



Annexes 2-5: Country case study field notes

For Joint Evaluation: UN Women/UNDP support to women's political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa



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Abbreviations

ABELO	Burundian Association of Local Representatives
APG	Advance Payment Guarantee
BINUB	United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi
CAFOB	Collective of Women's Associations and NGOs in Burundi
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission (Burundi)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CNDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy (Burundi)
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Front for Democracy Defence
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DGD	Democratic Governance for Development
EC	European Commission
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-affected States
Frodebu	Front for Democracy in Burundi
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission (Nigeria)
IRI	International Republican Institute
JSBF	Joint Donor Basket Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
NEC	National Elections Commission (South Sudan)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PAC	Political Accountability Cycle
PARENA	Party for National Recovery (Burundi)
REFEL	Network of Locally Elected Women (Burundi)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARO	Southern African Regional Office
SP	Strategic Plan
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPPDF	Partners' Synergy for Women's Rights Promotion (Burundi)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Uprona	Union for National Progress (Burundi)

Annex 2: Burundi Country Case Study

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Introduction

Burundi is a post-conflict setting. For more than a decade, since 1993, Burundi had experienced a civil war. Peace negotiations finally culminated in a peace agreement in Arusha in 2000 and a ceasefire in 2003 paved the way for the 2005 elections, the 2010 elections, as well as a series of institutional reforms reflecting commitments undertaken under the peace agreement. The work by UN Women and UNDP in support of political participation of women which has been selected for the evaluation exercise focuses on activities in relation to the 2010 elections, and strategic thinking for the post-election period on how political representation will continue to be supported.

Methodology

The methodology for the case was based on the template and questions set out in the Inception Report that guides this evaluation. It was tailored to meet the specific aid context of post-conflict reconstruction, and institutional fragility that characterises Burundi. The programmatic focus was agreed with the country office. It was confirmed through interviews with CSOs and NGOs that this was the relevant choice for the evaluation.

Key informants

Interviews were conducted only in Bujumbura, including for reasons of security. Informants were selected from among a range of stakeholders, including:

- UN Women staff;
- the Senior Gender Advisor at UNDP; ;implementing organisations, including key women NGOs and CSOs,
- beneficiaries, including women members of parliament, and CSOs;
- government officials; and
- donors.

Intervention selection

Interventions were selected in agreement with country staff from the two agencies, and reflect key actions in support of the 2010 election and support for post-election accompaniment of elected women officials.

These have included:

- a) actions undertaken under the 'Strategie harmonise';
- b) UNDP support to electoral process under the basket fund; and
- c) Post-electoral activities to support elected women officials.

Data collection methods

- Programme/project documentation provided by UN Women and UNDP at the country level, and sub-regional level.
- Individual interviews with key informants

Context Analysis

Country context

Burundi remains a fragile post-conflict setting. A peace process began with a peace and reconciliation agreement in August of 2000, setting up a power-sharing arrangement that paved the way for the ceasefire of 2003, and the first elections since the conflict were held in 2005. The peace process laid the ground for the implementation of the institutional and political reforms outlined in the Arusha Agreement of 2000.

The 2005 election led to the former rebel group coming to power, the National Council for Democracy – Front for Democracy defence (CNDD-FDD). Other parties which engaged in the electoral process included the Front for Democracy in Burundi (Frodebu), Union for National Progress (Uprona) and Frodebu Nyakuri National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), Movement for the Rehabilitation of Citizens- Rurenzangemero (MRC-Rurenzangemero), Party for National Recovery (PARENA), independents and others.

The 2010 election led to the re-election of President of Pierre Nkurunziza for another five years, but following the communal elections which were disputed, a number of opposition parties chose to boycott the national level, presidential and *collinaire* elections. This has resulted in heightened uncertainty about the peace process, and there are renewed risks of a return to armed conflict.

The root causes of conflict have revolved around ethnic rivalries, fundamentally between *Hutu* and *Tutsi* ethnic identities. The ethnic dimension however, also fundamentally reflects patterns and perceptions of social exclusion in relation to the distribution of power and resources across ethnic groups.

The current situation is thus one of re-surfacing risks of renewed conflict, in a context of still precarious state institutionalisation. The concern that dominant party rule is becoming entrenched is high. Political parties in the main, however, remain poorly institutionalised as the transition from armed group to political party remains a challenge. Thus the governance context remains one of fragility, with weak mechanisms of accountability in place between state and society.

Women have been disproportionately affected by the experience of conflict, through very high levels of violence and other forms of sexual abuse by government forces and by rebel forces. At the same time, the experience of conflict has led (differentially across the country, and bearing in mind rural and urban differences) to changes in the role of women both in the domestic and public spheres. In addition to taking on new roles in livelihoods and as heads of households, studies find that during the course of the peace process the role of women in facilitating change at the grassroots level in inter-ethnic relations between Hutu and Tutsi women was not irrelevant, and they have played an active role in conflict mediation in the hills (GNWP 2010).

However, structural gender inequality remains deeply entrenched, and women prior to the 2005 and 2010 elections were generally excluded from political life. Legal change as part of the peace process has opened the door for more women taking up public and elected office at local and national level. This also is the fruit of concerted advocacy, lobbying and strategic activism at the domestic and transnational levels throughout the peace process to ensure that gender issues were placed, and remained on the agenda.

During the peace process, women's CSOs gained strength and voice, including through effective transnational support networks (Falch 2010), and support from UNIFEM. Ongoing lobbying and advocacy since the beginning – when women were initially denied a seat at the peace table – eventually, and after great resistance, resulted first in women taking up the positions of permanent observers in the peace process, through which lobbying for gender equality to be integrated into the emerging political settlement would be pushed. Second, this then translated into important legal change initially focused on obtaining the increased presence of women in office through a 30% quota. Key legal changes have included:

- In 1997 the country signed and ratified CEDAW, and the additional protocol in 2001.

- The Constitution of 2005 established a 30% quota for women's representation in government, parliament and the senate. It also formally acknowledged Burundi's commitment to CEDAW.
- There is formally a National Gender Policy in place, and a Ministry of Human Rights and Gender is in place which oversees (in theory) gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the gender policy.
- In 2007 a national steering committee for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was created, which has encouraged the adoption of regional agreements and declarations on sexual violence such as the Great Lakes Region International Conference Protocol and the Goma Declaration. The reform of the Criminal Code in 2009, further, has taken into account UNSCR 1325, and 1820 on sexual violence.
- Electoral changes in 2009 through the new electoral code included new mechanisms to facilitate *collinaire* and communal level elections as well as national level elections, and to ensure that the quota system was replicated at the local level.

