INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS PROJECT IN SELECT ARAB STATES

Lessons Learned from the Field

REGIONAL WORKING MEETING REPORT

April 2013

United Nations Development Programme
Bureau for Crisis Prevention and recovery
Bureau for Development Policy
Regional Bureau for the Arab States

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CEDAW	Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
DGG	Democratic Governance Group
GNC	General National Congress (Libya)
MIFTAH	Palestinian NGO
MoPD	Ministry of Political Development (Jordan)
NCA	National Constituent Assembly (Tunisia)
NFP	National Federal Parliament (Somalia)
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women (Lebanon)
NTC	National Transition Council (Libya)
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
RBAS	Regional Bureau for the Arab States
RCC	Regional Center in Cairo
SHAREK	Palestinian Youth NGO

Executive Summary

The Regional Working Meeting held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 20-21 February, 2013, within the framework of the *'Inclusive and Participative Political Institutions in the Arab Region'* Project, brought together representatives of UNDP from ten countries in the region (**Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, OPT, Somalia and Tunisia**) as well as the Ambassador of Belgium to Lebanon, key staff from the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy's Democratic Governance Group (DGG) and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

Colleagues reflected on where the Project is with regard to meeting the original outcomes and what is required to build on the successes that have already been achieved to ensure more effective delivery of results. This included a frank discussion as to what has not worked and the challenges that have been faced by the Project. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share insights and experiences across UNDP Country Offices, with UNDP staff working on implementation of the Project at the national level sharing their own lessons learned.

The Report provides a set of final recommendations and policy considerations which identify what can be done to ensure that staff have access to the support and the resources they need, from regional and headquarters centres, in order to ensure effective delivery of results. This Report highlights some of the lessons learned so far, and provides guidance to better understand how an innovative project working in a dynamic political environment has been able to operate under challenging circumstances.

Key Discussions

Colleagues had the opportunity to interact, exchange information and knowledge, share lessons learned and discuss critical challenges (political, internal and operational) as well as opportunities pertaining to the management and implementation of the Project. Through the country updates provided by each participating Country Office, participants were given comprehensive information about the local context and political dynamics in each Project country, as well as discussing key issues and challenges. Colleagues were also able to reflect on good and replicable practices in the region, identify common threads / regional trends, and explore possible areas for cooperation. Finally, priorities for 2013 were identified by participants, as well as entry points for HQ and RCC support to increase country capacity and action for optimal implementation and impacts through the proposed national Annual Work Plans (AWPs).

The discussions placed a particular emphasis on how to make programmes more flexible, responsive and adaptable to changing political and social contexts, considering the special fluidity of trying to work with political institutions and processes in a constant state of flux. Discussions strongly focused on the importance of supporting partners to ensure the work of political institutions are perceived as legitimate, as a means of enhancing peace building and state building.

Lessons learned

- **Access to and sharing of expertise and knowledge**: In some cases UNDP Country Office staff are working in isolation or with limited access to other staff that have experience and skills to support their efforts to deliver results. Feedback from participants was that meetings like the one organized are important to allow for in-person exchanges of ideas and information, but much can also be done virtually and online. A specific hurdle identified was the lack of quality, senior experts that are both familiar with UNDP practices and speak Arabic. Participants also highlighted the need to enhance knowledge exchange between Country Offices, as well as between national parliaments and political parties.

- **Adaptability to political context**: A major challenge is the institutional lack of flexibility and responsiveness of Country Offices to the changing political dynamics in a country. Programme flexibility requires strategic engagement of Country Office senior management, the proper and informed use of UNDP direct implementation modalities to deliver results quickly and the need to keep all parts of UNDP informed of what is transpiring and to seek advice as required. Programming frameworks should be constantly revisited, based on an on-going analysis of the political context of country, to ensure the types of interventions and outputs reflect the reality on the ground.

- **Creating legitimacy in the work of political institutions**: A systemic challenge to working with political institutions in the Arab region is that they have an historic lack of legitimacy, given that they previously were 'rubber stamps' for autocratic regimes. This lack of legitimacy stems primarily from a lack of understanding of what a parliament or political party does amongst the wider community. Youth in particular tend to be sceptical and reluctant to engage with political parties, preferring other unorganized and untraditional forms of political activism. Programming needs to be adapted to address the need to work with multiple partners and leverage UNDP's comparative advantage as a neutral broker and convener of safe spaces.

Recommendations and Policy considerations

➢ **Exchange Knowledge between UNDP staff:**
  - *DGG and BCPR must be committed to the facilitation of an Agora knowledge space for Arab States staff (www.agora-parl.org);*
  - *RBAS and the Cairo Regional Centre must endorse and promote the use of the virtual space;*
  - *UNDP staff engaged in the project should meet in person at least twice more before the project ends.*

➢ **Create Opportunities for MPs and Parliamentary Staff to Exchange Knowledge:**
  - *Agora should create space for Arab MPs and, separately, staff to engage and exchange ideas and information;*
  - *UNDP staff at the country level should be promoting Agora and identifying good ideas and practices that can be shared online;*
  - *At least one knowledge event in the region should be conducted before the Project ends.*

- ➢ **Establish an Expert Roster:**
    - ▪ *DGG and BCPR should merge their expert rosters on parliamentary development;*
    - ▪ *A specific call for CVs should be advertised with regard to Arab speaking experts in the fields of parliamentary and political party development;*
    - ▪ *An induction course or orientation, even if done online, should be developed to ensure all members of the roster have a solid understanding of UNDPs method of working.*

- ➢ **Promote National Expertise Through Mentoring:**
    - ▪ *Each Country Office should identify two national experts / consultants that can be added to an expert roster for the Arab States;*
    - ▪ *National consultants should be paired with international experts on every mission, to ensure mentoring and the exchange of knowledge.*

- ➢ **Establish Partnerships** (between UNDP, parliament and national CSOs, academics/universities and think tanks, as well as regional organizations and other international implementers):
    - ▪ *UNDP Country Offices engaged in the Project should develop a database of CSOs, academics and other national actors who work with or monitor the work of parliament and political parties;*
    - ▪ *RBAS should develop a database of regional organizations that work with parliaments and political parties and reach out to these groups to build stronger relationships and to promote greater cooperation.*

- ➢ **Develop and Maintain a Clear Understanding of the Political Context:**
    - ▪ *UNDP staff who are engaged in the Project should receive training on the UNDP Institutional Context Analysis Guide;*
    - ▪ *An expert roster developed for this Project should include a critical number of experts who have experience in conducting political analyses;*
    - ▪ *UNDP Country Offices need to consider if they have the capacity to constantly review the political context for their country and establish procedures for ensuring such analysis is updated regularly.*

- ➢ **Ensure Political Leaders Support the Work of UNDP:**
    - ▪ *Senior management of UNDP Country Offices must be engaged on a regular basis with senior political leaders to ensure initial and ongoing support for proposed reforms that emanate from the Project;*
    - ▪ *Where feasible, national political institutions should be encouraged to contribute to the work of the Project, through – for example - funding or active project management;*
    - ▪ *Where possible, the creation and approval of a strategic development plan for a parliament (or, in some cases, a political party) is a key step in creating a sustainable reform process;*
    - ▪ *Identify "champions for change" in the senior leadership of the institution and support their efforts.*

