intervention, dealing with various aspects of public administration and governance. It aims to achieve two main outcomes: (i) enhance the individual, organizational and institutional capacity of the Ministry of Planning to formulate not only national development plans, but also to coordinate capacity development initiatives at the national level; and (ii) enable selected government institutions to implement institutional reforms to better carry out their functions and deliver better service to the public. Capacity assessments deal with training staff members of key government institutions and will provide the basis for further institutional reform initiatives[9]. The programme includes an important civil service reform component, addressing both human

resource management and human resource development policies and systems, with initial piloting in three government institutions (also looking at the respective role of the GPC and the government institutions in HRM and HRD). The programme will also provide the GPC with tools and methodologies for the identification of training needs of civil servants. In this area the programme will liaise closely with another UNDP/PAPP project on leadership and management training programme. In addition to these already ambitious objectives, the programme also aims to support the Ministry of Planning and key government institutions in a number of functional areas including strategic planning, budgeting and financial management, aid management, and policy formulation. UNDP is also supporting the "Civil Service Leadership Development Programme" launched by the Directorate of Training Development at the General Personnel Council (GPC). The overall objective of this programme is to ensure that senior civil servants acquire the necessary management and leadership skills to effectively carry out their roles in support of the national development goals of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The programme aims to develop the capacities of 1,200 senior civil servants (800 in the West Bank and 400 in the Gaza Strip), in: (i) Human Resource Management; (ii) Strategic Planning; (iii) Policy Formulation; (iv) Leadership Concepts and Techniques; (v) Communication Skills; (vi) Crisis Management; (vii) Conflict Management; (viii) Financial Awareness; and (ix) Legal Frameworks. The importance of gender awareness is also emphasized throughout the training modules.

A particular initiative in the **oPt** was the "Cross-sectional Public Administration Support Project for Palestinian Authority Institutions and Civil Society" (US$ 1.5 million). This project was part of the 120 days reform plan and involved the deployment of 19 UNVs to help build capacity in targeted public administration institutions and civil society organizations. The strategy

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[8] Including approximately US$ 3 million from TRACK resources.
[9] The programme assists the public administration institutions to improve their institutional capacities to implement their policies and plans and enhance delivery of services needs to take a flexible approach and adjusts to the local environment as there is still not a clear Public Administration Vision.

integrated young professionals within the public administration fabric as 'change agents' on issues related to improved Public Administration and Management, Communications, Finance, MIS and IT. This one year project was seen as a flexible means to address a potentially wide scope of issues: formulation of strategies; assessment of capacities; reform of governance rules and procedures, including those for the market and the most vulnerable; review and restructuring of functions and networks; improvement of systems, especially those concerned with planning, management, information and new technologies, budgeting, expenditures, statistics, reporting and accountability; reform of wage and incentive structures; private-public partnerships; and decentralization.

UNDP **Morocco** is financing an NGO (Foundation) to support greater Parliamentary involvement in the country's Budgetary Reform process (2009-2011). Co-financed by the European Commission, this project aims to strengthen the capacities of Parliamentarians in regards to the national Finance Law, in order to develop a Reform Proposal.

In **Somalia**, UNDP is currently implementing the "Somali Institutional Development Project for South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland" (US\$ 4.7 million). It addresses the need for existing government institutions to operate more effectively, in particular with regard to delivering services to the poor and disadvantaged groups. This 3 year project targets the capacity to create and implement policies and laws, human resource management, financial management and infrastructure. The project takes a broad long-term approach to institutional development, in an attempt to move away from previous peace-meal initiatives. The project mainly targets staff in central ministries and agencies dealing with planning, public works, trade, social affairs, gender issues, accounting and auditing, as well as staff in the central bank, central statistics office, civil service commission and executive and legislative bodies.

In terms of methodologies for developing national capacities, the "Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN)"[10] project in **Lebanon** (US\$

350,000) aims to establish a mechanism whereby the country can tap into the skills base of its expatriate nationals. A similar TOKTEN[11] project (US\$ 350,000) is underway in **Sudan**, a four-year project with support from DFID and the Netherlands. The project works with the Ministry of International Cooperation in Khartoum, the Ministry of Regional Cooperation in Juba and the Organization for Sudanese working Abroad. The project builds on the initial lessons learned from preparatory assistance phase and recommendations of consultative meetings held in Northern and Southern Sudan.

The comprehensive "Support to the States in Southern Sudan" programme (Phase I: US\$ 6.8 million, Phase II: 2007-2009, US\$ 12.2 million) received funding from DFID, the Netherlands, AfDB, SIDA and UNDP, and aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the states in **Southern Soudan** to adequately plan, set priorities, manage revenue and expenditures and deliver basic services. During the first phase the emphasis was on planning and budgeting and a Governors' forum was established to support inter-governmental policy dialogue. The second phase will further strengthen the capacity of the 10 state governments and focuses on four main pillars: (i) policy frameworks to support decentralized governance; (ii) capacity enhancement in the 10 states in planning, budgeting and public financial management; (iii) capacity enhancement of the State Assemblies for law making and oversight; and (iv) capacity enhancement of state in urban management and rehabilitation of national physical infrastructure.

UNDP **Syria** manages the "Government Services Reform and Modernisation Programme" (2006-2010, US\$ 10.5 million), implemented by the State Planning Commission and one of the largest civil service reform programmes in the region. The initiative addresses the improvement of government services provided to citizens and businesses, including minimizing costs, eliminating red tape and improvement of human resource capacities. In addition, the project addresses

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[10] TOKTEN is a special volunteer programme of UNDP that provides

a window of opportunities for expatriate nationals to volunteer in their country if origin for a short period of time, thereby contributing to the peace process, recovery and development.

[11] The TOKTEN project in Sudan will cover at least 10 states and about 25 TOKTEN volunteers will be recruited and allocated to institutions in the North and South.

institutional reform in selected ministries (policy improvement, organizational restructuring, process improvement, human resource development and information/communication).

Equally substantive is the "Support to Civil Service Reform" project in **Lebanon** (US$ 6.9 million) implemented by the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reforms. The project focuses on four main axes: (i) institutional development; (ii) coordination; (iii) legislative reform; and (iv) ICTs[12]. The project assists the Ministry in reducing the size of the public administration, based on organizational development studies, simplification of procedures, review and modernization of laws and regulations. Even though most of the outputs deal essentially with technical aspects of public administration reform, the project also aims to establish a more citizen oriented administration.

UNDP **Tunisia** started an initial public administration support project, "Support to the Implementation of the Public Administration Modernization Strategy" (US$ 120,000) at the Prime Minister's Office, Directorate of Administrative Reform and Planning. The government had launched a visioning exercise to support a public administration reform strategy towards 2016, adapting the public administration to the new globalization context. The project aimed to adapt processes and procedures to bring them in line with international norms and standards. The "Modernisation of the Public Administration" programme (US$ 1.5 million), a new and comprehensive four-year project, has just been approved to help implement the public administration development strategy that was launched in 2008. The programme's objective is to promote a government that is open and accessible to its citizens and stakeholders, and transparent and responsive, hence the plan to also have regular surveys to gather people's perceptions on the quality of services provided[13]. The

project also aims to collaborate closely with the European Institute of Public Administration as well as with POGAR, to explore the possibility of establishing a Centre for Measuring the Quality of Administrative Regulations in Arab States.

UNDP **Sudan** has a "Public Sector Decentralization and Capacity-Building" project (2008-2009, US$ 400,000), funded by DFID and implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development. This project prepares for longer-term public administration reform processes through: (i) pilot support to job description and job specification as part of a wider process of re-engineering and restructuring of ministries (federal ministries as policy centres and state ministries as service delivery agencies); (ii) strengthening capacity of the management development Centre to address training needs of the senior civil service; and (iii) strengthening capacity of the Sudan Academy for administrative Sciences to address training needs arising out of the ongoing administrative reform processes, especially for decentralized governance.

