

United Nations Development Programme

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCEAND DIVERGING PATHWAYS TO MORE **INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES**

2013 YEAR IN REVIEW

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UNDP partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. On the ground in more than 170 countries and territories, we offer global perspective and local insight to help empower lives and build resilient nations.

United Nations Development Programme One United Nations Plaza New York, NY, 10017 USA

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FOREWORD FROM THE DIRECTOR



We live in an era of unprecedented and rapid changes. The global balance of power is shifting. A majority of the world's population now lives in cities. Major progress has been made in terms of reducing extreme poverty. At the same time, the world is also facing increasingly complex and interrelated development challenges. Competition is intensifying around natural resources, and inequalities are widening between and within countries. Today, 75 percent of the world's population lives in societies where income is less evenly distributed than two decades ago.

Sharp degrees of exclusion lead to frustration and threaten stability, particularly in a globally connected world where aspirations for progress and participation have risen. For development to be sustainable over the longer term, it must offer economic, social and environmental benefits. For it to be inclusive, it must uphold people's rights. Democratic governance is fundamental to this process. More countries indeed recognize that the overall quality of governance matters, even as they take diverse development paths based on national priorities.

While the Millennium Development Goals address mainly social and economic priorities, the international deliberations on a post-2015 development framework have featured strong calls for the new agenda to include a prominent emphasis on governance.

Within this challenging and exciting environment, UNDP's Democratic Governance Group presents its 2013 global report, 'Year in Review—Democratic governance and diverging pathways to more inclusive societies'.

This report presents the key achievements and results from initiatives supported by the Democratic Governance Group in 2013. It shows intensive activities in the major pillars of our democratic governance work, from well-run parliaments to accessible formal and customary justice systems, to measures for combating corruption. It reveals how we are anticipating a future where democratic governance, as a set of values and principles, is ever more widely understood as integral to development as a whole.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our donors and other partners who make UNDP's democratic governance support successful. They enable us to assist programmes that concretely and effectively respond to many different needs in a wide variety of countries at varying stages of development and in different development settings.

Through our governance work in over 170 programme countries and territories around the world, we hope to have made a difference in the lives of people, women, men and children, providing them hope for a better future.

Patrick Keuleers, Director a.i.
Democratic Governance Group, UNDP

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INTRODUCTION

Democratic governance is defined as a set of values and principles that underpin state-society relations, allowing people — in particular the poor and marginalized — to have a say in how they are governed, in how decisions are made and implemented. It also means that people's human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected, and that they can hold their leaders to account, thus aiming to make governing institutions more responsive and accountable, and respectful of international norms and principles. Countries that respect democratic governance values and principles also ensure that mechanisms are in place for people to be protected from arbitrary action by state actors, as well as powerful corporations. Hence, democratic governance is not synonymous with a particular system of government; it is a way of governing that can be practised in a variety of political systems.

UNDP is committed to helping countries eradicate poverty and significantly reduce inequalities and exclusion. Central to this process are systems of democratic governance that meet citizen expectations for voice and development, and the rule of law and accountability, as well as public institutions that provide universal access to basic services.

As one of the world's largest multilateral providers of democratic governance assistance, UNDP plays an instrumental role in assisting developing countries to strengthen systems and institutions. This report presents the 2013 achievements of initiatives supported by UNDP's global Democratic Governance Group in three areas: fostering inclusive participation, supporting responsive institutions and upholding international principles. These areas are still related to the structure of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008—2013. The report highlights global, regional and national activities supported by the Group, including those funded through the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund.

The Group helps UNDP coordinate and harmonize democratic governance assistance across more than 170 countries and territories. It enables a regular flow of information to track emerging issues, provides top experts on demand, and cultivates new knowledge and analysis widely used inside UNDP and by our partners. In being able to analyse and learn from experiences in countries around the world, we can pioneer innovations — such as a series of national initiatives on youth and democratic governance that shaped a new global strategy that is now being implemented across the organization. The 2013 report therefore has a specific focus on youth-related activities.

UNDP's programmes cover many major elements of democratic governance systems and institutions, as this report demonstrates. Sections 1-3 each begin with an initiative that is illustrative of the area of governance being discussed, and is followed by results from other countries.

The first section, on inclusive participation, profiles achievements in the areas of elections, parliaments, e-governance and civic engagement, and youth empowerment in particular. Highlights include our global partnership with the Climate Parliament, which helps 200 legislators from 10 countries advance climate change policies. In 2013, we also supported a highly participatory and successful process in Tunisia that culminated in agreement on a new Constitution with broad protections for an array of human rights.

The second section looks at responsive institutions, covering local government and local development, public administration and public service excellence, rule of law and access to justice. Among other results, it presents the story of one of our many successful national legal aid programmes, in the Republic of Moldova. Beneficiaries, the number of legal aid lawyers and budgets have all multiplied several times over since UNDP assistance began. We are now focusing on helping to strengthen outreach to vulnerable youth.

A third section details our contributions to international principles as these are translated into national development in the areas of human rights, anti-corruption actions and gender equality. It chronicles, among other achievements, our regional support to anti-corruption measures in Asia and the Pacific, and Africa. The impact of these efforts include, for example, reaching 100 million people in Asia and the Pacific with messages around stopping corruption, and assisting with Africa's first continental meeting on extractive industries, illicit financial flows and repatriation of stolen assets.

UNDP, given its long and extensive experience in developing countries, is ideally positioned to act as a global and regional collector and disseminator of knowledge on democratic governance. A fourth section of the report details current examples of knowledge dissemination across all aspects of our work on democratic governance. A fifth section showcases UNDP's contributions to the process shaping the post-2015 development agenda. A final section summarizes lessons learned, as part of our continued focus on expanding the frontiers of what we know and applying it to how we operate. The conclusion of the report sets the tone for the way forward, under UNDP's new 2014—2017 Strategic Plan.

Participants at Youth and Development Forum, Tunisia, March 2014 (Photos: UNDP Tunisia)





I. INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Inclusive participation is fundamental to realizing sustainable development gains for all. UNDP seeks in particular to remove barriers to participation for people most affected by poverty or inequality — who are mostly women, youth, minorities, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities.

UNDP efforts helped to ensure that over 43 million people registered to vote in 68 countries supported by UNDP governance programming. UNDP works with countries to strengthen core systems and institutions that sustain and deepen inclusive participation. In 2013, through global, regional and national programmes, we supported 68 countries in managing their electoral cycles, spanning the time before, during and after elections. Our efforts helped to ensure, for example, that over 43 million people registered to vote in these countries.

Assistance to parliaments helps them work in a representative manner; legislate for sustainable, inclusive development; and keep governance processes open and accountable. We assist in building essential management and legislative capacities, and improving outreach and dialogue with constituents and civil society. UNDP currently works on parliamentary strengthening in 68 countries.

Since information and communication technology (ICT) enables governments and civil society to broaden participation in many directions, UNDP helps countries develop strategies and build capacities to effectively deploy it.

MAIN STORY: PARLIAMENTARIANS VOTE TO CARE FOR THE CLIMATE

Parliaments can accelerate transitions to clean, renewable energy through policy and regulatory reforms that guide new incentives and investments. The Parliamentary Action on Renewable Energy programme is a partnership

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