- ➢ **Quick and Effective Response to Demands Builds Trust:**
    - ▪ *UNDP Country Office teams must work with political institutions to identify not only long-term goals but also short-term objectives and "quick wins";*

- *UNDP Country Offices, with support from DGG, BCPR and RBAS technical support, must respond immediately to the short-term objectives identified;*
- *Though it should not be a major aspect of the work with an institution, sometimes it is important to provide infrastructure in the short-term to show 'good faith' and to build trust;*
- *Having an office in a parliament and working there on a daily basis will greatly increase the ability to respond to demands and, in turn, build trust.*

➢ **Building Trust Results in Change:**
- *Once trust has been established with a parliament or political parties, UNDP must provide medium and long-term technical advisers, where feasible, to ensure daily engagement and the transfer of knowledge.*

➢ **Focus on Short-Term Interventions Where Space is Changing Rapidly:**
- *UNDP should not immediately attempt to develop project documents and long-term programmes within a year of a conflict. The focus should be on a work plan that focuses on, at most, six-month intervals, to ensure the ability to adjust and amend outputs and outcomes on an ongoing basis;*
- *UNDP Country Offices, from senior management to programmatic levels, must be constantly engaged with political leaders during the first year of a democratic transition and should be constantly confirming the needs of the leaders and how UNDP can respond.*

➢ **Youth Concerns Need to be Articulated and Advocated:**
- *UNDP should use its convening capacity to create a forum for dialogue between youth and political leaders with the goal of identifying key recommendations for a sustainable process for youth to be heard;*
- *Based on the recommendations of the forum, UNDP must use its resources to advocate and provide technical support to implement the proposed reforms;*
- *A database of active youth CSOs and political movements must be established by UNDP and shared with political leaders.*

➢ *Parliaments and Political Parties must Not Only Engage the Public but must be Seen as Responding to what they Hear:*
- *Parliaments and political parties must show some "quick wins" after a conflict. UNDP should support the institutions in creating space for a dialogue and then support the implementation of reforms that will have an immediate impact;*
- *Where the rules of a parliament (or the regulations of party) are open to review, it is a critical opportunity for UNDP to provide technical support to promote and institutionalize public consultation.*

➢ **Political Leaders and Parties are Changing Quickly and UNDP Must Be Able to Adjust Its Work Accordingly:**
- *Immediately after a political crisis, UNDP Country Offices should create and maintain a database of all political parties and movements, to ensure all actors are identified;*
- *Consultations should be organized with as many parties (new and old) and actors as possible, both bilaterally and in multi-party groups, to ensure a network is established and UNDP begins to build trust with all actors;*

- *UNDP Country Offices should be conscious that all staff have political biases and extra effort must be made to ensure its neutrality is maintained and promoted;*
- *Programmes must be constantly reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure they reflect the changing political situation.*

➢ **Focus on "Well Done" Instead of Perfect:**
- *Not all political leaders will be willing to engage UNDP; this should not prohibit the Organization from moving forward with programming;*
- *"Quick wins" are critical to show that change has occurred after a crisis; UNDP must ensure its support for such reforms has a critical mass of political actors engaged, but should not wait for all actors to be on board with the reforms.*

➢ **UNDP must be creative in using its procedures to ensure effective delivery of its programmes:**
- *Consider using Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) to ensure a more rapid means of delivering programmes immediately after a political crisis;*
- *Use alternatives to project documents, such as preparatory assistance or regional and global initiatives, to deliver activities and outputs quickly after a crisis.*

Somalia- National Federal Parliament

1.   Introduction

The *Arab Awakening* that started at the beginning of 2011 is the first significant wave of democratic transitions in the 21st Century. It has led a number of countries in the region to face new and more complex levels of fragility and, in some cases, post-conflict societies. These transitions will take a number of years to work through because of the many challenges created by the upheaval generated by the *Awakening*. To make the transitions sustainable, these countries require political institutions, in particular parliaments and political parties, that are able to act in a manner that reflects the new democratic paradigm and are able to show a new, more open and inclusive approach to politics.

UNDP is the world's foremost parliamentary development organization. As of April 2013, UNDP is supporting up to 68 national parliaments across the globe, including ten parliaments in the Arab region. Prior to 2011, UNDP supported a regional programme, *Parliamentary Development in the Arab Region* (PDIAR), which provided space for national parliamentary staff and MPs to discuss and recommend solutions to critical development issues facing the citizens in the region. Since 2011 and the *Arab Awakening*, UNDP, through national, regional and global initiatives, has provided significant support to all countries in the region that have faced a transition to democracy.

Based on its experience globally, UNDP recognized that early interventions with political institutions could create a foundation for a sustainable transition to democracy. In many cases this did not require significant funding, but simply access to technical advice and knowledge about international standards and best practices. Given UNDP's experience and footprint in the Arab region, with offices in every country impacted by the *Awakening* and engagement with many of the political institutions in question, UNDP saw the value of leveraging its expertise to provide timely and relevant advice to key stakeholders as these countries attempted to move forward with their transitions.

To this end, three bureaux of UNDP – the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Regional Bureau for the Arab States (RBAS) – collaborated and received funding from the Government of Belgium at the beginning of 2012 for the *Inclusive and Participative Political Institutions in the Arab Region* Project. This Project, implemented in 2012 and 2013, has four outcomes:

> ➢ National parliaments in the Arab Region have the legal framework and structured parliamentary groups to engage all citizens and to avoid conflict;
> ➢ Political parties in Arab States are inclusive, promote a peaceful transition to democracy and are consultative;
> ➢ Virtual networks of parliaments are established to enable peer-to-peer exchange of information;
> ➢ Women and youth in four countries in the Arab region have the skills and support to work effectively within and with political parties and parliament.

From the start, the Project was seen as innovative for UNDP. The Project was designed to provide timely technical advice coupled with seed funding to UNDP Offices in the Arab region to enable them to support similar processes of democratic transition, while making sure that activities were tailored to the specific context of each target country. As the Project reached its second and final year of implementation, it was proposed that a meeting

of UNDP staff implementing the Project be held to provide an opportunity to exchange experiences, capture lessons learned to date and discuss where the planned work has faced roadblocks and how to overcome such challenges to speed and scale-up result as the Project moves forward in 2013.

The meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 20 and 21 February 2013. The meeting brought together representatives of UNDP from ten countries[1], the Ambassador from the Embassy of Belgium in Lebanon, key staff from the UNDP Regional Centre in Cairo, DGG and BCPR. The objective was to hear the stories from the various countries as they transition towards democracy and the role that UNDP has played in supporting these transitions. Two key objectives of the exchange of stories was to (i) allow for the exchange of ideas and lessons learned; and (ii) to identify what has been working and to try to apply these good practices to other countries to allow for better results within the Project.

Somalia- National Federal Parliament

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[1] Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, OPT, Somalia and Tunisia.

2. Assessing the political context for engagement of Political Institutions

2.1. Importance of Political Context

Though it may seem obvious, working with political institutions is inherently political. This lesson is only now starting to be appreciated by the international development community. Traditionally, support to parliaments, especially by organizations such as UNDP, has focused on institutional development and the delivery of results based on more traditional and technical methods of support. In recent years, UNDP has been at the forefront of efforts of the parliamentary development community to promote a new approach to such support that reflects the political realities in which this work is conducted[2].