Support to the Centre of Government & Strategic Policy-Making

Support to the centre of government includes all initiatives that deal with central policy-making, support to the Council of Ministers or the President's Office, the Secretary General of the government or central planning agencies. UNDP provided support to the Prime Minister's Office in **Lebanon**, through a 5-year project with a budget of US$ 2.5 million. The purpose of the project was to enhance decision-making, monitoring and follow-up on programme implementation, and ensuring more effective coordination with government institutions[14]. Another project, the "Establishment of a

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[12] The project aims to install the necessary ICT equipment in key ministries and institutions (5000 PCs, network infrastructure etc.), installation of ICT applications such as commercial registry at the Ministry of Justice, work permit at the Ministry of Labour, document management applications, HR management systems etc.

[13] The MODAP programme aims to achieve four main outputs : (i) tools to operationalize a quality approach to public services ; (ii) a human resource and human development strategy, including E-learning ; (iii) E-government is introduced on a larger scale and also at the local levels; and (iv) mechanisms in place to identify citizens and businesses needs.

[14] The outputs defined in the prodoc are less ambitious and include research and the production of reports, preparation of the annual report on the operations of the government, preparation and coordination of donor conferences, monitoring of major infrastructure projects, review and follow up on key legislation, maintaining data banks, producing the national accounts for several years, elaboration of a five-ear public investment strategy, planning coordination and follow up on recovery and reconstruction activities.

Recovery and Reconstruction Unit in the Prime Minister's Office" (2006-2008, US$ 800,000) was initiated after cessation of the hostilities in 2006. UNDP led the UNCT Early Recovery Cluster, and set up this project with a view to planning quick-starting and high impact activities, focusing on meeting the most critical post-conflict needs. The project supported the Prime Minister's Office with the coordination of incoming aid and relief operations. It also assisted with the preparation of the Stockholm Conference, coordination of the Lebanon Relief Fund, Development Assistance Database etc. In **Kuwait**, UNDP is supporting the Information and Decision Support Secretariat in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, in order to improve its performance and obtain ISO 9001 certification (US$ 65,000). In **Saudi Arabia**, the "Support to Policy Analysis and Strategic Planning" project (US$ 6.2 million) is part of a larger six-year capacity development programme for the Ministry of Economy and Planning. The project aims to build the capacity of the Ministry for economic and social policy analysis, sectoral, strategic, regional and decentralized planning. It also intends to build capacities on implementation and monitoring, related training and institutional and organizational development. Support to national and local planning and policy-making was also the main purpose of the "Support to National Strategic Planning Process" project in **Sudan** (2007-2008, US$ 1 million) that assisted the National Council for Strategic Planning to enhance the capacity for sustainable planning and budgeting of state governments and federal ministries. The project also ensured that national planning was better linked to resource availability and that budget resource allocations better reflect national plan priorities[15]. UNDP is also providing support to the Presidency in **Southern Soudan**. This 3-year project (US$ 1.5 million with contributions from DFID, NORAD and UNDP) is the second phase of a previous project and aims to assist the President with timely advice, briefings, analysis efficient management of the cabinet, and the development of an effective communications and press office.

In **Algeria**, the project that supports the evaluation of economic reforms is in fact a project to support the President of the Republic. The project aims to make available at the level of the Presidency, the skills, tools and techniques to follow up on the government's work and monitor the general economic situation.

UNDP **Egypt**, jointly with the Government of Egypt, is currently implementing the "Social Contract Center" project (2007-2011, US$ 2 million). The establishment of a Social Contract Advisory, Monitoring and Coordination Center within the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) at the Prime Minister's Office stemmed out of the 2005 Egypt Human Development Report entitled "Towards a New Social Contract for Egypt"[16]. The Social Contract Center will work closely with other IDSC units, line ministries, governorates, private sector and CSOs to provide first class policy advice and policy options, monitoring the implementation of the MDGs-based poverty action plan, and promote accountability, participation and equality. The Center has initiated a country-led democratic governance assessment involving various national stakeholders based on nationally agreed governance indicators, and is currently mapping and developing governance assessment frameworks. The Unit focuses on measuring five governance variables, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, sustainability and participation. The Center is also supporting IDSC in developing a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the "1000 Poorest Villages Initiative", through which the Government of Egypt is targeting the poorest villages in the country with investments in an integrated package of basic services. The program aims to create a sustained improved livelihood for the residents of these villages by increasing the availability of and accessibility to basic services as well as improving is affordable and equitable service delivery, thus reducing poverty and vulnerability of the most unprivileged residents.

In **Morocco**, UNDP has provided substantive support to the formulation of a national strategic poverty reduction framework. The purpose is to achieve a greater

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[15] The project outputs include training of staff in the Northern State government and federal ministries on planning methodologies and budgeting, a strategy for incorporating southern Soudan plans into the National Strategic Plan, budget forecast better reflecting national plan priorities, as well as an approved monitoring and evaluation plan for the national plan at the sector, federal ministry and state level.

[16] The report proposed a 10-year vision for Egypt's development based on the idea of a new social contract and a paradigm shift in the state-citizen relationship, rooted in principles of democratic governance and modern concepts of citizenship.

impact and accelerate MDG achievement by establishing an innovative mechanism designed to coordinate and develop synergies between poverty related initiatives implemented or planned by different sectoral Ministries.

A specific project is the support to the Office of the Quartet Representative in the occupied **Palestinian** territory. The quartet is a coalition that includes the UN, the Russian Federation, the US and the European Union. The Quartet is particularly committed to end the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and to help Palestinians build viable institutions in Gaza and the West Bank. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was appointed as the Quartet Special Envoy. The project – for a total of US$ 7.3 million – aims to mobilize resources and identify and secure support for addressing institutional governance needs of the future Palestinian State. More specifically, the project helps to support procurement, fund and asset management, personnel recruitment and broader human resource management services. Hence it mainly deals with logistical and operational support to the Quartet's Representative's mission and team.

Local Governance & Decentralization

In **Djibouti**, UNDP launched a project in 2008 to support implementation of the Law on Decentralization and on the Legal Statute of the Regions that was promulgated in 2002. Laws on decentralization often face long delays before being fully implemented. Despite the local elections in 2006 and the establishment of local institutions[17], implementation of the law has been lagging behind. The UNDP project (2008-2012) was launched with an initial DGTTF budget of US$ 250,000, and it aims to work with elected bodies, civil society and the prefectorates to improve their capacities and, through the decentralization process, boost the local economies. The "Strengthening Capacities for Local Governance in the District of Arta" project particularly targets the new district of Arta.

In post conflict societies, too much attention is often paid to the central administration. UNDP **Iraq** is assisting the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works with post-constitutional support on decentralization and local governance initiatives. This is a small project (US$ 100,000) implemented through a consulting firm that will conduct a nation-wide needs assessment of the 18 Governorates' capacity to assess their ability of service provision to the population. The outcome will contribute to a national dialogue on local governance, and to set up a pilot Centre of Excellence in one of the Governorates. In 2007, UNDP Iraq also launched a US$ 4 million project to support capacity-building and institutional development of the Mathanna Governorate, considered one of the poorest. In addition to local authorities and local technical departments the project also pays attention to their relationships with civil society organizations. The project's main goal is to enhance the institutional and human resource capacity to provide social and basic services to the population, with special focus on water, sanitation, electricity, civil defence and agriculture.