Thus in terms of legal change, Burundi is seemingly at the forefront of institutional reform that has put in place both gender machinery and quota systems to ensure women's presence in public office, and to facilitate (at least nominally) that Burundi embrace international norms and standards on violence against women.

Following the 2005 election, there was a woman Vice-President, the President of the National Assembly was a woman, 35% of government appointments were women, 31% of MPs were women, 35% in the Senate, 13 % at the communal administrative level, with 21% of communal councillors elected women, and 14% at the *collinaire* level.¹

Electoral results for women in 2005 and 2010

N°	ELECTIONS	Women elected or appointed					
		Elections de 2005			Elections de 2010		
		Total	Number of women	% of women in 2005	Total	Number of women	% of women in 2010
1	COMMUNALES	3,225	714	22	1935	653	34
2	LEGISLATIVES	118	37	31	106	34	32
3	SENATE	49	17	35	41	19	46
4	COLLINAIRES	14,540	2,035	14	14,550	2,414	17
5	GOVERNMENT	26	8	35	21	9	42.9
	TOTAL	17,958	2,811	16	16,653	3,129	19

Source: CENI BURUNDI

Réalisation: Gender unit, UNDP

The 2010 elections brought the senate of Burundi to the first position in Africa and second in the world after Bolivia. The Burundi national assembly is ranked 5th in Africa. This reflects also how peace-building moments in FCAS, as noted in the literature, can create important moments of opportunity that are difficult to replicate in normal times. Moreover, the gains that this level of rapid legal change that features in peace-building processes represent should not

¹ The administrative levels of elected office in Burundi includes: the *collinaire* (hill or village) level; the communal level; the national level.

be underestimated both in the short term and as a base on which more long-term change can be supported at different levels.

However, more substantive transformation is limited through a range of structural obstacles that reflect deeply embedded social and cultural attitudes about gender inequality. This is reflected across a range of issues, including entrenched resistance to pass legislation allowing women to inherit property; or the fact that despite numbers in elective office, women overall are excluded from executive or decision-making positions, or the more strategic cabinet appointments.

Concretely, it was observed during the fieldwork that the most transformative activism is located in CSOs across different women's organisations. Both studies and interviews indicate that – while it is true that there is inevitably a high degree of rivalry over scarce resources and funding among women's associations – CSOs working on gender equality issues have authoritative presence across the country, including in rural areas and at the communal and *collinaire* level. Thus engaging with these organisations has been instrumental in shaping emerging narratives about gender equality that have translated into lobbying and advocacy efforts.

By contrast, women in political parties are seen as less committed to an agenda of gender equality, as their loyalties lie with what remain still deeply patriarchal structures and attitudes in most political parties, despite the public rhetoric of commitment to international standards in relation to women's rights. The perception is that this is not helped by the dynamic of dominant party rule that is taking over.

During the 2005 electoral campaign, women's CSOs mobilised effectively to encourage women to vote, and to support women candidates. This led to the consolidation of what emerged as a more spontaneous coalition of women's groups called the 'Synergie des partenaires pour la Promotion des Droits de la Femme (SPPDF)'. This brought together women's associations, NGOs and donors working to support women's rights. This is an example of how effectively supported networking has resulted in the establishment of alliances across societal associations that continue to carry the banner of gender equality objectives in relation to different areas of women's empowerment (including in relation to political participation).

At the same time, it is important to note that there is a sharp distinction between women activists in society which is where the gender equality agenda is most vibrant, and the much more timid transformative agenda among elected women. The distinction is also manifested in a mutual distrust which was expressed in several interviews. At the same time there is a recognition that the sustainability of a gender equality agenda would benefit from better links between CSOs and women in public and elected office. For instance, among CSOs there was a recurrent discussion about the need to pass further legal change regarding the inheritance law for women, and the family law. But it was also noted that women MPs, (mostly from the governing party) were discouraged from embracing this. Rather they are seen as 'flowers' who are compelled to toe the party line.

Finally, it is important to note that programming within the UN agencies on governance and political development is geared up to supporting an ongoing trajectory of institutionalisation of democratic forms, and stabilisation of the political settlement supposedly resulting from the peace process. However, the 2010 elections, contrary to the assumptions that peace was being consolidated, have been shrouded in a climate of deteriorating relations between political opponents. Political tensions have escalated during 2011, and there is currently uncertainty about the prospects of the peace building/state-building process in Burundi.

Aid environment

As a country that is transitioning from conflict, Burundi has undergone different aid structures to many other aid recipient countries. The 2005 election brought an end to the administrative body of ONUB (UN peace-keeping structure which was brought to an end in 2006) to peace-building body (BINUB) through which UN agency work has been coordinated to more recently. UNIFEM worked through and in coordination with these structures in the past. Currently, and in relation to interventions aimed at supporting women's political participation, UNIFEM worked mostly reactively, also as a consequence of short term funding structures which have inhibited the possibility of long-term programming. There is the expectation that with changed roles through the institutional transition to UN Women, the agency will be better placed to lead interventions in support of gender equality agenda in relation to political participation.

Within the UNDP, Burundi is one of 10 countries to host a Senior Gender Advisor, a position which has been created in a selection of post-conflict countries. The mandate is to lead on gender mainstreaming and concrete actions within UNDP programming, and to liaise with UN Women. Since 2011 in Burundi, the expectation is that there will be a shift in balance towards UN Women taking a leading role, including in relation to UNDP work in support of gender equality agendas.

UN Women/UNDP Strategy and Activities

UN Women-Burundi

UN Women-Burundi sits within the Central Africa sub-regional division of Sub-Saharan Africa. As such it shares resources with several other post-conflict and fragile states, including Rwanda, and the DRC.

In relation to political participation support, staff in the country office have long-established links with existing women's organisations, and have made efforts to develop strong CSOs networks. Prior to 2005 it UN Women Burundi was also involved in supporting awareness raising and lobbying efforts to secure legal and constitutional change in support of gender equality. On political participation issues this has been significant (notwithstanding the difficulties of direct attribution). Since 2005 there are also activities intended to support women in elected or appointed office through a range of activities. These include: CD; awareness raising; support to networking of women CSOs; advocacy for legal change;

It was noted during the fieldwork, that the majority of staff at the UN Women country office are from Burundi, have strong links with national women's groups, and a deep knowledge of the country political context, and socio-cultural structures that shape gender relations, as well as how these are evolving in the post-conflict experience. As reflected in interviews with CSOs and NGO informants, there is a belief that this deep country knowledge has enabled the UN Women-Burundi office to work effectively and flexibly to identify entry points, and relevant stakeholders for engagement as opportunities have arisen.

