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برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي

Strengthening of the Democratic Process in Egypt
تعزيز العملية الديمقراطية في مصر



STRENGTHENING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN EGYPT

PROJECT NUMBER: 00079914

AWARD NUMBER: 00062430

PROGRESS REPORT (NOVEMBER 2011 – MARCH 2012)

ACRONYMS

EMB	Electoral Management Body
EU	European Union
GoE	Government of Egypt
HEC	High Electoral Commission
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IDSC	Information and Decision Support Center
IT	Information Technology
LoA	Letter of Agreement
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MSAD	Ministry of State for Administrative Development
PEC	Presidential Electoral Commission
OCV	Out-of-Country Voting
SIS	State Information Services
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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I. Background

The electoral process in Egypt is an essential step in the transition period to consolidate the path to democracy. On 14 November 2011, UNDP Egypt signed with the Egyptian government the "Strengthening of the democratic process" project document which spells out the UNDP elections support in building the national capacity to strengthen the efficiency and transparency of the electoral institutions and processes with a view to enhance credibility and acceptance of the election results. The project is expected to: a) strengthen public outreach and voter information on the parliamentary elections; b) strengthen technical and operational capacity of national electoral authorities; c) incorporate lessons learned and best practices of the 2011 elections in the subsequent elections processes; and d) increase access of women and rural dwellers to their citizenship rights in the 2011 and future elections.

Since the signing of the project document, UNDP Egypt has been working with the electoral authorities, including the High Electoral Commission (HEC), the Ministry of Interior (Moi) and other government agencies involved in the National Assembly and Shoura elections, in providing required technical assistance, support and advice leading to the conduct of the phased parliamentary elections in Egypt. Since its appointment, the project has also started working with the Presidential Electoral Commission (PEC) to provide the same type of support for the preparation of the presidential elections.

II. Description of the Projects' Outputs: Core Project Results

1. Public outreach and voter information about the Parliamentary elections is strengthened.

With the objective of strengthening the credibility of elections as well as enhancing participation, the project aimed at supporting the HEC in its efforts to increase public understanding and knowledge about the elections. Despite the tight timeline the project supported the HEC in quickly designing and implementing a media campaign for the parliamentary elections, over two phases: the first phase of six weeks targeted the People's Assembly elections and the second of 4 weeks targeted the Shoura Council elections.

With the support of the UNDP project, the project produced three TV spots and three radio spots on voter information for the first phase of the integrated public outreach campaign during the People's Assembly elections. The first spot focused on providing information to the voters on their eligibility, including their voter registration number, as well as on the accessibility of voters to the polling stations. The second spot provided procedural information on how to cast a valid vote, while the third spot promoted the confidentiality of the vote (*See Annex 2.1*).

The project also produced a motivational song on the importance of participation in the upcoming elections and the role of Egyptian citizens, particularly after the January 25th revolution.

The HEC decided to emphasize the importance of providing information on the voters' political rights within the Egyptian law, highlighting various aspects of the electoral process to the voters and to the female citizens in particular. In this context, the HEC requested the UNDP electoral team to produce a new phase of the campaign that would aim at increasing public understanding and knowledge about the elections procedures as a fundamental element in building confidence and credibility. In response, the project supported the development of a print media campaign and web banners for the HEC website (*See Annex 2.2*).

Each phase of the campaign focused on some main messages i.e "it's your right to vote", "Your vote is not for sale", "Your vote is secret", in addition to a simpler explanation of the parliamentary elections process.

Both TV and printed materials addressed male and female voters (18 years and above), national ID holders, first time voters, literate and illiterate populations and disabled people.

The project also supported the development of the branding theme for two press conference rooms in the SIS headquarters and its sub-offices in Cairo. Branding materials included banners, flags, folders and rollups with the HEC logo and 2m x 1m posters.

Moreover, the project developed an animated presentation with detailed information on the seat allocation process for the HEC to present it to the media during a press conference announcing the Shoura Council phase II results. The presentation allowed the different audiences to better understand the complexities of the 'translation' of votes into seats in Parliament and those of electoral system in general.

2. Upgrade of the technical and operational capacity of national electoral authorities.

Upon request of the electoral authorities the project supported the full renovation and equipment of an operations room within the HEC premises in Heliopolis. The operations room served as focal point for communications and monitoring of the polling process by the electoral commissioners and aimed to enhance their communications with other governmental authorities involved in the process. Through the project, UNDP Egypt procured the operational offices' furniture, thirty desktops with monitors and Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS), four printers, a network server, two satellite receivers, two flat-screen TVs and telecommunication equipment.