In **Jordan**, UNDP supported the improvement of the nation's property tax system. The "Building and Strengthening the Capacity for Improved Property Tax Management and Collection" project (2003-2009, US$ 2.9 million) worked towards the devolution of the property tax administration functions and the involvement of local governments in the tax collection (see public financial management). UNDP also provided policy advice on strategic options for a framework for decentralization within the specific context of Jordan to the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee on Decentralization (IMTCD), established for this purpose. The framework, if approved by government and parliament, will guide the reform and development of the Country's sub-national system of governance and public administration.

In the occupied **Palestinian** territory, UNDP/PAPP developed an updated diagnostic report for the local governance sector. The report serves to identify weaknesses and strength of the Palestinian local governance system, donor mapping of the support provided to develop the Palestinian local governance system in the past five years (the report also provided main highlights for a future strategy for a sustainable,

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[17] Regional Council, Regional Executive and Prefect of the region.

inclusive, democratic, and decentralized governance system, and main features for a future action plan to support the development of the local governance sector in the oPt). UNDP/PAPP piloted and developed a Participatory Rural Development Planning approach in the Jenin District in the oPt. The project (US$ 1.9 million funded by the government of Ireland) produced a strategic development plan for the Jenin District and involved CSOs, central government (line ministries and governorate office), 87 local governments in Jenin District, and representatives of the Palestinian Legislative Council. The project formed a regional planning unit hosted and coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government. PAPP also provided and still provides technical assistance to develop the capacities of the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), as part of its support to the local governance reform in the oPt. The project (US$ 721,000) developed a new organizational chart for MoLG and job descriptions, work manuals, MIS systems for project management and human resources management, procurement manual, and provided five UNVs to assist the capacity development for MoLG staff in budgeting, IT, communications, project management and, communication and coordination. In support of local elections in the oPt, PAPP launched a project to develop the capacities of the elected Palestinian local government officials (US$ 730,000). The project developed a capacity development manual on four main areas of local governance; legal, administrative, financial, planning and zoning[18]. In support of decentralization in the local governance system in the oPt, PAPP provided technical support to the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA). The project funded by UNDP/PAPP (US$ 135,000) provided technical assistance to APLA to develop a legal frame and share with its local government members. The "Support to Local Government Reform, Property Tax Reform" project (US$ 500,000) provides technical assistance in support of fiscal decentralization in all 132 municipalities of the oPt. The project's main outputs include: (i) amended Property Tax Law; (ii) development of an action plan for the reassignment of Property Tax to local government units; (iii) establishment of a computerized system of property tax record-keeping, billing, and collection; (iv) training of an Ad-hoc Technical Unit (ATU) to serve as long-term recourse centre within the MoLG during and beyond the project life; and (v) increased public awareness and educated community. UNDP/PAPP in cooperation with MoLG, APLA, NGOs, and CSOs also developed and piloted the application of LG Integrity Index to promote transparency and accountability in the local governance system especially in relation to LGUs performance. The index was piloted in fifteen LGUs and planned to be applied on all 132 municipalities in the oPt under the new Local Governance Support Programme (2010-2013).

UNDP **Saudi Arabia** has a project with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs titled "Technical Support to Municipal Elections in KSA". This project provided substantive advisory and technical support to the ministry in conducting and managing the 2005 municipal elections and support in post-elections term to develop a new vision and strategy for municipal management and finance. The impact of this project is the involvement of local authorities and community representatives in rural and urban areas in planning and management of development activities, including the provision of public services. The project also aims to increase social cohesion based on participatory local governance and stronger local communities and institutions. There is also a project of "Formulation and Implementation of a National Strategy for Municipality Services to Rural Areas". This project aims at providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs to prepare a study for the rural areas and settlements in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its aim is to produce a comprehensive strategy for the development of rural areas in Saudi Arabia.

Similarly, in **South Sudan**, UNDP supported a local governance capacity-building project in South Kordofan (2006-09, US$ 3 million), which has long been a contested zone between the government of Sudan and the Sudan people's Liberation Movement[19]. A lack of operational and technical capacity in the civil service,

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[18] Thirteen MoLG staff were trained as trainers who delivered the training for over six thousand elected local government officials in the oPt.

[19] The power-sharing government established in 2006 as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement comprises amongst others the Office of the Governor, the Legislative Council, the Auditor general, 10 line ministries and 9 localities. A state constitution was approved in 2006.

limited financial and human resources, ill equipped and weak public institutions, absence of well developed laws and regulations, operating procedures and standards of performance render the state unable to manage effective public administration in support of the devolution of powers. The project, funded by DFID and the Netherlands, aimed to contribute to the establishment of effective, transparent, accountable, accessible, representative and sustainable state and local governance structures. It focused essentially on human resource capacity development, systems and procedures with an emphasis on results-based management, legal and institutional frameworks for effective decentralization and empowerment of local government. Also in South Sudan, the "Local Government Recovery Programme (LGRP)" (US$ 46.8 million), is funded by the EC, DFID and the Netherlands. The main components of this programme are: (i) support for the establishment of local authorities; (ii) infrastructure support; (iii) advocacy; (iv) technical assistance at the level of the government of South Sudan, the States and the local levels; (v) training in a wide range of governance planning and management functions, (vi) development of planning and other systems, (vii) development of comprehensive recovery plans and budgets, (viii) provision of local funds; and (ix) civic education and civil society building. Additionally, gender mainstreaming at the local government level has been one of LGRP's key areas of focus. Main activities that have been undertaken include: (i) a study tour to Zambia and Zimbabwe for ten local government officers in 2007; (ii) a rapid assessment of gender and local governance in 2008 in selected local governments in five states to identify the extent to which women and girls have access to basic services and their level of representation and participation in decision-making; (iii) training and deployment of 20 Gender Focal Points (GFPs), two per state based in the Ministry of Local Government, for performing the role of "gender watchdog" at the local government level; and (iv) training of over 250 local government officers to act as trainers at the state and local government levels on the integration of a gender-perspective in their work, particularly in local government planning and budgeting. Although women representation and involvement has not been sufficient (below the 25% requirement stipulated in the Interim

Constitution), local governments are faced with a myriad of operational challenges characteristic to post-conflict situation[20]. Consequently, the gender issue needs to be captured and presented within this larger context and in relation to other challenges.

Also in **Sudan**, UNDP implemented the "Poverty Alleviation–Oriented Governance Project in Red Sea State" (2007-2008, US$ 1.7 million). The main objective of this project was to create an institutional, social and economic environment conducive to poverty reduction in the Red Sea State (an area in Sudan with the poorest populations) over a period of four years, through innovative pilot actions and constructive partnerships. To this end, specific objectives of the project are: (i) strengthening the capacity of the State administration at all levels in designing and implementing pro-poor strategies and ensuring sound development resources management; (ii) enabling the private sector, civil society, grassroots organizations and the poor to play a proactive role in the development process (iii) improving the capacity of the state in performing its overall role of participatory policy-making, regulation and coordination and in managing pro-poor / development policies (iv) strengthening the capacity of local government for poverty reduction and good governance; and (v) improving the capacity of civil society organizations, communities (women and men) and the private sector to play a pivotal role in poverty reduction, participatory development and peace-building.