Effective engagement in such work starts with the need for a full understanding of the political context in which UNDP will be operating. It is necessary to understand both the formal and informal political structures and leaders that are the drivers of change within a parliament and other political institutions. It was based on this approach that the Project proposed a political context analysis for seven countries[3] prior to determining *if and how* support to the parliament and/or political parties in that country should be delivered. Time and resources did not allow for a complete political economy analysis for any of the countries, but a 'light' version of a context analysis was conducted in six countries. A small team of international and national experts conducted short missions (5-10 days) in each country. Based on the analyses, the project team then decided if and how support would be provided to the institutions in the country to best support the democratic transition.

At a minimum, during the course of the Project it has become clear that the context analyses were valuable for two key reasons – (i) the analyses provided a baseline for any future work with the parliament or political parties in any given country, allowing UNDP Country Offices to better understand the current political situation within their country; and (ii) the analyses influenced the type and extent of the interventions with political institutions, allowing for a more strategic and precise approach to any support provided. Where previous support may have been overly aspirational or focused on too many objectives, the use of the political context analysis has resulted in project interventions that are attempting to address key challenges or support catalytic actions that can result in significant and sustainable change in how the institutions operate and, in turn, how citizens perceive their role in newly more open and democratic society.

2.2. Challenges

✓ *Supporting staff to utilize context analysis*

First, a key challenge is the ability of UNDP staff to properly absorb the content of the analysis and to use it to "think differently" about how the Organization approaches support to parliaments and political parties. In an Organization that is risk averse, particularly as it

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[2] GPA, 'Donor Support to Parliaments and Political parties: An Analysis Prepared for DANIDA'. 2008; ODI, 'Report Brief – Mind the Gap; Lessons Learnt and Remaining Challenges in Parliamentary Development Assistance', 2012.

[3] To date, six countries have received the context analysis. An analysis of Egypt's political institutions has been delayed until a new parliament has been elected, expected later in 2013.

relates to engagement in politics, staff are used to more traditional development models and are not encouraged by the Organization to use more politically conscious methods of engaging national actors. However, the success of the political economy analyses in helping target and tailor interventions is being used internally to demonstrate the value of such approaches.

✓ *Ensuring more systematic and timely context analysis*

A second challenge is that the context analysis must be refreshed on an ongoing basis, particularly given the rapid changes occurring in the region. Unfortunately the UNDP Country Offices do not necessarily have the capacity to regularly re-assess the political context in which they work and adapt their outputs and activities accordingly. What was noted is that where the staff in the Country Office does have such skills the Project has had a greater impact. For example, the **Libya** Country Office reported that their interventions benefited from access to a medium-term technical adviser who had the skill to constantly analyze and re-evaluate the political context of the country as activities were developed and, at times changed.

Participants at the meeting highlighted the value of having staff and /or resources available to ensure that Country Offices can ensure ongoing analysis. Ideally, such analysis will be progressed through the engagement of senior management within the Country Office, who can hold regular meetings with senior political leaders to help build trust between the organizations and to constantly check on the current political situation.

The "shelf life" of a context analysis is finite. Interventions and outputs that are developed as a result of the analysis should be focused on the medium-term to address the needs that arise as a result of the analysis.

✓ *Applicability in times of volatility*

A third challenge is that the political situation continued to change to such an extent that it becomes impossible to initiate and/or continue engagement with some institutions. This is the case in a number of the countries originally slotted for support through the Project. In **Egypt**, the dissolution of the Parliament in 2012 resulted in a re-evaluation of whether or not the Project could provide support under the circumstances. In **Jordan**, the delay in parliamentary elections for several months in mid-2012 resulted in the inability of the Country Office to engage parties and Parliament, as the focus was completely on the elections. In the **OPT**, the continuing deadlock of the national Parliament and the continued delay in national and some local elections narrowed the space for UNDP to engage with political stakeholders. In **Libya**, the deadlock in the General National Congress on how to proceed with constitutional reforms stalled UNDP's work.

✓ Ensure that after a context analysis is conducted that it is refreshed on a regular basis through formal and informal methods;

✓ Country Office senior management must be utilized on a strategic and regular basis to engage key political leaders and to build trust between UNDP and national political institutions;

✓ UNDP staff must have access to the capacity to conduct context analyses, either through development of in-house capacity or by access to external expertise on a timely basis;

✓ Work plans and outputs that are developed based on a context analysis must be made as flexible as possible to allow for adaptability to rapidly changing political dynamics;

✓ In countries where the political dynamics are changing rapidly, UNDP should focus on short and medium-term interventions that reflect the immediate needs identified as a result of a context analysis.

KEY RESOURCE

In 2012, UNDP published the **'Institutional and Context Analysis (ICA) Guidance Note'**, which introduces the ICA, UNDP's collective method for undertaking political economy analysis.

The Guidance Note can be accessed at the following link:
http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/democratic-governance/oslo_governance_centre/Institutional_and_Context_Analysis_Guidance_Note/
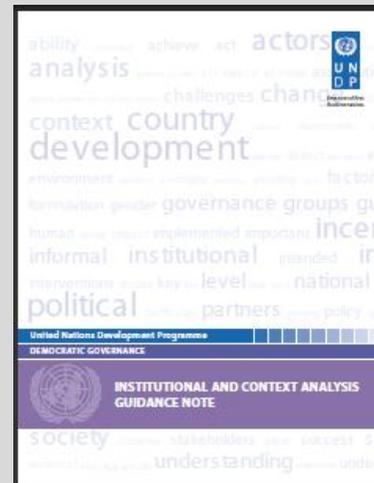
Lebanese Parliament

3. Key entry points for engagement in inclusive political processes in transition countries

The meeting discussed in detail what each of the ten Country Offices was doing to engage political institutions. In six countries, engagement was a direct result of funding and technical support from the Project. In four others (i.e. Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia and Morocco) the engagement built on existing programmes implemented by UNDP. In reviewing UNDP's work to date, the meeting considered each institutional entry-point separately in order to ensure focused analysis and identification of relevant lessons learned.

3.1. Parliaments

As a national institution that is constitutionally mandated to represent the citizens that elect its members to pass laws and monitor the work of the government, a parliament is a critical venue during a democratic transition process. Once free and fair elections are held for the national legislature, it is vital that the parliament prove that it is able to resolve the challenges facing the country in a peaceful manner, in order to have the legitimacy and build ongoing confidence with citizens who need to buy-in to the new state-society social contract.

In **Lebanon**, a political context analysis was conducted in 2012. The analysis highlighted the benefit of the existing UNDP Project maintaining an established presence in the Parliament. It also points to the importance of cultivating relationships over time. Since 2003, this presence has enabled the development of a level of trust between UNDP, the Parliament and MPs and has facilitated a strong interaction. It has also allowed the Project to respond rapidly to the demands of MPs on requests for knowledge and research. By enabling a greater level of trust, the Project has also ensured that the entire UN system has greater access to key political leaders as the system engages on matters related to development and peace.

