



# **European Commission United Nations Development Programme International IDEA**

## ***Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance***

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Organized within



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# Presentation

- ❑ What role do parties play in a democracy?
- ❑ Why should we care about them?
- ❑ How is UNDP providing support?



# 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



# 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!**



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