In addition to the provision of policy support to the government on the decentralization process, UNDP **Egypt** is supporting capacity development and coordination activities for the implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy (2007-2013, US$ 11.8 million). Under the capacity-building output, UNDP is providing support to the government of Egypt to establish a National Local Development Information Network (NLDIN) to utilize ICT to support the transparency and efficient performance of local governance units through strengthening the capacities of local governance structure and ensuring interconnectivity with central gov-

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[20] These include, for example, unclear expenditure responsibilities and revenue assignments, absence of accountability systems and administrative procedures, infrastructure-related problems and lack of legitimacy due to non-existence of legislative councils in many places, and absence of officially demarcated boundaries.

ernment responsible for implementing decentralization process across Egypt, providing them with the tools, mechanisms and information to enable them perform their decentralized functions. Moreover, the "Capacity Development" component focuses on the building and development of capacities within the Ministry of Local Development, and local councils (elected and executive) to support the implementation of the decentralization process. The final component of the programme is the "Coordination and Decentralization Support Unit" which oversees project implementation and coordinates all donor funded and national efforts in decentralization and ensures that they are in line with national priorities and the recommendations of the National Decentralization Strategy. UNDP Egypt is also supporting the "Strategic Urban Planning for Greater Cairo 2050" project, which focuses on preparing the vision and strategic urban development plan for the Greater Cairo region and its affiliated mega cities; Cairo, Giza and Shubra El-Kheima. Given the importance of the region as the urban, political, social and economic capital of Egypt and one of the largest urban agglomerations in the world, the project's main objective is to use a participatory approach to prepare detailed plans for priority subsidiary projects with national significance such as the transfer of ministries and governmental authorities to a new government city, urban development and upgrading of the north sector of Giza city as a new approach for public-private partnership in informal settlements and prevention of growth of further slums. It also seeks to establish a Local Urban Observatory Unit for Greater Cairo Region as a monitoring mechanism for urban development to support future urban policies in addition to strengthening the capacity of local actors in Participatory & Strategic Planning, Management and Implementation.

In **Yemen**, UNDP recently finalised the "Decentralization and Local Governance Support" programme (2003-2008, US$ 11.2 million), a joint initiative with UNCDF. UNDP and UNCDF have now developed a new project, which is still under consideration. The project worked with the Ministry of Local Government Affairs (MOLA) and the Governorates of Taiz, Hudayda, Wadi Hadhramaut, Mukalla, Hajjah, Ibb, Abyan and al-Jawf. The project assisted the government of Yemen to define, align and implement decentralization reforms

based on the Local Authority Law of 2000. It provided policy inputs, capacity development of the MOLA and local authorities, as well as top-up financial support for infrastructure projects foreseen in district development plans and annual investment programmes. The overall objective of the project was to improve the effectiveness and performance of local governments to engage in local development and service delivery and thus contribute to poverty alleviation through providing substantive inputs to the process of formulating the National Decentralization Strategy; establishing and strengthening institutions of the Local Authority System with a focus on the MOLA, pilot governorates and pilot districts; and developing and testing training materials covering the full public expenditure management cycle in pilot districts.

UNDP **Morocco** has a project to support the national strategy of decentralization (2015). The national strategy was launched in 2009 and focuses in fostering inclusive participation and strengthening accountable and responsive governing institutions at national, regional and local / decentralized levels. The strategy will be implemented through 6 interdependent strategic areas, developed as a package of services offering: (i) local strategic and participatory planning for the development of rural and urban areas; (ii) capacities development of officials and public servants at national, regional and local levels through the modernization of human resources; (ii) decentralized tools for monitoring and evaluation and local activity steering[21] (local organization, IT system, etc.); (iv) professionalization of local public services management; (v) enhancement of fiscal decentralization and resources mobilization; and (vi) strengthened favourable legal framework. Part of the strategy is to move from a higher authority within the Ministry of Interior to a national institution that will support and provide the local and regional authorities with a package of service offers. UNDP Morocco also assisted the local governance process by providing support to the "Decentralization of the Court of Accounts" project (US$ 915,000). This project involved the creation of Regional Court of Accounts, the strengthening of local management information sys-

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[21] The objectives of the project also include the modernization of the civil registration system and support to the development of a digital citizens' database that will enable the government to launch appropriate and targeted development policies.

tems and the training of financial court magistrates, and technical and administrative staff. In response to Morocco's interest in improving the targeting of social and economic development programmes, and accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, UNDP is currently supporting the Ministry of the Interior (*Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales*) with the implementation of a large programme of modernization of Civil Registration Offices across the country. The programme aims to improve the quality of services provided, through the modernization and computerization of all civil registration offices in Morocco (more than 2100), thus allowing for: (i) readily available and reliable data-bases for improved targeting of the populations, particularly in the health and education sectors; (ii) accurate provision of electoral lists by location and gender, facilitating greater participation in the democratic process; and (iii) a positive impact on education (enrolment and completion), and maternal mortality reduction efforts.

ART[22] also has several interventions in the region. Governance, local economic development, social welfare, health, environment, gender equity and education are the UNDP ART main fields of interventions at local and national levels. In **Morocco**, UNDP is implementing project in support of local governance and local development (2007-2009, US$ 3 million). To ensure the existence and autonomy of local communities, Morocco has constitutionally committed itself to decentralization. This process, undertaken during the last 40 years, has experienced in the most recent years a progressive development, which has substantially changed the administrative profile of the country. The main objectives of the programme are: (i) to promote democratic governance at the decentralized level through the promotion of a participative approach in local development planning and the improvement of the management of international cooperation resources; and (ii) to support the government and local stakeholders (public and private) in the comprehensive implementation of the decentralization and participatory processes at the regional level by strengthening

the capacity of local officials and authorities through capacity-building on local development planning, project management, territorial marketing, monitoring and evaluation. The programme has as main partners the Moroccan General Directorate of Local Communities (DGLC) of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The programme also works closely with the National Human Development Initiative (INDH), and is supported by Italy, Spain and Belgium, with an annual budget of around US$ 2.7 million.

In its essence, ART is also an aid effectiveness initiative at the local level, fostering the promotion of partnerships between local authorities of the South and the North. A similar initiative is also underway in **Lebanon**. UNDP ART Lebanon is being implemented in the four neediest areas where the scores of poverty rates mount high, the socio-economic problems are enormous, and the convergence between deprivation and the effects of the July 2006 war took place. The ART GOLD Lebanon main aim is to support the Lebanese national government and local communities in achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To support the Regional Working Groups efforts, UNDP ARTGOLD Lebanon facilitated the set-up of a number of decentralized cooperation partnerships between Lebanese and European communities. For 2007-2009, the programme had a global budget of approx. US$ 19 million with contributions from Italy, Belgium, Spain, Monaco and Canada. The main partner is the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR).

Accountability, Transparency & Integrity in Public Administration

The UNCAC provides the framework for a wide spectrum of initiatives, including those that directly relate to governance and public administration. A major conference on the topic was organised in 2004, as part of the Good Governance for development initiative in the Middle East[23]. Various initiatives are currently under-

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[22] ART Gold (*Appui aux Reseaux Territoriaux et Thematiques*) is a joint initiative of UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNIFEM, UNOPS, ILO and UNHCR that seeks to support local governance and local development through a more concerted action of development partners at the decentralized level.

