

Evaluation Of The Undp Role In The Electoral Process

Maputo, 17 March 2004 – In April 2003, the Mozambican Government submitted to UNDP an official request for UN assistance to the municipal elections of 2003. The UN Secretary General responded immediately by sending a mission from 4 to 10 May 2003. The main objective of the mission was to assess the national context within which the elections were planned and recommend the appropriate UN assistance, if any, to support their successful organization and conduct.

The mission found all conditions satisfactory and recommended a positive response to the Government's request for a UN coordination of the international assistance to the 2003 municipal elections. As a result, UNDP provided:

- technical assistance to the election management bodies (CNE and STAE) during the preparation and holding of the 2003 municipal elections, and their immediate post-electoral period, while laying a strong foundation for the 2004 general elections;

- the funding of specific electoral activities and materials, namely in support of the civic education campaigns, training programmes and voting materials.

- the coordination of donor financial contributions.

Following the holding of the municipal elections on 19 November 2003, the Electoral Assistance Division of the UN Department of Political Affairs conducted an evaluation of the electoral process and of the UN support delivered through the UNDP Technical Assistance Project.

The general evaluation of the electoral process and UNDP role in it was positive. Both the technical and financial contributions as well as quality of the relations established between the stakeholders were highly praised.

According to the evaluation report, international actors emphasized that the 2003 Mozambican

municipal elections should be viewed as a positive step towards the preparation of the general elections planned for 2004 rather than as an isolated event.

Additionally, they considered that the sustainability of future electoral processes will depend on their incorporation as periodic governmental activities, foreseen in the law and planned for well in advance, both in its organizational and budgetary aspects.

The municipal elections experience also evidenced the need for an early adoption of the legal framework for the 2004 general elections and for budgetary commitment by the Government of Mozambique and international donors for their appropriate organization and conduct.

National efforts to further enhance the reliability of and access to the voter lists and consolidate multiples lists into a single database for the 2004 general elections should receive the full support of the international community, recommends the report.

To be credible, transparency is needed in the process of ascertaining the will of the people, from identifying those who can vote and be elected all the way to the counting of their ballots.

Experience in these elections showed that a clearly defined role and code of conduct for international and national observers would make their contributions more effective. The roles of national and international observers should be well defined and understood beforehand, and mechanisms set in place for the quick resolution of issues that may arise from their necessary close, yet separate, function in the election.

Among other aspects, the report stresses that the main stakeholders strongly support a continuation of the strategic role of the United Nations as coordinator of international assistance in the forthcoming electoral process.

In addition to UNDP, donor contributions to the municipal elections within the UNDP Technical Assistance Project were the Governments of Canada, Italy, and Sweden; outside the project, through direct budget support, was the contribution of the European Union.

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