The project also printed 15-17 million ballot papers for the Shoura Council elections, which amounted to \$ 2.4 million. A total of 77,900 accreditation cards for national and international 'witnesses' and media representatives along with ID badges for judges were also printed and laminated. The electoral team reviewed and redesigned a SIS produced voter information leaflet on polling procedures. In order to ensure the coherence of the procedures implemented at the polling stations during the polling operations, the project printed for the HEC a total of 12,000 copies of a manual for the judges containing extracts of relevant legal texts. Similar actions were taken to facilitate the planning of the various electoral operations to be carried out by the Ministry of Interior (Moi). In this regard the project contributed to the design and printing of 2,000 copies of a detailed operations manual for the use of the Moi's electoral operational staff.

In order to properly store the ballot papers following the three phases of the parliamentary elections, as requested by the law, the project fully equipped two large secure storage areas (one at the Egyptian Mint and the other at the Egyptian Archive) furnished with stands, boxes, IT equipment and furniture, for a total cost of \$120,000.

The procedures and training officers of the UNDP electoral project collaborated with the HEC and the Moi in the production of a color-illustrated polling manual detailing the operational procedures and including all relevant forms to be used by the polling staff during the polling operations. The manual was effectively utilized by the judges presiding in the polling stations during the final round of the People's Assembly election and Shoura Council elections. For the Shoura Council the manual included not only the illustrations showing the set up in the polling station and the role of each member, but also a detailed depiction of how the finger should be inked with indelible ink, and how the plastic seals should be applied to the ballot box. The aim of the

illustrations is to make the manual more attractive, and as diagrams and pictures are more easily memorized the illustrations help ensure the message is passed.

Following a request from the HEC, the project prepared a counting procedures guide for the Shoura Council elections. The procedures developed served as the basis for a manual, also developed on the bases of the law. The manual comprised text and the official forms to be used during counting and sorting. The procedures and training experts of the project also prepared an illustrated Quick Reference Guide, in liaison with the electoral authorities, which is also expected to be used for the forthcoming electoral events.

With the aim of strengthening the technical capacity of the electoral authorities, a number of knowledge exchange events were organized by the project:

- In July 2011, a workshop on transitional elections was held in Bucharest, Romania, with a view of bringing together Egyptian and Tunisian electoral stakeholders. Organized jointly by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP, EAD/DPA and the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, the workshop was designed to be an exchange of views and experiences between countries with recent experience in transition and countries in North Africa. The organizers decided for a concept emphasizing the diversity of the subject matter. On the one hand, in order to ensure a wider participation and to stimulate a richness of the debate, the workshop brought together nearly 80 participants – of which 25 participants from Egypt and 20 from Tunisia – high level representatives of public institutions and electoral management bodies from Romania, Moldova, Mexico and, certainly, Egypt and Tunisia, Romanian and international electoral experts. The representation from Egypt was high-level, including the head of HEC and the head of the Elections Department at the Ministry of Interior, as well as representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs, representatives of civil society organizations, academics and media.
- The electoral project supported the participation of an Egyptian delegation (including senior HEC officials) to a conference hosted by UNDP Tunisia on “Building key principles into the design of the future Electoral Management Body: Tunisian and International perspectives”. The conference, organized by UNDP in partnership with the European Union (EU) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on 27 February, was aimed at legislators who will be drafting the Tunisian electoral law. International experts contributed with discussion papers on various aspects of the electoral administration and comparative experiences. Members of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) from different countries presented their respective national experience, while the President of L'Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections (ISIE) as well as the former Head of the Electoral Liaison Committee under the auspices of the Prime Minister reviewed the experience during the National Constituent Assembly elections. The close analysis of the Tunisian electoral process and its lessons learnt highly benefitted the Egyptian electoral authorities on their internal similar processes also supported by the UNDP project (see Lessons Learned Exercise, page 9 of this progress report).