In **Algeria,** in 2012 UNDP supported greater dialogue between the Parliament and marginalized groups, particularly youth. This work started with a high level workshop between political leaders and representatives of youth. The workshop identified some key actions to facilitate greater interaction between citizens and the Parliament, including the opening of committee hearings to the public. As a result of the workshop, the Parliament asked UNDP to conduct a study on the merits of a change in its rules of procedure to allow open committee hearings. This report will be finalized in the 2nd quarter of 2013 and UNDP will continue to advocate for amendments to the internal rules to allow more access and transparency to the work of the Parliament.

❖ *Challenges*

The newly established parliamentary institutions the Project is working with operate in a fragile environment and are facing a number of challenges, including: no real parliamentary tradition and poor pluralist culture; the weak capacity of MPs, most of whom have been elected for the first time; poor Secretariat staff skills; lack of infrastructure; limited coordination and cooperation between the executive and legislative; and limited MP-constituent relationships. Moving from closed or fragile political environments to more democratic politics can begin rapidly, but it is a lesson learned that parliamentary

development nonetheless takes time, particular where both parliamentary members and staff need to be capacitated simultaneously.

Additional challenges specific to each of these countries have also impacted on Project delivery: In **Lebanon** – the strong political polarization and frequent paralysis of Parliament; in **Somalia** - the political infighting inside the Parliament, the on-going unstable security environment and growing tensions between the legislative and executive; in **Libya** – the institutional weakness of the new GNC and the political deadlock around the constitutional process; in **Tunisia** – the lack of public trust due to the lack of transparency around the NCA's work, and the difficulty of mobilizing NCA members who are caught up with other political priorities; in **Egypt** – the dissolution of the Parliament and centralization of power in the hands of the President.

TIPS FOR COUNTRY OFFICES

✓ Ownership of the support by the parliament is critical. This can be demonstrated by means of a Strategic Plan endorsed by the parliament or through provision of resources for UNDP parliamentary development activities by the parliament itself;

✓ Identify key, sustainable changes that will have an impact on the public's perception of the parliament and democracy in general. Use a variety of tools to advocate for such changes, but understand that it may require a long-term commitment to see the changes come to fruition;

✓ Trust between UNDP and the parliament (and its various leaders) is critical to any sustainable results. This can be accomplished by building strategic partnerships with parliament that results in UNDP quickly and effectively responding to the demands of the parliament;

✓ Fully utilize UNDP's comparative advantages: Harness resources, capacities and expertise that exist in-house and in the region.

Libya - General National Congress

3.2. Constituent Assemblies

Constituent assemblies are interim parliaments created with the specific intention of developing and, in many cases, approving a new constitution that reflects the new democratic paradigm after a period of conflict or fragility. They have been used in a number of countries in the Arab region in the recent past. Iraq used this approach in 2005. More recently, Constituent assemblies were created in **Tunisia**, **Somalia** and **Egypt** to develop their new constitutions and some form of elected assembly is planned for **Libya** in 2013.

Tunisia, the first country to experience the *Arab Awakening*, was also the first country in the region where UNDP developed experience in engaging a Constituent Assembly after the *Awakening*. Access to knowledge with regard to institutional procedures and broader constitutional matters was critical in the early stages of the Assembly's development. The rapid deployment of technical support was very successful, allowing for the development of the legal framework and internal rules for the Assembly and its election based on international standards. It also ensured support for women who were interested in seeking elected office. In the end, the Constituent Assembly elected more than 25% women deputies. As for the constitution-making process, UNDP has not directly supported the drafting of the text[4], but oriented its efforts towards strengthening the national dialogue with citizens and CSOs throughout the drafting process. Discussions were held via committees, nationwide debates through the country and regional consultations (in 24 regions and in universities), which were all supported by UNDP.

In **Libya**, UNDP provided initial support to the Transitional National Council which was tasked with guiding the initial transition and which developed the initial roadmap for the constitutional process. Support focused on capacitating the nascent Secretariat, as well as providing initial support to MPs. A General National Congress was elected in July 2012. It was agreed in February 2013 that a separate Constituent Assembly would be elected to draft the constitution. UNDP's support to the constitution making is focusing on ensuring consultative and inclusive dialogue (with youth, women, CSOs, academia, etc), and sharing experience on participative constitutional processes. UNDP also plans to support the Secretariat of the new Assembly to strengthen its organizational and consultative capacity in terms of media outreach, and procedures relating to public consultation and outreach.

In **Somalia,** the constitutional process lasted 8 years. At the conclusion of the drafting process, a Constituent Assembly was convened for two weeks in July 2012. The Assembly comprised 825 members, selected by elders. UNDP, with support from the Project, played a critical role organizing the Assembly and providing access to knowledge in order to come to a consensus with regard to a new Constitution. The Assembly itself had a representation rate of 24% by women and UNDP supported efforts to ensure that the 825 participants reflected all regions and clans in the country. UNDP support through this Project is now being channeled to support the new National Federal Parliament, which is tasked with implementing the new Constitution, including by passing a substantive legislative agenda which is necessary to support Somalia's statebuilding and peacebulding agenda.

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[4] An official Constitution draft was released in December 2012.

❖ *Challenges*

Constitutional reform processes have been crucial in the post *Arab Awakening* context, but this remains a very complex and challenging area of work. UNDP has focused heavily on supporting breadth and depth of public involvement, recognising that legitimacy is heavily based on public buy-in to the final outcomes. UNDP has also supported dialogue efforts intended to assist with mitigating negative impacts from political divisions in debate. Heavy focus has also been kept on the importance of finalising the process within a reasonable timeframe to manage the high expectations of citizens.

The issue of legitimacy of the constitutional process has been particularly contentious in **Somalia.** The process leading to the current settlement was not as inclusive as would have been ideal, but was rather a result of elite bargaining. Additionally, the provisional constitution does not address the most essential issues (e.g.: the federal structure of state and division of power, division of resources). UNDP is now supporting the National Federal Parliament to undertake a more inclusive process of constitutional review and implementation. In **Tunisia** the constitutional debate has been complicated by electoral issues, with most MPs focused on their voters and political campaigns. In addition, the absence of a clear and consensual roadmap and the delays in the constitutional calendar caused delays for the rest of the transition process. The difficulty of respecting the constitutional process timeframe is also a challenge for **Libya**, with the process already delayed more than 6 months, and citizen unhappiness with said delays risking the existing fragile peace. The risk of deterioration of the security situation may also hamper efforts for effective consultation and outreach.

Tunisia – National Constituent Assembly

TIPS FOR COUNTRY OFFICES

✓ Electoral systems matter – they define the type and level of representation in the parliament and can ensure or discourage dialogue amongst various groups that are demanding a voice during the transition;

✓ Quick and timely access to technical advice is critical as the constituent assembly starts its work;

✓ It is important to support the legal framework for the assembly, including the development of rules of procedure ensuring the "ground rules" are established;

✓ In countries that do not have a tradition of public consultation and dialogue, it is important to create space for such processes while the constitution is being developed;

✓ Advocating for a significant number of women in the assembly is critical for its legitimacy;

✓ Technical support to the substantive issues raised during the deliberations should not be attempted unless requested by the assembly;

✓ The process matters as much as the outcome: In countries accustomed to autocratic rule, the series of negotiations, deliberations and consultations that take place within the framework of the constitutional process, are vital for laying the foundations for a democratic culture of multiparty consultation and cooperation, based on the rule of law;

✓ Constitution making presents moments of great opportunity to create a common vision of the future of a state, and are thus doubly important from a crisis prevention perspective as its adoption can lead to national conciliation and reconciliation in a country affected by conflict;

✓ Prioritize quality over quantity: ideally, extensive nation-wide consultations should be held, but it is more important that the focus be on high quality consultations than on a large volume of events.