At the same time, at a general level there is the sense that UN Women-Burundi has tended to respond more reactively than strategically in the past. In part this reflects the fluid realities of a conflict situation, where there is a context of institutional instability, where the rules of the game are still themselves being negotiated and defined. Thus, the deep knowledge of contextual dynamics has enabled UN Women to work flexibly, and to adapt to what remains a changing situation in which the political settlement is still in dispute, and the peace process far from over.

It was noted during interviews that UN Women has been undergoing an expansion, with new recruitments, mainly of Burundians. The expertise that is sought includes: violence and security; economic security and livelihoods; gender budgeting; and governance. Now that UN Women is an independent agency, they are recruiting staff to engage in relations with other donors.

Within this context, the UN Women's office has been working through different governance programmes as one important stream of work. The work has involved peace-building activities, especially prior to 2009 efforts were focussed on. This has included: developing capabilities of women's CSOs, and support to networks of women groups at different national and sub-national levels; support to women aspiring to be elected for office, and support to CSO networking which has proved strategic in mobilising electoral capabilities (for voters and candidates) at the local and national level, and to support for advocacy and capacity development in relation to the measures of legal change noted above.

While much of the work has focused on mobilising women around electoral processes, this has involved working at different levels, and through different activities, including supporting peacekeeping activities such as conflict mediation at the local level.

As UNIFEM has become UN Women, there are new expectations arising in relation to the country office now playing a leading and more strategic role in supporting a gender equality agenda.

For this evaluation, activities that were examined included projects under the '*Strategie harmonisée pour une meilleure participation des femmes Burundaises aux election de 2010*' (harmonised strategy for a better involvement of Burundian women in 2010 elections)', (UN-Women 2010, 2009). This includes activities leading up to the 2010 election, as well as post electoral activities in support of CD and accompanying newly elected women officials at the different levels of governance.

Formally the programme rests on 4 axes:

- Axis 1: Mainstreaming gender into the electoral system through legal and procedural change.
- Axis 2: Mobilisation of women as voters and candidates, including through capacity development at the individual level.
- Axis 3: Integrating gender issues in political party programming.
- Axis 4: Support to peace-building efforts before, during and after elections.

In practice UN Women has been involved in a broader range of activities and lobbying forums, including in coordination with UNDP and UNESCO and national women's associations networks, the CAFOB (collectif des associations et ONGs feminines du Burundi), SPPDF and Dushirewhamwe, for instance for the development of a 'social compact' which was agreed by the political parties and which outlines a set of priority reform areas to advance gender equality. It was noted in a number of interviews that this document has become a written agreement regarding priority reforms against which political parties can be held to account.

Moreover, in reality and beyond the strategic thinking, interviews indicated that UN Women-Burundi has demonstrated an agility to work with context specific opportunities as these arise.

UNDP-Burundi

Within the UNDP basket fund in support of the 2010 election, the Senior Gender Advisor in UNDP, while also liaising with UN Women officers, has led on concrete actions in support of the women's political participation (UNDP 2009, 2010a, 2010b). These have included:

- Support to network of women's candidates at the communal level.
- Support to the national association of locally elected officials.
- Project to fund costs of obtaining ID cards being issued (necessary both for candidates and for voters). ID cards cost \$3.00 to obtain, which is a prohibitive amount for women candidates and voters.
- Support to women observers for 2010 election.

Thus the two programmes/projects that were examined during the field trip included:

- Support for the 2010 electoral process (before, during and after) by UN Women under the *Strategie Harmonise*.
- UNDP concrete actions under the basket fund led by UNDP through the Peace Building Fund in support of the 2010 electoral process in Burundi.

Findings

Theory of change

Both UN Women and UNDP country offices provided documentation on their activities, with some degree of explicitness about the underlying theory of change.

Formally the activities within both agencies (including through the fact that they also work collaboratively) include the following:

- Electoral support for women candidates and women voters through capacity development and accompanying activities at the national and local levels, in preparation for elections at national and sub-national levels, and with the aim of enabling capabilities for mobilising politically
- Support for enabling structures for political activism (for instance funding the costs of obtaining ID cards for women voters and candidates)
- Supporting advocacy through CSOs and supporting networking of CSOs for legal change (as translated into the 2009 Electoral Code, and Criminal Code reform)
- Supporting women's roles in mediating conflict at the local level, building on previous conflict mediation work

The '*Strategie Harmonisée*' of UN Women further puts in place a Plan of Action intended to provide ongoing accompaniment for elected women, public officials between elections, through different forms of CD, awareness raising and advocacy, including through the media. There is a long list of activities that are incorporated (and indeed budgeted) for the next two years on awareness raising regarding different rights and needs, including in relation to political capabilities and support to political networks for women. This is an ongoing programme.

Formally, the implicit theories of change include that:

- increased numbers of women in office leads to empowerment of women, and better chances of legal change that advances the agenda of gender equality;
- legal change supports transformative change in gender relations in politics;
- supporting women to develop leadership and political capabilities at different governance levels to be more effectively engaged in official politics contributes to giving visibility and strength to gender equality agenda beyond elite levels;
- working through partnerships in government and CSOs, and supporting networks of pro-reform actors contributes to creating an enabling context for political change, because of implicit assumptions about accountability of elected women officials to gender equality agendas; and
- women are effective conflict mediators at the local (communal and collinaire) levels.

UN Women documents also situate interventions against global strategic goals and outcomes, positioning the actions as supporting change in relation to UN Women SP outcomes 2 and 5 especially, (although the list of actions to come in the future also address SP Outcome 7).

At the formal level, UN Women-Burundi's strategic thinking is thus clearly aligned to global UN Women's objectives. This is presumably also important in terms of bidding for funding from core funds, including at the sub-regional level of UN-Women.

The underlying assumptions noted above are implicitly taken as the starting point of programming, but perhaps insufficiently take account of national power dynamics and institutional logics of political decision-making and how relations of accountability are constructed. Thus, the fact of weak political parties, dominant party rule, and poor mechanisms of accountability are not explicitly factored into programming.

However, interviews also suggest that in the main, the UN Women country office is also pragmatic and more reactive and responsive on the ground than the documentation suggests. Indeed there is a sense that the documentation reflects more a list of intentions, but in reality what interventions will take place on the ground is also shaped by how the political process unfolds. From interviews it was raised that this flexibility is commendable as it reflects the necessary agility and sensitivity by the country office to adapt to context specific realities and constraints, which enhances the relevance of activities.

