European Commission
United Nations Development Programme
International IDEA

Joint Training on
Effective Electoral Assistance

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Assistance to Political Parties
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What comes to mind when you hear the term 'political parties'?

- Actors in *processes* – elections, policy formation, opposition
- Democratic governance *institutions* – parliamentary and executive representatives
- *Image and functioning*
  - Self-interested
  - Discredited
  - Unrepresentative and undemocratic
  - Captured by elites
  - Not issue based

Table discussion (7 min)

What role do parties play in a democracy?

Why should we care about them?

What is the role of political parties in a democracy?

- Aggregate interests
- Structure the vote
- Integrate and mobilize the public
- Foster future political leaders
- Organize government
- Influence or form public policy

Why are Parties Important?

- Critical governance and electoral actors

- Have been left out of DG assistance

- Traditional assistance of limited utility – why much is 'bouncing off' parties

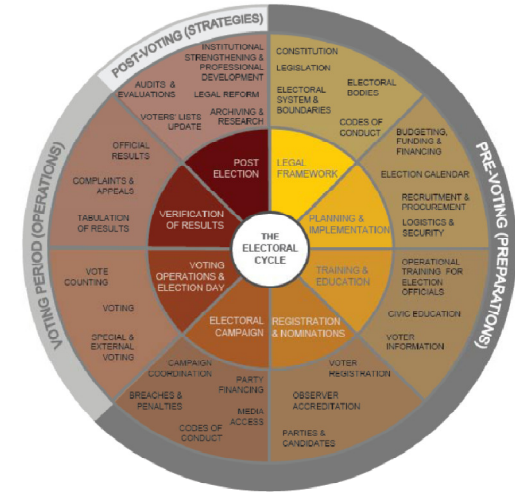- Can be facilitators or spoilers of democratic gains

Value added?

- What do assistance providers bring?
- Electoral Cycle entry points:
  - Role in **Institutions**: EMBs, **Parliaments**, Government, Political Party Commissions
  - Role in **Processes**: Legal framework, voter+party/candidate registration, voter sensitization, campaign, pollwatching, electoral disputes, accepting results, conflict management
  - **Functioning** and **Image**: Codes of conduct, relations with media, internal rules and regulations, nomination procedures, financing of parties

Lessons Learned thus far: Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Be aware
- Be non-partisan
- Be transparent and clear
- Be inclusive
- Be equitable
- Know your capacity
- Use HD/MDG agendas
- Focus on dialogue
- Think about the cycle
- When in doubt seek help

DON'T

- Give funding directly
- Favor parties over each other

BUT WHAT ABOUT?

- Parties and violence?
- Parties that prohibit women?
- Balancing democratic ideals with reinforcing status quo?

Thank you!