Libya - General National Congress

3.3. Political Parties

Support to political parties, as a form of political institution, has proven to be much more challenging, though there has been some progress through the Project. This is a new area of capacity development in the Arab region, with little, if any, work done at the national level by UNDP prior to this project. Supporting the development of political parties is highly sensitive and must be approached carefully.

In **Jordan** there is a clear intention to build a political system in which parties are dominant, something that has not been achieved to date as a result of political customs that lean heavily towards clan-based elections and an electoral system that encouraged the election of independent candidates. To counter the risk of being accused of partiality, UNDP is engaging political parties through the Ministry of Political Development. UNDP supported the development of bylaws regulating party financing as well as further improving parties' capacities in terms of platform definition, outreach, membership, communication and operational skills. UNDP also supported review of party internal regulations to enhance the inclusiveness of party processes. Dialogues and roundtables among political parties, civil society, youth and women organizations on election-related laws, and a dedicated network was established and supported by UNDP ahead of the January 2013 elections.

UNDP has provided support to parliamentary groups in **Tunisia** as part of the constitutional and parliamentary development Project with the National Constituent Assembly. This has included providing knowledge on the important role such groups can play in the effective administration and operation of a parliament and the need for the groups to well organized in order to be effective advocates in the new multi-party system.

❖ *Challenges*

Not all parties are created equal. Older, more established parties are well structured and have strong grassroots and greater resources – such as the case with the Muslim Brotherhood affiliated parties in **Tunisia** and **Egypt** - while newer parties tend to have limited capacity and weak links to voters. By targeting support to weaker parties, UNDP risks being accused of partiality, but at the same time, UNDP needs to find innovating ways of ensuring that smaller parties can access technical expertise and advice to support efforts to establish more meaningful multi-party democracy.

Through the Arab States, political parties tend to be organized along ethnic, religious, regional, sectarian or clan-based lines. The 4.5 Clan Formula in **Somalia** for instance is indicative of how primary allegiance still is to the clan. This represents a challenge for UNDP and its traditional approach to supporting more formal political party structures. It requires UNDP to abandon its preconceptions and the lens through which it commonly plans support to these structures. Additionally, there is an important need to engage with the "independents". The *Arab Awakening* created a new class of political activists – independent actors, primarily youth (see more below), who do not affiliate with the government, traditional CSOs or any formal political party. Any support to political institutions in the Arab region must find a way to engage these actors in the political process if there is any hope of a sustainable transition to democracy.

In some countries the challenge was related to relative strength of parliamentary groups, which is critical to an effective parliament. In **Tunisia** the deputies in the Constituent

Assembly are constantly leaving their original parliamentary groups and either sitting as independents or in other groups. This has resulted in extremely weak parliamentary groups.

TIPS FOR COUNTRY OFFICES

✓ With a transition to democracy comes a proliferation of political parties and leaders, some of which will rise and fall (or merge) within the first year. It is critical to maintain contact with as many actors as possible to be flexible in providing support as the situation evolves, actors change and allegiances move;

✓ Not all parties are created equal. Some are more established and have strong grassroots while others have limited capacity and weak links to voters. Both need to be supported. UNDP must show caution and dexterity in balancing its support to political parties with this in mind while ensuring its neutrality is not at risk;

✓ Social context is a major factor in designing support for parties. Clan and tribe based political engagement will be a significant factor in the Arab region and any support must reflect this context;

✓ No matter the political or social context, the ultimate goal is to have political parties that foster a culture of pluralism that include all segments of society and are able to aggregate these disparate perspectives into concrete policies within parliament.

3.4. Support for Women and Youth

The Arab Awakening was notable for the important roles played by both women and young people in lobbying for change and pushing for more democratic government. Previously marginalized, women and youth were highly visible in taking a more active role in political life. With this in mind, the Project heavily prioritized support to build the capacity of women and youth to engage parties and parliaments.

➢ *YOUTH*

In **Lebanon**, the Parliamentary Internship Programme, with support from UNDP, has provided 80 young students, mainly young women, a training opportunity on public policy making and the legislative and oversight functions of the Parliament.

A youth dialogue was convened by UNDP in **Algeria**, starting with a workshop in early 2012 between youth leaders, CSOs and the Parliament. Based on the outcomes of the workshop, the Parliament asked UNDP to produce a study on how it could change its internal regulations to enable more opportunities for youth to be heard and to engage in the political process. That study will be finalized in 2013 and will be the basis for further advocacy by UNDP, among others, to press for amendments to the rules to allow committee meetings and hearings to be open to the public and media.

In the **OPT**, UNDP helped train University Councils to develop a stronger culture of dialogue among their youth members in order to more effectively influence Palestinian political and social leadership. The Project worked with SHAREK, a Palestinian Youth NGO, to engage

with students in Palestinian universities and their leadership in students' councils. UNDP targeted seven student University Councils across Palestine and worked with them to strengthen their dialogue with political parties. This work included enhancing capacities of student council members to articulate, effectively communicate and persuasively argue issues that affect them as active individuals and engaged citizens. Special attention was given to reinforcing the role of young Palestinian women in political leadership.

> ## *WOMEN*

Tunisia showed early success in supporting candidate schools for women who wanted to be nominated for election or to otherwise play leadership roles in elections (e.g.: as campaign managers). These trainings were done in collaboration with national CSOs and other international organizations. UNDP partnered with UN Women, NDI and national CSOs to run a series of "summer schools" (Ecole d'Ete) for women to share knowledge about how to be politically active. A number of participants were subsequently elected to the National Constituent Assembly.

UNDP has been successful in engaging with political parties to open up spaces for women's participation. In **Jordan**, UNDP has started to work with the Ministry of Political Development and Political Parties to develop a strategy for gender to ensure the parties are actively creating opportunities and space for women to participate and get nominated to Executive positions and for elections. UNDP is in dialogue with almost all political parties to identify the content of a general strategy that can be applied to all parties. The Project also supported the finalization of a Gender Strategy for the Independent Electoral Commission.

In **Libya**, the Project initiated a programme of civic education in the lead-up to the July 2012 elections, through the deployment of a 3-month technical advisor in-country. This programme, which is still on-going, was complemented by specific support for women candidates. UNDP hosted intensive workshops on political campaigns and media management for 170 women candidates in Benghazi, Sabha and Tripoli; eight of these women are currently elected members to the National Congress. On 25 June 2012, UNDP-launched a campaign called "My Voice for Her" to support women candidates for the July National Congress elections.