This reflects two dynamics. First, that in part due to the unpredictability of funding, UN Women and UNDP interventions have in some respects had to be ad hoc in responding to opportunities of funding, and decision-making processes within the donor community. This means that long term planning has not always been possible. But second, as noted by a number of beneficiary organisations, there is a sense that the particular characteristics of the country office (and concrete individuals within it) are such that they are able to work flexibly and take up opportunities as these arise. The deep country knowledge, and understanding of who the key stakeholders are both in government and at the societal level among UN Women staff means that they have been able to position themselves strategically to support interventions that respond to needs and opportunities as these arise in the political process. This is also helped by regular consultation exercises which seem to be taken seriously by UN Women country office staff.

To some extent then, the ToCs that underpin the strategic thinking that guides country level actions are responsive to the global strategic thinking within UN Women. From the documents and interviews undertaken, it is less evident how strategic thinking at the regional or sub-regional offices interfaces with the country level process (in the case of UN Women). But it was also clear that planning and engagement at the country level reflects a particular ability by country office staff to develop and implement activities that are relevant for the context.

This also applies to UNDP activities under the coordination of the current Senior Gender Advisor. In this case it was noted that the ability to navigate the political situation and work effectively to secure buy-in from key government actors, as well as to mobilise support within the UN agencies and other donors had an impact in relation to concrete activities of support for women for the 2010 elections.

This raises first the question of the relationship between global strategic thinking and ToCs (as identified in the Inception Report for this evaluation) that are developed at Headquarters, and what is best fit, (addressed below under the criteria of relevance and effectiveness). To what extent is the global strategy a guiding or constraining framework? Secondly, addressed below under sustainability and efficiency, there are questions about results and attribution. And third, there are issues about the degree to which there is a coordinated agenda in place among UN agencies and with other donors to provide effective support to women's political participation.

Finally, it is important to note, as has been suggested by other authors (eg Uvin 2009) that the aid environment in Burundi overall has provided effective support to the peace process, and laying the ground for the transition from conflict. In part the size of the country makes this potentially more feasible. Moreover, the size of the country and levels of aid dependence create the space for some leverage. At the same time the fact that renewed conflict is resurfacing as a real risk is very much a reminder of the need for realism regarding what donors can do, and for caution in the attribution of results.

Relevance

Given the political process of peace and state building that Burundi is undergoing, the key focus of activities for women and political participation is to support electoral capabilities for voters and candidates at different levels, and to encourage and support lobbying for legal change.

- Corresponding activities on the ground and mostly programme objectives both of UN Women and UNDP were considered by different stakeholders to be relevant to the needs and priorities of the country context in relation to the electoral process, and to the specific challenges facing women to engage in political participation. There was formal evidence of political and social analysis in programme documents for both agencies.
- Importantly, the context analysis that mattered most for ensuring good levels of relevance of programming was the deep understanding and knowledge of context by country office staff. In this sense it mattered that UN Women advisors were from Burundi, and had knowledge of the landscape of relevant partners both at the national and sub-national level, which is not often present in donor offices (both multi- and bi-lateral agencies). This contributes to the flexibility of UN Women to tap into emerging opportunities for action as these have emerged.
- While this evaluation has focused on political participation, UN Women has also supported interventions addressing conflict related gender violence leading up to the 2005 election (UN-Women Burundi, 2006).
- Of note is that the current strategy for political participation lists support for political parties to include gender equality objectives in their programmatic documents. This is despite the fact that it was acknowledged that working with political party programmes was probably an irrelevant activity, as these did not inform politics of political decision-making. Nonetheless, it was also argued that this contributes to building in a narrative of gender-equality into the political discourse that overtime can enhance socialisation of this agenda.
- UNDP programming was less immediately tapped into sub-national dynamics, and the range of grass-roots and local networks and partnerships. However this seemed to be compensated by the role of (the current) Senior Gender Advisor within UNDP, who has proved to be effective in working with UN Women to leverage the gender agenda in a basket fund on peace-building where it risked getting sidelined by other governance objectives, and in obtaining support from key actors in government.
- Formal programme documents adopt the ToCs that are outlined in global strategic documents, as noted above, with an emphasis on legal change, supporting political capabilities among women candidates at different levels. This is complemented with actions to support the creation and survival of CSO networks. In part this is intended to bridge dialogue between CSOs and women in political parties, but in reality the two remain divided in many respects.

Sustainability

The sustainability of interventions speaks to issues of realistic achievement of outcomes, attribution and the sustainability of achievements.

- It is not evident how concrete actions result in long-term outcomes. But concrete objectives and outputs outlined seemed more realistic in both UN Women and UNDP documents. Moreover, given the starting point of women's absence in public life, in the case of Burundi it seems to be the case that UN Women and UNDP work has contributed to meaningfully reshape the landscape of 'numbers' in office, both by support to legal change to adopt quotas, by support to CSOs at local and national level to mobilise women politically and build up political and leadership capabilities both for women candidates, and for CSOs. Here the work to support societal networks is important. Equally, the work with

the parliamentary women's group is important, but bridging the two – CSOs and women in office – remains a challenge.

- Peace-building processes may offer a particular dynamic of opportunities to embed some aspects of gender equality into the emerging institutional framework after a period of conflict, and it is not evident that the initial transformative momentum (say of legal change) can easily translate into a more sustainable trajectory of long-term cumulative transformative change. There is a risk of the initial momentum slowing down, first through the routinisation of politics. Once the initial foundational impact of first elections passes, it is likely that prevalent social and cultural attitudes to gender relations will resurface and dictate how these shape women's political participation and access to decision-making. In terms of real political empowerment, this can typically translate into a reality where elected women are more tokenistic, and are effectively excluded from decision-making posts (such as strategic cabinet positions); or are pressured to toe the party line, including when this goes against a gender equality agenda. This is exacerbated in the Burundi context because of the dominant party logic, which means that the legislative branch does not act as an important decision-making body, as most political power is concentrated in the executive branch.
- Cultural barriers and ongoing prevalent social attitudes discriminate against effective political empowerment of women, and their inclusion in decision-making process. The sustainability of UN Women and UNDP efforts thus is also dependent on the degree to which they contribute to shifting prevalent attitudes to the role of women in office. It is not evident that the women who reach office thanks to donor (and local stakeholder) efforts are committed to supporting systematic change beyond benefitting those women who have been elected.
- For this, it matters how UN Women and UNDP continue to engage with women's CSOs, and support their advocacy and awareness raising role, including in their role of CD for elected women. Support to CSO networks, and working across a range of partners, such as SPPDF, Dushirehamwe and CAFOB suggests that in the case of Burundi, there are good efforts to engage with the relevant and representative local partners, including those which have presence at the local and sub-national level, as indicated by different informants.
- Crucially, as has been reflected in existing literature, women's associations in Burundi have been critical agents of change in the political process to ensure that gender equality objectives are integrated into the peace and state building process, including through legal change. But, as in other cases, their reliance on external funding runs the risk of diminishing their critical capacity, including because of the pressures to compete for funding. This has the risk that they adapt to donor narratives, rather than lead transformative agendas. This requires sustained efforts at consultation and ongoing engagement with local fora. Informants suggested that UN Women staff seemed committed to accompanying and supporting local networks and consultation exercises. One example is that of supporting the network created in 2009 of women elected (REFEL = Réseau des Femmes Elues locales = Network of local women elected, branch of ABELO) at the local level through ABELO, (Association burundaise des élus locaux). Another example is the social compact for women which was drawn up by different partners and presented to political parties.
- Sustainability is also reflected in the degree to which support to political participation translates into effective women's empowerment. A recurrent issue in interviews is that sustained political empowerment of women is also deeply connected to economic autonomy. For this it was noted that a number of laws continue to be barriers to enhancing women's economic autonomy and empowerment. This includes barriers in customary practices which prevent women from inheriting property, and political resistance in the ruling party (Kazoviyo and Gahungu 2011). Medium to long term support to legal change thus needs to strategically include a focus on bringing legislation into line with constitutional and international commitments on gender equality in relation to issues beyond formal political participation. This is notwithstanding that UN Women has been