[23] UNDP/OECD Conference on Good Governance for Development in

way, with POGAR playing an important role at the regional level in maintaining attention to the integrity challenges in the region. In **Egypt** for example, UNDP's "Strengthening Transparency and Integrity in the Civil Service" project supports the newly established Transparency and Integrity Committee in the Ministry of Administrative Development (MSAD). The project's outputs include: (i) a Code of Conduct for public servants; (ii) national anti-corruption indicators; (iii) measures to assess government performance in selected ministries; and (iv) policy papers and a compilation of comparative experiences related to the potential establishment of a National Ombudsman and for enhancing transparency in the preparation of the national budget. UNDP Egypt supports the Ministry of Investment through the "Enhancing Transparency and Fighting Corruption" project (US$ 2.4 million). The project set up a Transparency Centre within the Ministry of Investment to strengthen advocacy and awareness for financial disclosure, transparency and accountability, especially in the media, public business sector companies and the private sector, in addition to providing examples of best practices in compliance and transparency. For this purpose, the Centre is collaborating with Siemens and Pepsi as best practices in corporate transparency, disclosure and collective action and is developing a code of conduct for the public business sector. Three training programmes on "Financial Disclosure" were organized for a total of 45 journalists, as well as training on "Strengthening Transparency and Boosting Competitiveness through Effective Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting" for private sector firms and for the Egyptian Institute of Directors. The Centre initiated collaboration with the World Bank for the development of the Collective Action Framework and Training modules and co-operated with the OECD for the implementation of the Business Strategy for Egypt.

The National Campaign for advocating UNCAC provisions in **Palestine** (UNDEF) mainly works with civil society organizations, but seeks to mobilize a wide variety of stakeholders from all sectors in order to: (i)

conduct research in addressing gaps and draft new legislation to adequately operationalize UNCAC in the government[24]; (ii) institutionalize monitoring mechanisms; (ii) raise public awareness; and (iv) advocate for effective implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption measures. The project would also assist in setting up a State Anti-corruption Agency[25]. Specific research was also undertaken on corruption in the security sector and to analyse the impact of corruption on marginalize groups. UNDP in Palestine also works on anti-corruption at the local level through the DGTTF-funded "Local Governance Integrity" project (US$ 200,000), developing the capacity of Local Government Units (LGUs) to promote UNCAC implementation at the local level. In 2008-2009, UNDP/PAPP developed a local governance integrity toolkit in a participatory approach and jointly with three selected municipalities, Ministry of Local Governance, Civil Society Organizations and the General Bureau of Administrative and Financial Monitoring in the Palestinian Authority. The LG integrity tool was applied and tested on fifteen municipalities out of 132 in the occupied Palestinian territory and is planned to be applied on the remaining 117 municipalities in 2010-2012. The main target is to develop tools to support participatory assessments of the integrity, accountability and transparency of local authorities and to apply those tools in at least 483 LGUs.

Strengthening Institutions remains an important component of UNDP's anti-corruption initiatives. In **Jordan**, UNDP supports the Anti-corruption Commission (US$ 275,000) also to assess the gaps in legislation in relation to UNCAC, develop the capacities of the staff of the commission and improve complains handling and internal monitoring. In **Lebanon**, a 3-year project supported a national dialogue on corruption. The project not only aimed to strengthen accountability and transparency in public institutions, but also to enhance the

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the Middle East, Istanbul, February 2004. Presentations at this Conference referred to activities under the on-going UNDP-UNDESA project to study Public Sector Transparency and Accountability in Selected Arab Countries: Policies and Practices (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen).

[24] A National Plan of Action to Combat Corruption was drafted by a national team, and now awaits endorsement by the Cabinet and the Prime Minister. The project developed the Palestinian Integrity Index, which AMAN, the implementing agency of the project, has already started to use to measure corruption levels and legal compliance in public, private, and non-governmental sectors.

[25] The State Anti-Corruption agency has not yet been established during. An Anti-Money Laundering Law was endorsed, and an Anti-Money Laundering Commission was created. Also, the State Illicit Gain Commission, which later on will be a part of the State Anti-Corruption agency, is now on the way to be established.

capacity of parliament and other central control agencies. In addition, the project allows greater participation of citizens in national political life. UNDP **Djibouti** has a DGTTF project (US$ 100,000) in support of strengthening transparency and integrity in the public sector, implemented by the General State Inspection (IGE)[26], and involving civil society in this process. In **Kuwait**, UNDP supports the State Audit Bureau to better undertake its role of financial oversight to achieve the highest level of accountability and transparency in disbursement of public funds[27].

In 2009, UNDP **Yemen** built bridges between local district officials and CSOs in five governorates (Hodeida, Taiz, Aden, Hadramawt, Hajja) through the "Strengthening the Capacity of Media and CSOs in Transparency Advocacy" project. By conducting joint capacity development trainings in public finance monitoring, and through joint workshops, UNDP provided a platform for greater interaction between CSOs and local district officials. During field monitoring visits, the feedback received from local district officials and CSOs, was that a transparent dialogue on public resources has contributed to a restoration of trust between the two parties and has reduced tensions between the communities and the local district officials in targeted districts. In 2010, capacity development for public resources monitoring will be expanded to 9 additional governorates in cooperation with the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, and the Ministry of Local Administration.

Public Financial Management

In **Jordan**, UNDP supported the improvement of the nation's property tax system. The "Building and Strengthening the Capacity for Improved Property Tax Management and Collection" project (2003-2009, US$ 2.9 million) worked towards the devolution of the prop-

erty tax administration functions and the involvement of local governments in the tax collection. Between 1998 and 2008, the property tax base more than doubled. The project aimed to improve the efficiency of the property tax collection system by developing a transparent, accountable computerized information system to improve people's tax payment compliance. Outputs included: (i) regulatory framework for the property tax in Jordan amended; (ii) a functional property tax information system with a requisite supporting information technology component designed, constructed, and implemented, including networking of the Financial Centres; (iii) the organizational, administrative, and operational matters related to the property tax system and its technological support duly implemented and in operation; (iv) a comprehensive manual covering all organizational, administrative, and operational aspects related to the property tax information system formally adopted by all organizational units involved, including but not limited to the Land and Survey Department, the Property Tax Directorate, the Municipality of Greater Amman, other municipalities, and the Civil Registration and Passport Department; (v) staff of the concerned organizational units duly prepared and trained for new job requirements emerging as a consequence of the introduction of the new property tax administration system; and (vi) improved people's knowledge about the property tax system, including its benefits for the society, and their improved attitudes towards paying the property tax.

In **Palestine**, UNDP is supporting property tax reforms as part of its support to local governance reforms. The project (US$ 500,000) aims to support the reform of the legal framework that governs the Property Tax Administration to be unified in the West Bank and Gaza, develop the capacities of the property tax staff at the Ministry of Finance and 132 municipalities, provide technical assistance and field equipment to support the property valuation in the municipalities, providing technical assistance to develop mass computerised property tax operations through providing software for archiving, MIS, GIS, billing, collection, and piloting the reassignment of tax Authorities (transfer to local government units) in 3 municipalities.

One of the largest public financial management interventions in the region is the "Capacity Development for

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[26] IGE reports directly to the Prime Minister, and is in charge of controlling public organizations and local governments.
[27] In order to implement the ISO 2700 standards, the project conducted a gap analysis report, review of policies and procedures, and organizational structure, developed training materials and guidelines.

Fiscal Reform and Management" project[28] (2003-2010, US$ 18.5 million) in **Lebanon**. Also important in terms of funding was the "Modernisation of the Customs Directorate Project" in **Syria** (US$ 8.1 million) implemented by the Ministry of Finance. Automation of customs operations will be performed through the UNCTAD international standard software package (ASYCUDA). The project provided the private sector with transparency and trade facilitation while providing the Customs Directorate with enhanced intelligent risk management capabilities for enforcing laws and regulations. Physical connectivity between the various border checkpoints and the directorate was improved.