Women and Youth political activism in the Palestinian Territories

❖ *Challenges*

Many of the cultural biases of marginalized women and youth prior to the *Arab Awakening* still exist and are well entrenched. To date, parliaments and political parties in the Arab region have not been open and inclusive - only 15.7 percent of parliamentarians in the Arab States region are women[5]. Youth and women remain underrepresented in parliament, political parties, and political leadership. Whereas many CSOs in the region work directly with youth, there are no formal fora to promote linkages with political leaders. Young men and women are very often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and excluded from policy development. As a result, political activism of youth is not organized according to formal groupings, but relies upon less formal 'political movements' that have proliferated since the *Awakening* to become a significant force in many countries still transitioning to democracy.

TIPS FOR COUNTRY OFFICES

✓ Prioritise engagement with partners (both national and international) to build the capacity of women and youth to participate in the political process. UNDP's comparative advantage is working to empower marginalised groups in particular;

✓ Use UNDPs convening ability to initiate dialogues between women and/or youth and political leaders;

✓ UNDPs access to comparative experiences regionally and globally should be utilized to advocate for concrete changes that create more space and opportunities for women and youth within political parties and parliament;

✓ Where political leaders (either within parliament or parties) recognize the need for greater engagement of youth and women, support their demand for knowledge and help in implementing a plan that they endorse;

✓ Explore new avenues for ensuring women and youth engagement, such as social media and more systematic capacity development through academic institutions.

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[5] *Women in Parliament*, Inter-Parliamentary Union, February 2013 http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

4. What are the roadblocks that are preventing effective support to political institutions?

Three general roadblocks were identified by participants in the meeting that commonly prevent UNDP Country Offices from fully engaging their respective political institutions and, in turn, ensuring those institutions have the capacity to operate as effective partners in democratic governance.

4.1. Access to Knowledge

At all levels there is a lack of knowledge about how to create political institutions that are inclusive and participative, particularly in the context brought forth by the '*Arab Awakening*'. Most of the UNDP Country Offices involved in the Project reported that they felt they were working in isolation or with limited access to other staff with experiences and skills to support their efforts, despite being geographically and culturally proximate and working on very similar issues. It was agreed that regional meetings like the one organized are important to allow for in-person exchanges of ideas and information, but much can also be done virtually and online using AGORA and Teamworks, and by organizing video conferences.

A specific hurdle identified was the lack of quality, senior experts that are both familiar with UNDP practices and speak Arabic. More needs to be done to identify and maintain a roster of such experts that can be rapidly deployed as required by Country Offices. Where possible, the use of peers from parliament and political parties from other countries in the region should be tapped to ensure a larger pool of experts and ability to facilitate the transfer of knowledge on a peer-to-peer basis. Anecdotally, it was reported that such approaches allow for better learning opportunities while enhancing South-South cooperation.

At the same time, parliaments themselves must have better access to knowledge. It was agreed that there are good practices already occurring in the region in some of the newly democratic parliaments, but there is little or no space for those practices to be shared with other parliaments in the region. Online and in-person venues need to be developed to support the exchange of information between MPs and parliamentary staff. The Project will focus on this in 2013.

4.2. Adaptability to Political Context

A major challenge to UNDPs work with political institutions in the region is the lack of flexibility and responsiveness of Country Offices to the changing political dynamics in the country. Where UNDP has success during a democratic transition it is because there is the right combination of (i) staff with the capacity; and (ii) a programme with the flexibility to quickly analyze and respond to changing political conditions. This flexibility should include strategic engagement of the senior management of the office, the proper and informed use of direct implementation project modalities to deliver results quickly and the need to keep all parts of UNDP informed of what is transpiring and to seek advice as required.

It is particularly important to ensure **programme design and implementation** is locally owned, due to the highly politically sensitive nature of this work. To this end, during the design stage, extra effort must be made to ensure national actors and champions are identified and take ownership of the proposed work. During implementation, annual work

plans must be designed to allow for flexibility and the ability to scale up or down the outputs and activities depending on the political space available for delivery.

In addition to the need to adapt to changing political conditions, UNDP Country Offices need to more systematically analyze and calibrate project activities to address the **socio-economic context** of a country and its impact on target political institutions. This should be clearly addressed in any risk management strategy and political context analysis that is completed prior to work with such institutions. Such assessments should also be constantly revisited to ensure the types of interventions and outputs can be achieved and reflect the ongoing reality on the ground.

A key challenge in this area is the need for partnerships. Where UNDP has engaged national CSOs and even other international organizations in long-term **partnerships** it has resulted in more effective and responsive programming. If UNDP is to engage in a new form of work with political organizations then it must also be proactive and seek new and creative methods of delivery for results, especially when the political institutions are paralyzed. In the **OPT** for example, UNDP bypassed the political deadlock caused by the stand-off between Fatah and Hamas by working at the municipal level, and fostering youth inclusion by engaging youth councils at universities and partnering with local NGOs such as SHAREK and MIFTAH.

4.3. Creating Legitimacy in the Work of Political Institutions

A systemic challenge to working with political institutions is that they have an historic lack of legitimacy in the Arab region, given that they were previously "rubber stamps" for autocratic regimes. However, if democracy is to be sustainable and the rule of law to be entrenched in a country such institutions need to have legitimacy in the eyes of the public. This lack of legitimacy stems primarily from a lack of understanding amongst the public of what a democratic parliament or political party does as well as confusion within these institutions on why and how to work with the public and other non-government stakeholders. A simple change would be to ensure these political institutions have **communication plans** to inform the general public of their mandates and work. A culture of transparency needs to be promoted and the necessary procedural measures set up to uphold and institutionalize it.

Strong skepticism and distrust exist particularly amongst youth with regard to political parties. Since the *Arab Awakening* youth activism has taken shape through ad hoc, unorganized and non-traditional forms of engagement including virtual platforms and social media, rather than through more formal and conventional structures such as political parties. To many, political parties are seen as antiquated vehicles for political engagement. However, given that it is these parties that contest elections and sit in parliament, if youth remain outside of the sphere of party politics they will look for alternative means of expression that could easily result in conflict and/or fragility. Therefore, it is critical that UNDP **address this lack of legitimacy** in concrete and effective ways. Of course, the main purpose of the Project – political institutions that are more inclusive and open to participation – is a key to legitimacy. If parliament and parties can show the public that they are open to dialogue and discussion about the needs of all citizens, through various tools, then the public will perceive the institutions as relevant to their lives and an integral part of any democratic system.

One key output should be the **revision of rules of procedure for parliaments** to institutionalize the type of engagement that is necessary for legitimacy. By ensuring parliamentary committees are conducting routine public consultations or MPs have the resources to engage their constituents, citizens are more likely to perceive that their voices are being heard and this will, in turn, create greater legitimacy in the parliament. Similar efforts can be made with political parties to encourage their ongoing engagement of citizens.