engaged in programming on economic empowerment through the Women's Project with some good results (Campbell et al 2010).

Effectiveness

- Project and programme documents for UNDP were more specific than what was provided from UN Women regarding how objectives translated into concrete results. However, in both, objectives seemed not unrealistic. Given the political moment, the size of Burundi and the importance of donor presence in the country it is likely that UN Women and UNDP support through their different activities will have contributed to gains in legal change (in relation to the electoral process, and criminal code) and to numbers of women in office at the sub-national and national level. Moreover, this is reflected in concrete changes identified in UN Women global strategic Outcomes 2 and 5 especially (less evidently so in the scope of this evaluation in relation to Outcome 7).
- On measurement, and on results agendas, however, even if measurable indicators are available, transformative change cannot be derived from the number of training sessions that are held, or the number of ID cards that are issued. This evidence or results indicators however is relevant information, including in terms of ensuring accountability and transparency in how and where funds are allocated, and project activities implemented.
- More difficult to measure, by the nature of the phenomenon, is the degree to which this translates into results in relation to substantive processes of transformative change in gender relations, as reflected in the Political Accountability Cycle identified in the Inception Report, which informs UN Women strategic thinking.
- Achievements reflect the fact that UN Women and UNDP (through the Senior Gender Advisor) were able to read the context at the national and sub-national level, and position themselves strategically with Burundi stakeholders to achieve results. UN Women was better placed with work in support of women organisations. UNDP through the Senior Gender Advisor has been effective in mobilising support at the government level for concrete actions (such as the ID cards).
- Thus in the specific context of Burundi, and given the particular features of country offices and individuals in country offices, there is a sense – as expressed by different informants – that there is value added in the work of UN Women and the current Senior Gender Advisor.
- There is also, however, the sense that more integrated and long-term strategic thinking which takes into account linkages between social, political and legal spheres of change would add to programming strategy and design. For instance, one informant noted that he felt that for all the changes that had been achieved in terms of increased numbers of women in office, this did not translate into substantively higher levels of awareness among women regarding their rights, and a gender equality agenda across different sectors.
- It was noted in a few interviews that awareness raising and advocacy needs to be better targeted towards men, not only women.

Efficiency

- It was noted that predictability in levels of funding for support to women's political participation has not always been possible leading to more ad hoc implementation of activities. (We were not provided with financial reporting documents, but this was not a priority for this evaluation).
- Because of ad hoc activities, (also as a result of the fact of lateness of funding structures being in place) results have been less than optimal. This was raised in relation to some of the CD activities in preparation for the elections. In order to compensate for this UNDP has endeavoured to organise activities for incumbent women in elected posts to share their experiences with incoming women elected and appointed officials. This translated into workshops held at the national and the sub-national levels of governance.

- Staffing levels for UN Women have increased, including in relation to governance related activities, which it is intended will contribute to more sustained and strategic engagement, including in terms of activities between electoral processes.
- It was noted that UN Women staff skills seem especially attuned to understand context specific constraints and opportunities. This may be specific to the UN Women-Burundi office. It is not evident that this is replicated in other countries in the region.
- UN Women/UNDP coordination under the current management seems effective.
- Overall donor coordination on women and political participation was not immediately evident (but few donors were interviewed). Notably the (outgoing – due to leave in August 2011) gender advisor in the Belgian Embassy seemed to have limited knowledge of UN or other donor programming on gender issues in the country, and revealed very limited understanding of contextual conditions, constraints and opportunities for donor support to political participation for women. Notwithstanding such limitations among bi-lateral donors, there is a role for UN Women under new structures to lead the gender agenda on political participation.

Levels of Change and Cross-Cutting Issues

- Legal change has been critical in creating opportunities for women to engage politically, as Burundi has begun to move towards a more stable political situation through the peace-building process, (notwithstanding recent political developments in the country). It was evident in interviews that we should not underestimate the impact of having women occupying public office, either through appointment or election. The visibility of women in office has an impact in terms of socialisation of gender equality objectives that is not likely to have an immediate effect on social and cultural attitudes towards the public and political roles of women. Nonetheless it does constitute an important building block in countries like Burundi where the starting point is one of women in the recent past being very absent from political participation.
- At the same time, there was recognition that complacency with numbers needs to be avoided. It is also the case that UN Women and UNDP (through the current Senior Gender Advisor) are strategically positioning themselves, including through current ongoing actions, to support other forms of political participation that involves building capabilities of political women, and 'accompanying' elected women. While there is less evidence of explicit strategic thinking across the three levels of change noted in the Inception report for this evaluation, the work in support of networks de facto speaks of engagement at the social and political levels (beyond the legal).
- The point to note here is that legal change in Burundi (as elsewhere) is not translating unimpeded into political change for a number of reasons that are not factored into programming. First, elected women still do not in the main occupy key decision-making positions in government. Second, they are not necessarily supporting women's agendas, but rather respond to political party lines and in a context of dominant party rule (for instance a resistance to support). Third, lines of accountability in relation to political agendas remain weak. Moreover, as noted in one interview, there are formidable obstacles here in terms of the kinds of political pressures that women in office face not to be active proponents of gender equality agendas, for instance in relation to inheritance (and other laws).
- Hence the need for ongoing support to activities at the societal level. In Burundi (as has been the case elsewhere, for instance in Latin America), the critical edge of gender equality agendas sits in women's associations in civil society. But the risk of these demand-side actors losing their vibrancy remains high given a context of limited resources, and competition between CSOs (which was noted in interviews). It will be important for UN Women to continue to work strategically to support CSO to maintain vibrancy in its capabilities to exert pressure through social accountability mechanisms (including advocacy, and lobbying at sub-national, national and transnational level).