In **Egypt**, UNDP is building on its ongoing partnership with the Ministry of Finance[29] supporting it to implement many strategic initiatives in Egypt's reform of the financial sector with far reaching socio-economic impacts (2009-2011, US$ 2.8 million). The support provided to the MoF includes assistance to the Ministry's Macro Fiscal Policy Unit, the source of technical advice in the formulation of financial and fiscal policy, and has contributed to various strategic initiatives such as Egypt's tax reforms and ensuing new tax laws. In addition, UNDP is also supporting the Ministry of Finance in reforming, modernizing and automating the national social insurance and pension system comprised of over 16.5 million contributors in the government, public and private sectors. UNDP's supports the MoF in establishing Public Private Partnerships as a mode of investment and financing government projects in infrastructure, healthcare, utilities, and transport through developing capacities and policy formulation (including laws and legislation) to implement PPP initiatives.

In **Tunisia**, UNDP is supporting the High Court of Accounts to become a prime institution to steer the improvement of the public sector performance and thus act as an advisor to the state authorities in this mater. The project (US$ 330,000) aims to assist in modernizing work processes, improve human resource qualifications, reduce the current backlash, improve citizens' access to the Audit Institution both at central and regional levels and support the organizational restructuring. In 2007, the project was further supported by a DGTTF injection of US$ 75,000 (Support to the Modernisation and Strengthening of the Court of Accounts). The main objective of this initiative is to enhance transparency in the relationships between the representative institutions in the country and the high-level control institutions of the State, to increase the capacity of members of parliament to analyse and use the reports of the Court of Accounts, and to improve the external communications of the Court with the representative institutions. Better collaboration between these institutions is likely to seriously improve accountability in the management of the state affairs.

UNDP also implemented a "Public Finance Management" project in **Yemen** (2006-2008, US$ 3.6 million). Outputs included general budget reform and improved budget decision-making, improved management of national budget execution, public financial information system, better control and financial accountability and improved bidding and procurement system.

Aid Effectiveness

To streamline the aid management system in the occupied **Palestine** territory, in line with the OECD-DAC Paris Declaration, UNDP has implemented an EC funded project in support of the "Governance Strategy Group", one of the four strategic groups that were established. Each of these strategy groups deals with policy formulation and programmatic coordination. UNDP was specifically requested to support the Governance Strategic Group in building of a viable Palestinian State, assisted by a transparent, accountable, merit based and efficient administration. Much of the project's focus is on aid coordination and aid effectiveness – in particular related to governance reforms – and support to the aid coordination structure that was approved in 2005.

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[28] In addition to the drafting of TAX procedure Law and Global Income Tax law, improved tax audit system, reorganization of the tax administration, the development of a user-friendly tax portal (including E-tax filing and 24/7 call centre), improved customs-client connectivity and enhanced customs risk management , the project also deals with aid coordination improvements.

[29] UNDP has been supporting the Ministry of Finance since 2000. The project helped to establish a Fiscal Policy Decision Support Unit, assisted with automation of the ministry. The latest extension of the project (for a total budget of US$ 1.2 million of which US$ 125,000 is provided by UNDP) mainly aims to analyse policies, build capacity of the support unit, improving technical capacities for the effective management of public financial resources, the efficient management of government inventories, public depth management and automation of government sectors.

In **Syria**, the "Enhancing Aid Effectiveness and Coordination" project (US$ 450,000) focuses on enhancing the capacity of the State Planning Commission in its coordination role[30]. In **Djibouti**, UNDP is supporting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in close collaboration with the Directorate for International Financing of the Ministry of Finance, to implement the Paris Declaration principles and support the the African Peer Review Mechanism[31]. This is a relatively small project that mainly aims to organize a study tour, a conference, reports and action plans. UNDP **Morocco**, in partnership with Spanish and French cooperation agencies, supports the Ministry of Economy and Finance's efforts to improve aid coordination through the "Support to the Mapping of Development Projects" initiative (US$ 520,000), focused around the establishment of a systematized data-base providing detailed information on the geographical distribution of development efforts. In **Sudan**, UNDP implemented a "Capacity Development Project for Aid Management and Coordination" (2005-2007, US$ 1.7 million). Such interventions are critical in post-conflict environments, characterised by increased flows of foreign assistance. The project led the foundation for a Sudanese led and results-based aid management system. After years of relief assistance, mainly managed and controlled by external partners, in a fragmented and short-term output oriented manner, there is now a need to better coordinate longer-term development aid[32]. In **Yemen**, the "Aid Coordination and Alignment" project (2005-2009, US$ 1.6 million) aimed to enhance government leadership and ownership of development aid and build capacity in the area of aid management, coordination and effectiveness. Outputs included the development of a national Aid Policy paper; establishment of a national aid database; enhancement of government oversight and aid coordination; needs assessment and identify weaknesses in institutional management and individual capacities within the context of aid management and coordination.

E-government, Information & Communication Technologies (ICTs)

The Ministerial declaration issued at the Marrakesh Conference (November 2009) between the MENA countries and the OECD reiterates the importance of electronic government solutions and reforms as an effective tool for transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and transformation of public sectors and their service provision in the interest of both citizens and businesses. Modernisation of the public administration through ICTs is a common trend in the region. UNDP **Saudi Arabia** is assisting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with ICT developments to enhance productivity, efficiency and connectivity (US$ 3.6 million).

UNDP **Iraq** currently has large public sector modernization and local government initiatives (see above) and is aiming at linking the E-governance portfolio to these projects.

In **Jordan**, the "Building and Strengthening the Capacity for Improved Property Tax Management and Collection" project (2003-2009, US$ 2.9 million) has a supporting information technology component, including networking of the Financial Centres (see also Public Financial management). UNDP Jordan also supports the introduction of a national E-procurement system. The E-procurement project (US$ 1.6 million) focuses on the automation of procurement transactions in order to reduce human error, enhance data integrity, bringing transparency to government procurement and facilitating standardisation of processes. The project recently launched the Procurement Training Institute that will train staff on procurement and develop an E-procurement handbook. The project complements UNDP's support to establish a national Asset Management system

The "Support to E-governance Initiatives" project (US$ 4.1 million – US$ 250,000 from UNDP) in **Egypt**, was

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[30] The project supports the development of policy frameworks for grater aid effectiveness, improved information and analysis to support decision-making, capacity-building of SPC staff and line ministries staff in aid effectiveness, coordination and management.

[31] Recently a Directorate for International Cooperation was established in the MOFA and several working groups with development partners were established including a working group on Governance.

[32] The project's main outputs are: (i) functioning aid management and coordination structures with responsibilities and roles clearly delineated; (i) a comprehensive and transparent aid information system that is publicly available; and (iii) better alignment of foreign aid with national planning and budgeting systems.

designed and implemented to support the E-government initiative of the Ministry of State for Administrative Development (MSAD). The E-government initiative was launched in 2001, the first strategic plan was accomplished and evaluated in 2007 and another phase of the initiative was launched. The initiative focuses on delivering better service to citizens while providing efficient tools for managing country resources. The project's objective is to increase access to government services and improve transparency, especially for rural area residents, and to improve the responsiveness of the Government of Egypt's (GOE) administration system to the needs of citizens and businesses. Project outputs include: (i) municipalities' service delivery upgraded through E-mechanism; (ii) new channels for service delivery & citizen participation created; (iii) re-engineering & automation of core business processes in governmental organizations; and (iv) support Transparency and Integrity Committee. UNDP Egypt also supported the "Enhancing Local Development and Governance Issues using IT Support" initiative in partnership with the Ministry of Local Development. The project's aim was to improve local and governorate level participatory governance by providing decision-makers, including community organizations, with the necessary information to plan, allocate resources and manage community development. The project achieved this through pilots in 2 governorates (Ismailia, Monofeya), focusing on the following outputs: (i) an information system and network for the Ministry of Local Development to aid decision-makers at the local and governorate levels; (ii) training of trainers within the Information Decision Support Centres across local governorates and within the Ministry of Local Development on data collection and analysis and database management; (iii) piloting local E-administration utilizing the new information system, indicators and networks. The documentation of the process of implementation of electronic portals for local administrative units and information management services (electronic services for citizens) and the actual implementation were successfully completed in the two pilot governorates (Ismailia, Monofeya). The comprehensive process was documented and replication has commenced within the Ministry of Local Development, Cairo, Alexandria and Minya governorates.