5. Recommendations

The meeting was considered an important opportunity for all staff engaged in the Project to come together and discuss what has been working and where more effort is required to ensure delivery of the results expected by the Project. As a result of detailed discussions of the success stories and the challenges faced by the various Country Offices, the following points were raised for action by the Project team in order to ensure the Project is even more effective:

➢ **Exchange Knowledge between UNDP staff:** Through the Agora web portal space (www.agora-parl.org), information and ideas can be exchanged amongst UNDP staff. This should include the uploading of all documents at the national, regional and global levels that are relevant to the work of the project. It should include a forum for queries and discussions between staff. In addition, regular opportunities should be created to allow staff to meet in person to discuss progress and share information.
  - *DGG and BCPR must be committed to the facilitation of an Agora knowledge space for Arab States staff;*
  - *RBAS and the Cairo Regional Centre must endorse and promote the use of the virtual space;*
  - *UNDP staff engaged in the Project should meet in person at least twice more before the project ends.*

➢ **Create Opportunities for MPs and Parliamentary Staff to Exchange Knowledge:** There are good practices being developed and implemented in the various political institutions in the region, but little is being done to share those practices across national boundaries. More needs to be done to facilitate the exchange of practices between MPs and parliamentary staff. In addition, as was originally proposed in the Project, a virtual network of knowledge should be developed that can be accessed by MPs and parliamentary staff. In particular, the portal should provide opportunities to promote good practices and to allow for bilateral exchanges of queries and ideas.
  - *Agora should create space for Arab MPs and, separately, staff to engage and exchange ideas and information;*
  - *UNDP staff at the country level should be promoting Agora and identifying good ideas and practices that can be shared online;*
  - *At least one knowledge event in the region should be conducted before the project ends.*

➢ **Establish an Expert Roster:** Though UNDP maintains general rosters of experts with regard to parliamentary development, a specific roster should be developed and maintained for this Project and should include experts that have knowledge of both

UNDP practices and, where possible, Arabic. There should also be space to provide feedback on the experts by staff that has evaluated their work.

- *DGG and BCPR should merge their expert rosters on parliamentary development;*
- *A specific call for CVs should be advertised with regard to Arab speaking experts in the fields of parliamentary and political party development;*
- *An induction course or orientation, even if done online, should be developed to ensure all members of the roster have a solid understanding of UNDPs method of working.*

➢ **Promote National Expertise Through Mentoring:** Given the limited number of senior experts with Arabic language skills, the Project should consider the need for national consultants to be assigned to work with international experts as a means of using mentoring to build the capacity of national experts.

- *Each Country Office should identify two national experts/consultants that can be added to an expert roster for the Arab states;*
- *National consultants should be paired with international experts on every mission, to ensure mentoring and the exchange of knowledge.*

➢ **Establish Partnerships:** UNDP must do a better job at building partnerships and collaborations between UNDP, parliament and national CSOs, academics/universities and think tanks, as well as regional organizations and other international implementers. Where such partnerships have been established it has resulted in more effective results that are more likely to be sustainable.

- *UNDP Country Offices engaged in the Project should develop a database of CSOs, academics and other national actors who work with or monitor the work of parliament and political parties;*
- *RBAS should develop a database of regional organizations that work with parliaments and parties and reach out to these groups to build stronger relationships and to promote greater cooperation.*

➢ **Develop and Maintain a Clear Understanding of the Political Context:**
Ensure each Country Office that is part of the Project has the capacity (within the CO or through DGG, RCC or BCPR) to continually assess and analyze the political situation within the country. This should also result in the constant re-evaluation of the Project outputs for each country.

- *UNDP staff who are engaged in the Project should receive training on the UNDP Institutional Context Analysis Guide;*
- *An expert roster developed for this Project should include a critical number of experts who have experience in conducting political analyses;*
- *UNDP Country Offices need to consider if they have the capacity to constantly review the political context for their country and establish procedures for ensuring such analysis is updated regularly.*

➢ **Ensure Political Leaders Support the Work of UNDP:** Lessons from various countries show that where the political leaders have "ownership" of reform it is more likely to succeed and UNDPs support will be well received. This may be in the form of ongoing engagement in the project management, in the establishment of a development plan for the parliament or through the provision of resources towards the Project's success.

- *Senior management of UNDP Country Offices must be engaged on a regular basis with senior political leaders to ensure initial and ongoing support for proposed reforms that emanate from the Project;*
- *Where feasible, national political institutions should be encouraged to contribute to the work of the Project, through for example, funding or active project management;*
- *Where possible, the creation and approval of a strategic development plan for a parliament (or, in some cases, a party) is a key step in creating a sustainable reform process;*
- *Identify "champions for change" in the senior leadership of the institution and support their efforts.*

➢ **Quick and Effective Response to Demands Builds Trust:** Trust is critical in UNDPs work with political institutions. Trust will only be developed when the political leaders see UNDP responding effectively to their needs. By having resources and expertise that can be mobilized quickly to address those needs, as they develop, the Project and Country Offices will establish credibility with the political leaders.
- *UNDP Country Office teams must work with political institutions to identify not only long-term goals but also short-term objectives and "quick wins";*
- *UNDP Country Offices, with support from DGG, BCPR and RBAS technical support, must respond immediately to the short-term objectives identified;*
- *Though it should not be a major aspect of the work with an institution, sometimes it is important to provide infrastructure in the short-term to show "good faith' and to build trust;*
- *Having an office in a parliament and working there on a daily basis will greatly increase the ability to respond to demands and, in turn, build trust.*

➢ **Building Trust Results in Change:** Where the Country Office can use the resources of this Project to build trust with political leaders, it will eventually result in a rapid transfer of knowledge and a greater possibility of effective reforms. Those projects in the region that have been established the longest or who have built trust quickly are the ones that are delivering the greatest results.
- *Once trust has been established with a parliament or parties, UNDP must provide medium and long-term technical advisers, where feasible, to ensure daily engagement and the transfer of knowledge.*

➢ **Focus on Short-Term Interventions Where Space is Changing Rapidly:** Longer-term goals may be a challenge where the dynamics of the politics in a country are changing rapidly. A focus on short to medium-term interventions may ensure key results are delivered even where there is a rapidly changing political context.
- *UNDP should not immediately attempt to develop project documents and long-term programmes within a year of a conflict. The focus should be on a work plan that focuses on, at most, six-month intervals, to ensure the ability to adjust and amend outputs and outcomes on an ongoing basis;*
- *UNDP Country Offices, from senior management to programmatic levels, must be constantly engaged with political leaders during the first year of a democratic transition and should be constantly confirming the needs of the leaders and how UNDP can respond.*

- ➢ **Youth Concerns Need to be Articulated and Advocated:** UNDP is in a unique position to convene national actors to discuss the growing demand from youth to have their voices heard. However, UNDP must go beyond convening meetings and helping youth articulate their concerns; it is critical that UNDP use its capacity to advocate on behalf of youth to effect change in government policy that reflects those concerns.
  - *UNDP should use its convening capacity to create a forum for dialogue between youth and political leaders with the goal of identifying key recommendations for a sustainable process for youth to be heard;*
  - *Based on the recommendations of the forum, UNDP must use its resources to advocate and provide technical support to implement the proposed reforms;*
  - *A database of active youth CSOs and political movements must be established by UNDP and shared with political leaders.*

- ➢ *Parliaments and Political Parties must Not Only Engage the Public but must be Seen as Responding to what they Hear***:** The quality of the consultative process depends on the ability of authorities to listen, take into account and integrate the views and observations of the different segments of the society. Public awareness campaigns and consultative processes are important first steps but ensuring meaningful participation needs to look at the impact on policy development or change to integrate such views.
  - *Parliaments and parties must show some "quick wins" after a conflict. UNDP should support the institutions in creating space for a dialogue and then support the implementation of reforms that will have an immediate impact;*
  - *Where the rules of a parliament (or the regulations of party) are open to review, it is a critical opportunity for UNDP to provide technical support to promote and institutionalize public consultation.*