- At the same time, cultural and social attitudes change slowly and there is a need for realism on what programming can achieve.
- Here UN Women-Burundi's support to sub-national dynamics is especially interesting, as it is at the collinaire and communal levels where support to grass-roots dynamics of change can contribute to transformative processes, including through tapping into change that is anchored in the experience of conflict itself.

Lessons and Recommendations

- As a UN agency UN Women will now be better positioned to lead on support for gender equality and political participation for women in the donor community. This should translate into more long-term planning on support not only in response to key moments, such as elections. Although support in between elections happens, there is merit in building up a more strategic narrative of change that connects the social, political and legal levels of transformation outlined in the Inception Report.
- UN Women-Burundi is especially well placed, because of staff characteristics, to develop programming which responds to context. It does this already de facto, but programming is not sufficiently engaging in the power dynamics that shape gender relations in the political spheres of decision making around policy. A more explicit analysis of the power dynamics of the institutional context in which support to political participation for women takes place can identify more strategically the challenges that need to be addressed.
- From the perspective of UN Women global outcomes, these provide a starting point to guide programming at the national level. But the case of Burundi is an example of how deep understanding of context specific constraints and opportunities is crucial to inform activities on the ground. Thus, the context specificity needs to be brought to the surface more explicitly in developing the particular theories of change that should guide programming – taking into account the power analysis noted above.
- The Burundi case also highlights the effectiveness of working at the sub-national and grass roots level.
- Post-conflict contexts typically feature challenges of volatility and unpredictability, which requires capacity to be flexible in order to adapt programming to a changing environment. The need for realism is especially important here.
- The fact of working in an aid dependent environment creates opportunities for leverage for donor interventions, for instance in relation to lobbying for change in alignment with international commitments. In this regard, UN Women and UNDP can continue to lobby government, using CEDAW commitments to monitor progress on gender equality agendas, and not only in relation to political participation.
- Enhance activism in gender equality among elected women and ones in public offices at all levels.
- Build/ensure a link between CSOs work and women elected at national levels or in decision making positions, as well as men, to better connect demand and supply side actors.

List of Interviews

Honorable Marcelline Bararufise, Vice Présidente de l'Association des Femmes Parlementaires du Burundi, Assemblée Nationale (AFEPABU)

Mme Kathelyne Craenen, En charge du volet Genre, Ambassade de la Belgique au Burundi

Estella Cimpaye, Directrice du Département de la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Égalité des Genres, Ministère de la Solidarité, des droits humains et du Genre

Macumi Evariste, Directeur des Affaires Administratives et Judiciaires, Ministère de l'Intérieur

Marie Goreth Ndacayisaba, Association Dushirehamwe

Marie Josée Kandanga, UN-Women

Perpétue Kanyange, Coordonnatrice, Synergie des Partenaires pour la Promotion des Droits de la femme (SPPDF)

Yvone Matuturu, Representative assistant And Vice-chair of gender thematic group, UNESCO

Ambassadeur Adolphe Nahayo, Directeur General des Organisations Régionales et Internationales, Ministère des Relations extérieures et de la Coopération Internationale

Awa Ndiaye Diouf, Senior Gender Advisor, UNDP

Honorable Norbert Ndiwokubwayo: Président de la commission des affaires sociales, du genre, du VIH/SIDA et du Rapatriement, Assemblée Nationale

Spes Ndironkeye, Coordonnatrice, Association des Juristes Catholiques du Burundi

André Nduwimana, Directeur Exécutif and Richard Nimubona, Directeur Exécutif Adjoint, ABELO (Association Burundaise des élus locaux incluant le REFEL (Réseau des femmes élus locales))

Zenon Nicayenzi, Représentant, International Alert

Seconde Nizigiyimana, Program Development Specialist, USAID

Prosper Ntahorwamiye, Porte parole, Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)

Soline Rubuka, Secrétaire Exécutif and Aline Nivyabandi, Chargée de Programme, CAFOB (Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi)

Laetitia Twagirimana, Directrice Générale de la Promotion de la Femme et de l'Égalité des Genres, Ministère de la Solidarité, des droits humains et du Genre

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Annex 3: Sudan Country Case Study

Leni Wild and Edmund Yakani Berizilious

Introduction

These field notes summarise the findings of the Sudan case study as part of a broader UN Women/UNDP-commissioned evaluation of women's political participation in sub-Saharan Africa.

Methodology

The substantive methodology employed in the ODI-led evaluation is set out in more detail in the Inception Report. Here, it is important to note the intervention selection and methods used in operationalising this methodology. In the case of Sudan, the recent separation of South Sudan seriously constrained the ability of this evaluation to cover in depth UN Women/UNDP interventions in both North and South Sudan.

For North Sudan, visa difficulties meant that only a light touch review was possible, involving a review of available documents. Efforts are still underway to secure a limited number of telephone interviews with key UN Women staff. Field work in South Sudan was possible, but was limited to Juba (the capital) due to security and logistic concerns. This field trip involved interviews with UN Women representatives, donors, government representatives, civil society organisations, Members of Parliament and political parties, and academics/researchers. The spread of interviews thus provided a broad range of views that allowed for the necessary triangulation with UN policy documents and the wider grey literature. The expertise of the ODI researcher was supplemented with in-depth local knowledge of a South Sudanese researcher who attended all interviews and was involved in the compilation of these field notes.

Context Analysis

Country context

Sudan has had a long history of internal conflict and division. Following independence in 1956, the historic imbalances between the North and the South gave rise to violent clashes which degenerated into the first North-South civil war (1955-1972). These patterns of internal conflict have continued, most significantly in the second North-South civil war (1983-2005) and the Darfur crisis (2003-2009/2010). The second civil war, fought between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), was brought to an end by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005.

The CPA established a six-year interim period (dated from 9th July 2005) during which the Southern Sudanese would have the right to govern affairs in their region and participate equitably in the national government. The CPA also stipulated that after the interim period, Southern Sudan would have the right to vote in an internationally monitored referendum either to confirm Sudan's unity or vote for secession. Until the referendum, however, peaceful implementation of the CPA needed to occur in ways that made the unity of Sudan attractive.