In **Syria**, UNDP supported the Planning Commission with the establishment of a DEVINFO database to provide government decision makers, UN agencies and other partners with an updated information of indicators allowing the analysis of the country progress related to MDGs, as well as with a simple user friendly software to extract this information in the shape of tables, graphs and maps (US$ 87,000). The database will be used for the regular updating and monitoring of MDG related data, and will build on disaggregated data extracted from reliable sources, including the National population Census, National Surveys, Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), and household budget surveys, as well as government routine statistics information systems.

Institutional Development of Specific Government Ministries & Agencies

Public administration and governance cover a wide area of additional interventions, mainly dealing with various types of institutional support to specific agencies. Examples of these interventions are the support services to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in **Saudi Arabia**[33], **Libya**[34] and **Syria**[35]. There is also the "Institutional Support Project to the General Investment Authority" (**Saudi Arabia**[36]), "Capacity-Building of the Investment Promotion Agency" (**Lebanon**) and the Ministry of Economy and Trade[37] (**Lebanon**), and the

[33] The project "Advisory services to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs" is a small project (US$ 50,000 to improve the administrative and organizational structure of the Ministry and provide advice on the preparation of a Diplomatic Service Rule. A larger project (E-services and Knowledge society in the MOFA) for a total budget of US$ 3.6 million aims at modernizing the ministry and its embassies through the introduction of E-services, ICT infrastructure, and training of staff to increase work productivity and efficiency.

[34] A small preparatory project aiming to support the automation of the general people's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International cooperation.

[35] Support in Establishing the Syrian Institute for Diplomacy and modernization of selected directorates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[36] Enhance the in-house capacity to provide training in investment promotion (US$ 1.4 million).

[37] A 9 year long project for a total budget of US$ 6 million aiming to strengthen the institutional capacities of the Ministry with respect to policy formulation and modernization of legislation and regulations, negotiation and finalisation of trade agreements (including accession to the WTO, development of trade and economic indicators, public sector management and control, private sector development

Saudi Food and Drug Authority[38] (**Saudi Arabia**).

UNDP is also providing support to National Postal Organizations. A common problem of these organizations is their lack of competiveness, high recurrent costs, particularly in terms of personnel, increase in competition from private providers (both local and international), lack of qualified cadres, lack of flexibility in management, weak communications and absence of business oriented vision.

In **Egypt**, the "Support to Modernisation of Egypt Post" was a four-year project (US$ 620,000 – US$ 30,000 from UNDP) to address four main outputs: (i) establishment of a new regulatory body for the Universal Postal Service; (ii) creation of an effective strategy; (iii) usage of ICT technologies; and (iv) staff capacity development to make them more client-oriented. A similar project is being implemented in **Syria** where UNDP is supporting the government with the modernisation of the Syrian Post Authority Service. This four-year project (US$ 250,000) supports the reform of the Syrian Postal Service to turn it into a profitable institute[39].

UNDP **Morocco** is currently providing support to the National Observatory for Human Development. This US$ 1.9 million project is a joint effort with UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNESCO that supports this new institution's mandate to analyze and orient public policies towards enhanced progress in human development. The Institute's mandate includes analysis of poverty profiles, relationships between different levels of decision-making and local populations and convergence between ministerial programmes and national human development policies. The project aims to enhance the capacity of the institution to analyse and evaluate public policies.

Access to Information

The right to information (A2I) is fundamental in bolstering democratic principles of openness, transparency and accountability and in eradicating poverty, and is therefore a programming priority for UNDP. However, few programmatic interventions focus on assessing outcomes of A2I interventions. Outcome assessment may need to focus on: (i) the legal regime for the right to information; (ii) the implementation of right to information legislation by government; (iii) the use of right to information by the general public and civil society; and (iv) the use of right to information by marginalised groups. On the supply side, some projects support government agencies to enhance their ICT infrastructure, their database and to develop personnel capacity to deal with open information sharing.

In **Lebanon** the "E-strategy for Lebanon" project aims to improve access to and efficiency of public administration and transparency in the administration of justice to promote a citizen-oriented public sector free from corruption: 3,000 civil servants in key ministries were trained on IT, productivity tools and data base and network administration. A draft law for enhancing Citizen's Access to information was formulated and sent to the Council of Ministers for review and endorsement. Improved information management systems at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute were established.

In **Iraq**, an E-governance strategy was elaborated in 2006 with the support of USAID. The strategy has had a slow start in its implementation but has guided most of the E-governance work in Iraq. An Iraqi E-governance advisory committee was formed and

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and relationships with the private sector and other related matters, resource mobilization and aid coordination. New equipment for 16 testing laboratories was tendered, delivered and installed. The capacity development initiatives also included building the IT infrastructure at the ministry and development of the main website. The project initially started in 2001 as a joint UNDP-World Bank project. From 2004 on, when the World Bank funding had ceased, the project has been funded mainly by the government and 10% by UNDP. The project played a key role in mobilizing additional resources for the ministry (€ 35 million).

[38] The SFDA was established in 2004 to undertake all control functions of food and drug governmental organizations. It reports directly to the Council of Ministers. The SFDA approached UNDP to support the establishment of the Authority, formulate its strategy and business plan and develop the required capacity to discharge its mandate (needs assessment, vision and mission statement, detailed work plan, organizational structure, job descriptions and administrative support provided to the SFDA consultative committees). The project has a 1 million dollar budget over a 4 year period.

[39] The project's outputs include a market scan of the private sector providers, legislative framework for the new body, revision of the postal law, introduction of financial services a as a new area of services, cost and benefit analysis, strategic plan, and comprehensive capacity-building programme. The modernization process also includes better communications through the establishment of a website.

UNDP has been supporting its work. Despite weak endorsement from many of the Ministers in Iraq to the idea of E-governance partially due to lack of full awareness of its use and developmental impact, several steps have been taken in the direction of strengthening the supply side of A2I. A draft legislation[40] created a national Chief Information Officer (NCIO) and NCIO office has been submitted to Parliament; approval has been pending due to more attention given to various election rounds.

Finally, there are some efforts at enhancing thematic information and sharing of information thereon. In **Saudi Arabia**, the "Climate Change Enabling Activities" project focuses on supporting the capacity of non-state stakeholders (civil society, media, business, and academic institutions) to access information and engage proactively in environmental development priorities: Efforts in both Climate Change and Water have been significant in terms of ensuring both state and non-state stakeholders have access to information, capacity-building and awareness.

In 2009, UNDP **Yemen** supported the Economic Journalism Centre (CSO) to map and assess the public information disclosure policy of the following national public institutions: Central Organization for Control and Audit, the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, the High Judiciary Council, and the Parliament. The outcome of the study was presented to all institutions involved in a workshop which provided a platform to reflect on the factors impeding the application of the public information disclosure policy of the institutions concerned. Also in Yemen, the "National Programme on Integrated Water Resources Management" focuses on upgrading Website of NWRA providing access to information to the general public.

Streamlining
Regulations & Procedures

In **Yemen**, UNDP supports the Ministry of Industry and Trade with a US$ 1 million project to modernize and strengthen trade and industry licence administration – also through ICTs and web-based connectivity to affiliated institutions such as the Investment authority, Municipality Office, and Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Trade – by presenting a view that emphasizes the improvement of the bureaucratic processes of doing business in Yemen.