- A delegation of eight senior officials from the Egyptian electoral authorities was invited to attend the UNDP/EU organized conference in Kenya (5-9 March) on "Information technology and elections management: Informed decisions for sustainable outcomes". In the conference, the Egyptian delegation had the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of the different IT options for each type of electoral operation and phase. The Egyptian delegation was provided with comparative information and data, indicative analysis of timelines and costs, allowing them to make informed decisions around the possible use of technology in the forthcoming electoral processes, and to effectively evaluate the choices available. The Egyptian delegation had the opportunity to exchange their experience with representatives of the electoral authorities from different countries facing similar IT challenges (210 representatives of electoral commissions and support projects from more than 30 countries attended the event). In the Conference, a specific discussion on the systems used for the registration of voters for the parliamentary elections in Egypt, was presented by the Egyptian delegation. Following the presentation, the delegation benefitted from a broad discussion with representatives and experts from other countries, on the main strengths and potential areas for improvement in future electoral operations in Egypt.
- In the same line, a very successful study-tour to Mexico, jointly arranged with the Mexican electoral authorities and UNDP, composed of Egyptian, Tunisian and Libyan delegations, took place on 21-24 March. The delegations benefitted in a two-fold manner from the visit: exchanging experiences with the Mexican authorities on the current preparations for their preparations for their presidential elections (scheduled for 1 July 2012); and from the good understanding of the functioning of an independent and sustainable EMB (*See Annex 2.3*).

A similar series of conferences and study visits are planned to be held in the coming weeks and months which are intended to further develop the technical and operational capacity of the Egyptian authorities:

- A study tour to France to observe the preparation of the upcoming presidential elections and the holding of the first round (18-24 April) in order to expose the Egyptian authorities to a comparative electoral experience.
- UNDP and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) are organizing a 3-day sub-regional forum on Principles for Independent and Sustainable Electoral Management (9-11 April 2012). This joint forum aims to provide a platform for dialogue and technical exchanges among electoral stakeholders from Egypt, Tunisia and Libya on the guiding principles of the independent and sustainable electoral management, as a guarantee for democratic, free and credible elections. Comparative country experiences on different models of independent electoral management bodies from the Region and from other parts of the world will be presented by internationally renowned experts and members of reputable independent EMBs. The forum will also provide an opportunity for networking

and cooperation, by bringing together electoral stakeholders from the Region and across the world.

3. Subsequent elections process to benefit from additional support based on lessons learned of the 2011 elections.

The lessons learned and best practices component of the project aims at supporting the improvement of the future electoral processes in Egypt. For this purpose, in close collaboration with the electoral authorities, the project designed, prepared and implemented a comprehensive lessons learned exercise intended for the electoral authorities to evaluate the Egyptian parliamentary elections and focus on the various procedural and operational aspects of electoral administration before the forthcoming presidential elections. The exercise, conducted from late February assessed the challenges and areas for improvement in the conduction of elections in Egypt, and provided recommendations for future capacity development measures. The topics assessed included: a) voter registration; b) the electoral operations and security; c) the electoral complaints, appeals and audit processes; d) Out-of-Country Voting (OCV); e) voter education and public outreach; f) the media strategy and communication related issues; g) election observation and monitoring; and h) the electoral administration model being used in Egypt.

The lessons learned exercise was composed of various complimentary stages: (a) surveys with different stakeholders conducted by the Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) as a lead implementing partner; (b) small workshops on various issues (as described below); (c) a general discussion and d) a national conference to finalize the evaluation with different stakeholders. Data was collected via four qualitative surveys, for which, questionnaires targeted four key groups: (i) 500 polling staff, (ii) 1500 voters, (iii) out-of-country voters (through online surveys), and (iv) a set of 3 roundtables with 6-8 judges in each session. After the data results and their analysis were prepared, several working sessions analysed and discussed the data in an effort to bring together HEC officials, various Egyptian authorities and other experts (including academics) to reflect on the lessons learned of the previous electoral process and extract findings and recommendations for the way forward.

The general discussion took place in the form of an internal lessons learned conference, which took place on 28-30 March at Ain Sokhna with the participation of 35-38 officials of the Egyptian electoral authorities (Judges including 5 female judges, HEC officials, MoI, IDSC, MOFA and SIS) involved in the parliamentary elections. Once the holistic lessons learned exercise is finalized, a final report will be produced and follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations will be given by the project. The findings and output of the lessons learned will be a basis for content towards a national conference, with other stakeholders (local observers, women) anticipated in early May 2012.