Conflict analysis conducted before and after the signing of the CPA reveals broad agreement on some of the drivers of conflict in Sudan. Alex de Waal identifies five main discourses which have contributed to continued conflict: clash of identities; centre-periphery inequality; conflict over resources; intra-elite competition; and what he terms 'brute causes' such as criminality, individual agency, and the effects of a cycle of violence (de Waal 2007). In a study for the World Bank in 2004, Pantuliano identifies similar factors, including the historical marginalisation of the South; identity issues (especially linked to religion and language); tensions over access to and control of natural resources; the status of the peripheries; and internal divisions within the South (Pantuliano 2004).

Alongside these historic tensions, three additional drivers stand out from more recent analysis. Firstly, the failure to disarm armed groups is a recurring challenge, particularly in Southern

Sudan, contributing to an escalation of violence since the signing of the CPA. A number of major ceasefire breaches have prevented significant progress, with ongoing sporadic fighting between different groups. Secondly, analysis points to the consequences of a lack of progress in building more inclusive political settlements, in Juba or Khartoum (Schomerus and Allen 2010:13). The possibilities of establishing effective joint governance with the North are minimal. There are also increasing fears that the lack of political pluralism indicates a potentially similar trajectory for Southern Sudan as for the North. Thirdly, Southern Sudan's reliance on oil revenues remains a further destabilising feature.

Sudan ranks 150 out of 182 in the UNDP's Human Development Index (UNDP 2009). While there is very limited available data on poverty levels, an estimated 90 per cent of the population are thought to survive on less than \$1 per day (IRIN 2007). Key development challenges include poor access to basic services, such as education, water, and healthcare. Sudan is characterised by an uneven distribution of resources, through urban/rural, centre/periphery divides, including the heavy concentration of services in the centre (Khartoum). By one estimate, half of Sudan's income and assets are located in the capital so that 'the country consists of a middle-income capital city and immediate surroundings, with a hinterland that would qualify as a 'least developed country' were it not for the fact that it is actually becoming poorer' (de Waal 2007: 5).

Illiteracy among women is as high as 49.2%, much higher than that among men (29.9%). In North Sudan, two out of five women are said to be literate while this ratio decreases in South Sudan to only one woman in ten. A wide variation exists within and between different states and between rural and urban areas. School dropout rates are also higher among girls, particularly in IDPs and rural areas. Gender relations are also reflected in education access and attainment. While male enrolment rates are 59% at primary school level, female enrolment is lower at 51%. Secondary school enrolment rates show higher disparity, with 22% for female enrolment and 36% for male.

ODI research highlights a number of challenges for women in North and South Sudan (Domingo et al 2011). These include in-built biases against gender equality, through prevailing ideological legacies and patriarchal structures in the North and South which undermine women's participation in the political process. The conservative Islamic ideology in the North has hardened over time, with consequences for how women's public and private roles are conceived. Gender inequalities have also been most starkly experienced in high levels of violence against women during continuous periods of conflict in Sudan (including instances of rape and domestic violence). There is evidence that this remains an ongoing problem. Some research in South Sudan, for example, has shown an increase in physical and sexual violence against women under the peace process, due to a range of factors including processes of demobilisation, the continued prevalence of small arms, and excessive alcohol drinking (possibly reflecting increased levels of stress) (Aldehaib 2010).

There has been more space for women's political participation in the South than in the North, and the South's interim constitution (unlike in the North) included a provision for 25% quota for women's representation in both the legislature and the executive. This reflected the recognition of the role of women within the SPLA and during the prolonged conflict. At the same time, the legacy of patriarchal structures remains deeply embedded in community structures and customary law in the South. Key issues raised in interviews include early marriage and bride prices, violence against women and women's low levels of literacy. The use of quotas (in Parliament and in government) was widely seen as positive by many of the interviewees, but it was also noted that challenges of low education levels and literacy meant it was still very difficult for women to participate fully. There is reportedly ongoing anger over these women being viewed as products of affirmative action rather than recognised for their own worth or capabilities.

The realisation of independence for South Sudan marks a major milestone since the CPA, with 98.83 percent of the population voting for secession in January 2011, and formal independence scheduled for 9 July 2011. However, there are ongoing challenges in terms of finding a workable agreement on sharing oil wealth; instability along the border and escalating

conflicts in Abyei and Southern Kordofan, as well as tensions in Blue Nile state (Pantuliano 2011).

A recent International Crisis Group report has highlighted two key issues for the post-independence period, namely the degree to which the SPLM can allow for an opening of political space and the will to undertake internal reforms within the SPLM (ICG 2011). Interviews confirmed the widespread perception that since the signing of the CPA, divergent groups were able to unite under the goal of self determination – now that has been achieved, differences and tensions are more likely to emerge. This is shaped by historical legacies of fighting and conflict, which now need to develop into finding ways of non-violent contestation and bargaining. Another prominent issue is the challenge of a new government and new country and the very high expectations of the wider population. While there have been some advances in terms of governance structures, there have been few tangible peace dividends to date; the CPA period was marked by a focus on political and governance issues, but this now needs to shift to a greater focus on the realities of governing and on delivering services (ICG 2011; interviews).

Aid environment

There is a long history of aid to Sudan, and Sudan is ranked as the thirteenth largest recipient of official development assistance (ODA) (excluding debt relief) between 2000 and 2009. A large proportion of that aid (60.6% between 2005 and 2009) is humanitarian aid. Due to governance challenges, the majority of this aid has gone to actors outside the state (although this is changing with the independence of South Sudan).

During the CPA period, a number of donors agreed a package to support the reconstruction and development of Sudan. Three of the leading donors have been the United States, the United Kingdom and Norway (who collectively provided 49.5% of ODA between 2000 and 2009). The majority of aid flows have been channelled through multilateral agencies, including UN agencies and international financial institutions such as the World Bank (particularly in the form of trust funds and pooled funds managed by these agencies).

Humanitarian assistance levelled off after a peak in 2005, while development assistance continues to show a rising trend. This increase in development funding reflects the more conducive environment for programming development assistance in South Sudan, afforded by the establishment of a development partner in the semi-autonomous regional Government of South Sudan (GoSS).

Since South Sudan's independence, aid modalities and approaches are being reconfigured. Many of the major donors are in the process of establishing permanent offices in South Sudan. Many of the pooled funds and main aid modalities are also being reconfigured. The GoSS has put forward a new aid strategy, with a strong preference for aid to gradually work with country systems and through the government, and with a focus on public infrastructure development, basic service delivery and institutional development as part of a transition away from humanitarian assistance.

North Sudan, in contrast, is increasingly isolated.

Findings

Theory of Change

In South Sudan, the main interventions analysed for this study were UN Women support to elections and to the referendum. These mainly involved relatively short term forms of support (over a period of 3-4 months).

For the elections, support involved:

- Aimed to increase the number of women registered and who turned out to vote in the elections, as well as supporting women candidates.