Gender &
Public Administration

Women in Arab countries find themselves in a subservient position within the family as they live in societies bound by patriarchal patterns of kinship, legalized discrimination, social subordination and ingrained male dominance. The Arab Region has one of the highest rates of female illiteracy in the world, standing at about 50% compared to about 30% for Arab males. In public life, women account for less than 10% of Arab parliamentarians (also the lowest in the world), ranging from 1.8% in Egypt to 22.5% in Iraq, and at best no more than 23% in Tunisia and UAE. There is a higher rate of women ministers in middle income countries than in NCCs and LDC, while in crisis countries, it varies from a high of 18% in Sudan to a low of 0.3% in Somalia.

UNDP's interventions to enhance women empowerment are most pronounced in the area of legal reform and combating of social discrimination. In public administration and local government assistance, the gender dimension is still less pronounced. One exception was the "Strategy for Mainstreaming Gender Empowerment in Local Government in Southern Sudan" project undertaken in **Southern Sudan** with DGTTF support. This initiative was a component of the broader Local Governance Recovery Programme that supported gender equality by training state and county government officials in gender awareness, sensitivity and mainstreaming. The project built databases, trained specific and general local government staff members, developed policy guidelines and successfully introduced gender issues into planning and budgeting of local government throughout Southern Sudan. A Gender Policy Framework was completed in the latter half of 2009. However, it was too late to be used to

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[40] This legislation calls for the creation of a formal mechanism across all sectors of government to both oversee and coordinate the deployment of ICT within national and local institutions.

inform the final draft and subsequent Local Government Act. A network of 20 Gender Focal Points was created and based at the Ministry of Local Government in each of the 10 Southern states. The role of the Focal Points was to initiate and coordinate gender activities with communities in an attempt to increase participation of women in community decision-making[41].

UNDP **Morocco**, through the "Support to the Family Sections for the Implementation of the Family Law"[42] programme (2007-2010, US$ 1.68 million), UNDP, UNIFEM and UNICEF are jointly supporting the Department of Justice's effort to strengthen the operational capacities of the Family Sections. The programme, coordinated by UNIFEM, focuses on improving access to justice for litigants, equipping the Family Sections for the implementation of the new family code, and establishing: (i) a mediation and conciliation mechanism in participating Family Sections; (ii) a Pilot Fund to assist children of divorced women in ob-

taining child support; (iii) a model for determining child support and calculating the division of property; (iv) an automated system for information management in the Family Sections; and (v) a specialized training unit within the continuous education programme for Ministry and Family Section public servants.

In 2009, UNDP **Yemen** supported the Transparency Centre (CSO) to assess from a gender perspective, the human resources policies of the following national public institutions: The Ministry of Civil Service, the Supreme National Authority for Combating Corruption, the Central Organization for Control and Audit, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning, and the Ministry of Justice. The assessment revealed that the concerned entities lacked a human resources policy that would attract women, and that in general the recruitment process is not conducted in a transparent manner. In 2010, a proposal for a gender sensitive civil service law will be presented to the Ministry of Civil Service for consideration.

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[41] Based on a DGTTF assessment in Southern Sudan conducted by the Oslo Governance Centre and the Regional Centre in Cairo. An independent consultant – Susan Soux – undertook field visits and assessment of the project.

[42] *Renforcement des capacités opérationnelles des Sections de la familles.*

CONCLUSION

Governance and public administration initiatives inevitably involve a substantive amount of capacity development activities, either to build up the institutional capacity of specific agencies or ministries. Several public administration and local governance programmes/projects in the region are quite capital intensive with certain projects involving budgets of 10 to 15 million US$. But despite the importance of public administration and local governance in the region, the portfolio has received less focus in the regional governance programme (POGAR). That focus has now shifted, and with POGAR's increased support to the implementation of the UNCAC, there is an opportunity to also enhance knowledge sharing on governance and public administration in the region, especially in the framework of the newly established Arab Anti-Corruption & Integrity Network (ACINET) similar to the practitioners' network that is established in Eastern Europe.

The overview of UNDP's activities in the area of public administration and local governance in the Arab States region shows a vibrant portfolio of projects in the sector. Even though the International Financing Institutions are increasing their support to civil service reform, and claim a comparative advantage in the area of public finance, several UNDP country offices are playing an important role in these sectors. Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia have important civil service reform initiatives. UNDP is also active in the area of public finance in Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Egypt and supporting tax and customs reforms in Palestine and Syria. Local governance has gained importance, in particular also in the post-conflict countries and regions (Iraq, South Sudan). UNCAC provides a new opportunity to work on public sector accountability and transparency (e.g. Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, and Lebanon). Projects that directly support planning and coordination at the centre of government decision-making (including the coordination and management of aid effectiveness) are also gaining importance, and may do so even more, as countries are seeking solution to deal with the effects of the global crisis.

Public administration and local governance projects, like all UNDP projects, are anchored in country analysis that informed CCAs, CPDs, and CPAPs. This analysis could be further strengthened by a political economy approach that re-examines assumptions related to power relations and how those affect the definition of nation, the expectations about and roles of the state and the rigidities of horizontal and vertical inequalities.

Programming for capacity development is shifting towards pillars of institutional development, leadership, accountability and knowledge promotion through monitoring and evaluation capacity. This is commendable and will need to emphasize incentives and sanctions for excellence, incentives and sanctions for integrity, and citizen participation.

Public finance management support could program for entry points that enhance inclusive growth patterns, not only effective implementation of taxation and custom reform. This may require more attention to inter ministerial linkages and coordination of social policies with investment policies as well as more sensitivity to financing of local government to enhance the latter's capacities and accountability.

There is obviously a need for enhancing UNDP's role in gender empowerment through public administration and local governance. This will be possible when the region launches a gender strategy that includes economic empowerment of women alongside their legal and political empowerment.

While most public administration and local governance projects have some link to MDGs achievement, that link is not always explicit. Projects and programmes that have a very explicit and comprehensive focus on the MDGs are usually included and reported as part of UNDP's support to the poverty/MDGs practice and not democratic governance, even though they may include important governance dimensions. But there are obviously several projects, especially those related to local level service delivery, corruption and public sector performance that do not explicitly refer to the MDGs, but nevertheless contribute to their achievement by ensuring that resources and public goods and services are efficiently, effectively and equitably provided. Public administration and local governance / decentralization interventions are where the majority of MDGs support lies. Despite its centrality in the MDG's, gender equality is not all that explicit in the public administration and local governance projects.

Finally, although profound institutional, economic and legal reforms have taken place in several countries, poverty and social inequalities remain pronounced, calling for public sector interventions that are more inclusive and participatory, and for more attention to local governance and local service delivery. Arab countries clearly seem to have become more aware of their international surrounding and of the aspirations of people for freedom and democracy. Governments, civil society and private sector organizations are now aware of the impact of globalization and the need to change by becoming active in the world community; people have become more vocal in their demand for reform. The impact of the Arab Human Development Reports is evident and intellectuals have shifted from passive criticism to positive and constructive sharing and building partnerships to engage in guiding governments towards much needed governance and public administration reform[43].

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[43] At the Marrakesh conference (November 2009) between the nations on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and the OECD, it was acknowledged that, despite the impact of the Global Crisis, the process of readjustment and modernisation of public governance institutions has been reinforced. Also emphasized was the importance of fostering integrity and transparency in the public sector to better serve citizens and business and the need to encourage enhanced transparency in government procedures, laws and regulations as decisive for a vibrant business environment and re-confirm their commitment to fight corruption in all its forms including by eliminating unnecessary administrative procedures.

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