4. Access of women and rural dwellers to their citizenship rights in the 2011 and future elections is increased.

In order to enhance credibility and acceptance of the election results as well as to enhance the participation of women and rural dwellers, the second phase of the media campaign conducted during the Shoura Council elections targeted citizens who are eligible to vote, focusing on females in rural areas. The expected campaign impact was to empower the voters to reject any kind of pressure from different parties which violate the laws before and/or during the elections, reinforcing the right of the voter to make a free choice. In addition, special efforts were made to reassure women voters that their vote was confidential. Three TV spots, three radio spots and a web banner were produced. One of the TV spots addressed the importance of women's participation in the elections and their role during the transitional period. The campaign highlighted information on the voters' political rights within the Egyptian law, highlighting various aspects of the electoral process to the voters and to the female citizens in particular.

As part of the second phase of the media campaign for the elections, three campaign posters were also designed and printed as a continuation of the media campaign initiated with the People's Assembly elections. A total of 9,000 copies were disseminated through the UN Women network to 1,000 local NGOs. All audio-visual products related to the first and second campaigns were incorporated into 1,000 CDs, which were produced and distributed to NGO networks on women in rural areas. UNDP also worked in close collaboration with UN Women, in the process of finalizing video clips for two awareness raising songs. Lyrics for the songs were developed by youth representatives and the two clips were aired without cost. Once again, the focus was on addressing rural women.

The "Women Citizenship Initiative" forms an integral part of the UNDP Project "Strengthening of the democratic process in Egypt" and is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of State for Administrative Development, the Civil Registry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The campaign was officially launched on 18 March 2012 and aims at facilitating the on-going national registration process for the issuance 2,000,000 national ID cards over a 3-years period. The registration will enable women in the short run to access polls, vote and seek membership in political parties, as well as in the long run, access government services including medical care in a public hospital, processing for a property title or deed, literacy programs, banking services and working positions.

In this respect, UNDP and UNWOMEN are negotiating with the national authorities, the coordination to begin the implementation of this campaign on April 11th for the period of 25 days, which constitutes the first of two phases. With the project's support to this campaign, it is expected to contribute to the efforts to grant rural women access to vote in future elections.

III. Annexes

Annex 1: Donors Contributions to the "Strengthening of the Democratic Process in Egypt" Project (as of 31 March 2012)

Donor	Contributions received (USD)
Germany	
Ireland	
Austria	
Romania	
Norway	
Belgium	
Sweden	
Australia	
Japan	
UNDP	
Total	

Annex 2: Sample images of products developed during the reporting period

- i. *Public outreach and voter information about the Parliamentary elections is strengthened.*



2.1 TV Spot



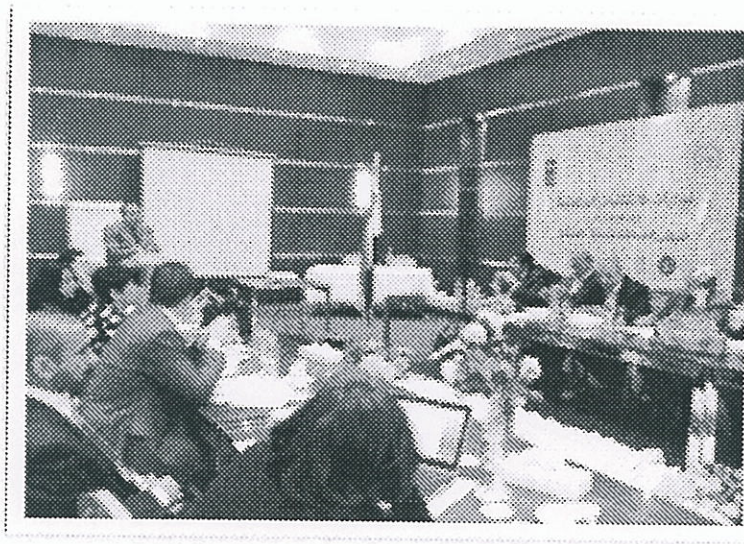
2.2 Printed media campaign

- ii. *Upgrade of the technical and operational capacity of national electoral authorities.*



2.3 Visiting the Mexican Electoral Management Body

- iii. *Subsequent elections process to benefit from additional support based on lessons learned of the 2011 elections.*



2.4 Lessons learnt exercise in Ain Sokhna

- iv. *Access of women and rural dwellers to their citizenship rights in the 2011 and future elections is increased.*



2.5 Printed posters for women voters