- ➢ **Political Leaders and Parties are Changing Quickly and UNDP Must Be Able to Adjust Its Work Accordingly:** In a post-conflict or fragility scenario there is a rapid proliferation of political parties, but some will be better organized while others will quickly disappear or merge with other parties. This results in a rapid change in political leadership. UNDP must be prepared to adjust to such changes, but must also maintain an up-to-date engagement with as many of the parties and leaders as possible.
  - *Immediately after a political crisis, UNDP Country offices should create and maintain a database of all political parties and movements, to ensure all actors are identified;*
  - *Consultations should be organized with as many parties (new and old) and actors as possible, both bilaterally and in multi-party groups, to ensure a network is established and UNDP begins to build trust with all actors;*
  - *UNDP Country Offices should be conscious that all staff have political biases and extra effort must be made to ensure its neutrality is maintained and promoted;*
  - *Programmes must be constantly reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure they reflect the changing political situation.*

- ➢ **Focus on "Well Done" Instead of Perfect:** With rapid changes in political leadership and various levels of capacity of CSOs, UNDP must ensure it is able to provide a reasonable level of support to as many actors as possible. What is critical in such a dynamic situation is that the public perceives that change is occurring. Whether it is with regard to public consultations or the provision of capacity support, one should not forsake any support in order to ensure all actors are engaged.

- *Not all political leaders will be willing to engage UNDP; this should not prohibit the Organization from moving forward with programming;*
- *"Quick wins" are critical to show that change has occurred after a crisis; UNDP must ensure its support for such reforms has a critical mass of political actors engaged, but should not wait for all actors to be on board with the reforms.*

➢ **UNDP must be creative in using its procedures to ensure effective delivery of its programmes:** The default process for UNDP is to develop programmes and projects that are nationally implemented, but previous experiences have proven that this may not be the most productive means of delivering programmes in a politically volatile situation.
- *Consider using Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) to ensure a more rapid means of delivering programmes immediately after a political crisis;*
- *Use alternatives to project documents, such as preparatory assistance or regional and global initiatives, to deliver activities and outputs quickly after a crisis.*

6. Next Steps

The '*Inclusive and Participative Political Institutions in the Arab Region*' Project will come to end in 2013, but the lessons learned from the work will be critical for UNDP, and the broader international community, in the years to come. Political institutions are at the heart of any transition to democracy. It is important to ensure the method by which UNDP works with these political institutions is adapted to reflect political realities and the need for a more nuanced, politically savvy consideration of the outputs that can and should be achieved.

Going forward, the project team will take the recommendations that came from the workshop to adjust the means by which the project is delivered. This will include a closer scrutiny of how and what the Country Offices are doing to ensure the work is reflecting the best practices that have been identified. It will also include a reflection upon what can be done regionally and by headquarters by the various Bureaux to ensure their efforts are well coordinated and fully in support of the work of the Country Offices. This will include the specific development of a dedicated expert roster for the project and the establishment of more venues for the exchange of information and ideas amongst staff.

Finally, it is hoped that the recommendations from this workshop will be used to impact the means by which UNDP (and, perhaps others) respond to countries that are transitioning to democracy after a conflict or a period of fragility, fo much of what has been learned in the past two years in the Arab region is transferrable to other countries and regions.

7. Do's and Don'ts for UNDP Staff

✔ DO's:

- Conduct a political analysis immediately after a political crisis and constantly update the analysis going forward;
- Create a map of the political actors (i.e. – parties, CSOs, people) and engage them on a regular basis to know what their needs are;
- Establish short to medium-term programmes that can be amended or adjusted quickly;
- Access technical expertise where it does not exist in the Country Office;
- Build trust with political actors;
- Engage CO senior management strategically to ensure effectively delivery of programmes;
- Provide knowledge and comparative examples where political leaders are keen for this information;
- Ensure the legal framework for elections, parliaments and political parties establish a system that promotes consensus and transparency;
- Advocate for a system that elects more women and educate women on how to be effective political leaders;
- Create space for youth and political leaders to interact and to discuss on-going issues of concern;
- Partner with national and international organizations to increase the effectiveness of UNDPs programming.

🚫 DON'TS:

- Pick winners and losers and focus on only a few political actors or parties;
- Allow UNDP procedures to delay the need to provide immediate technical support, where it is demanded by political leaders;
- Build long-term programmes and projects during the first year after a political crisis;
- Accept political expediency over public consultation, especially with youth and women;
- Proceed with programming unless and until political actors have endorsed the proposed work;
- Ignore the demands/needs of political actors, even if this means adjusting planned programmes.

Annex 1: Country Synopses

Algeria: A limited amount of political upheaval in 2011 nonetheless resulted in significant political reform, including the lifting of the state of emergency and the adoption of ten key laws to reform political participation. As part of a longer-term engagement with the Parliament of Algeria, the Project provides access to technical expertise and funds to promote a more inclusive dialogue between the Parliament and the citizens of Algeria, especially marginalized groups such as youth, specific support to women's participation and the promotion of transparency by the Parliament. The legislative elections held in May 2012 also provided new opportunities to work with MPs and committees, given the election of six parliamentary groups and a significant increase in the number of women MPs, who now stand at 33% of the members.

Jordan: The *Arab Awakening* resulted in sufficient political pressure that the Constitution was amended to allow more autonomy and a greater role for the Parliament of Jordan. Since 2011, new laws on elections, political parties, press and publications, and on establishing an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) have been finalized and passed through a national consultation process. The focus of support from the Project was on the need to support more structured and effective parliamentary groups in the Parliament and to encourage political parties and the Parliament to provide greater opportunities for women and youth to be engaged and to take leadership roles.

Lebanon: UNDP has provided support to the Parliament of Lebanon since 1999. With the creation of greater democratic space in 2005 a more robust engagement of the Parliament was initiated. In support of this long-term programme, the Project provides resources to maintain and enhance the capacity of the Project office based in the Parliament, specific support to the inclusion of women and youth in political participation and to promote the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan.

Libya: A civil war in 2011 resulted in the complete over through of the government, the proliferation of arms and the subsequent impact on security. Funding from the Project was focused on immediate interventions after the revolution to support the National Transitional Council (NTC) and the General National Congress (GNC), including the establishment of rules of procedure for the GNC and the creation of a professional and well-organized secretariat.

OPT: Though not directly affected by the *Arab Awakening*, there was hope in 2011 that the two main political parties (Fatah and Hamas) would engage in a form of reconciliation that resulted in a unified government to manage both the West Bank and Gaza. The Project's focus was on supporting the establishment of political parties in the territory that are more inclusive, particularly with regard to women and youth.

Somalia: Given the rapid transition to an elected Parliament in Somalia in 2012 and the agreement to accept a Federal State, the formerly failed state suddenly became one with significant space for democratic engagement. As a result, the project provided access to technical advice and funding to support the transition, including the convening of the first session, support to the drafting of the Federal Constitution and the establishment and implementation of a strategic plan for required reforms of the Parliament.