- Activities focused on voter registration, gender sensitive civic education, mobilisation of voters including to vote for women candidates, training of women candidates and capacity building for national women leaders, some media work, and support for a gender and governance expert advisor to work with the NEC to help ensure equitable participation of women.
- Funded through a wider UNDP elections basket.
- Partners were reportedly carefully selected to avoid political bias. This meant a focus on international organisations or those seen to be neutral: IRI, ACCORD, American Refugee's Council.

The main successes identified by project documents and staff for this support was the high turnout of women to vote and commitment to rural outreach. The main challenges identified included low levels of literacy, cultural attitudes and logistical constraints (travel/infrastructure, security).

Referendum support:

- Aimed to improve women's participation in referendum and gender sensitivity of referendum process.
- Support to range of locally based organisations; tried to cover all states in South Sudan.
- Main activities: Support for gender unit and gender focal point in South Sudan Referendum Bureau, outreach to women voters (education and sensitisation), support for their security and safe participation.

The main successes identified by project documents and staff included greater awareness of women's protection issues, women's participation in voting. Identified challenges included low levels of literacy and delays in disbursing funds.

Since the referendum, a number of ad hoc/discrete projects are also underway. These include:

- Support to GoSS for self evaluation (including identifying gender data and indicators).
- Reviews of interim constitution for gender sensitivity.
- Support to a select number of women's organisations.

One of the key findings emerging from this study is that there has not been much evidence of an explicit theory of change or of longer-term strategy for reform in South Sudan. In part, this very much reflects the wider context – with governance structures themselves in flux, and ongoing conflict and insecurity, short term and ad hoc approaches are likely to have emerged out of necessity. As the 2008-2011 sub-regional strategy sets out, this reflects the dynamic context in Sudan and uncertainties around the future outcomes for Darfur, North Sudan and South Sudan.

However, this seems to have meant a series of activities have been supported but with little reflection on the wider strategy or change to be achieved – and on how this can be sustained for the longer term. In terms of electoral support and support for the referendum, there do seem to have been missed opportunities to adopt a more 'political cycle' approach, beyond electoral moments, with greater follow up and engagement post the election. Instead, there was a short burst of activity (over a 3 to 4 month period) directly targeting the electoral or referendum event but limited follow up with partners since then. Greater reflection on the wider theory of change (beyond the specific electoral moment) may have been helpful for this.

Moreover, some of the assumptions underlying this support were questioned in interviews. A number of interviewees felt that women's participation in the elections and in the referendum was to be expected – the importance of these votes for the future of South Sudan was such that in practice everyone was expected to turn out, and there were few concrete barriers to

women's participation. This is challenging for the emphasis placed on the high levels of women's voter registration and turn out as a measure of a success for these programmes.

There were attempts to deal creatively with some of the significant infrastructure and logistics challenges for support in South Sudan, by working through local organisations to reach payam levels. Some of the activities were also altered to better reflect cultural or social preferences, for example through the use of songs, theatre and so on. However, some core social and cultural, as well as political economy, features did not seem to be addressed by support currently provided by UN Women/UNDP. For example, while the reviews of the election support cite a number of barriers in terms of low literacy and cultural attitudes, there was no evidence of this being picked up and specifically addressed for subsequent referendum support – and indeed, these same barriers are again noted in review documents for the referendum. Interviews also pointed to a wide number of political economy dynamics. These included challenges where women parliamentarians from the ruling party are constrained in their ability to oppose or criticise SPLM policy (including on gender issues) or where women candidates are elected but then cannot fulfil their potential because of wider power dynamics and ongoing capacity constraints (for instance, literacy).

Of most concern has been the lack of follow up with implementing partners. Some partners cited significant delays in financial disbursements and some had reportedly yet to receive the final instalment of funds, with knock on impacts on activities. Most reported no significant follow up or engagement since past projects and few were aware of UN Women/UNDP's current activities and strategies on this area. The UN Women office in particular seems to have been in a period of reduced staff capacity and undergoing internal review with the transition from UNIFEM and this seems to have undermined its ability to support change in a strategic and systematic way in 2011.

Relevance

- Interviews reflected the sense that few donor agencies, government actors and other civil society bodies had a strong understanding of UN Women/UNDP interventions to support women's political participation in South Sudan. Country strategies and priorities were not seen as well publicised or understood.
- This contributed to perceptions of a lack of coordination with others and to calls for UN Women, in particular, to do much more to help coordinate gender work, for example through the Gender Based Violence working group, or the Gender Coordination Group. Greater sharing of plans and approaches with others was seen as key to prevent overlap in the future. This is in contrast to the 2008-2011 sub-regional strategy, which states that UNIFEM will take the lead within the UN system and across a broader constituency as a driver for gender equality.
- There was a general impression across the interviews that UN Women, in particular, tended to focus on small levels of support across a wide range of issues and actors, with calls for greater focus on some targeted areas and follow up in the future.

In terms of the projects supported, a number of areas were put forward where 1) support could be better tailored to context and 2) particular gaps could be addressed.

- Turning first to the realities of the context, there was clear agreement on the major capacity gaps in South Sudan, particularly in terms of infrastructure. On a practical level, most women have very low education levels, as a result of the prolonged conflict. This has implications for the choice of activities and interviewees cited challenges where the predominance of one-off training (e.g. workshops) did not work well, as longer term investment and engagement was needed to overcome the significant capacity constraints in place.
- On a more substantive level, the most significant challenges seem to be faced by women at the grassroots, who face real significant constraints in accessing public services and in terms of livelihood opportunities – a focus group discussion revealed

that many returnees had experienced better provision while in IDP camps than now that they had returned. There are reportedly few links between these women and political elites (women or men). Partly this reflects problems of logistics and travel, with rural areas effectively isolated. But there was an overriding sense that what mattered was how these substantive issues could be realised and addressed now that the governance arrangements were clearer – and this is something for both male and female politicians to take forward. The emphasis to date appears to have been training for female candidates and supporting women to join political parties, but these findings suggests the need to focus much more on the substantive issues likely to be particularly important for women at the grassroots (e.g. service delivery, including maternal health; livelihoods and economic development; access to justice and security) and to work backwards from there.

- In terms of key gaps in support, and linked to the point above, a number of interviews raised questions as to whether MPs are the most appropriate entry point for working on women's issues. This reflects criticisms of their lack of experience as legislators but also wider political dynamics where, in reality, the SPLM retains control. For example, some interviewees highlighted that they had worked on proposals as part of the constitutional review process which were presented to female parliamentarians; but that there was no follow up because in reality these MPs could not challenge the status quo of the ruling party line.
- There are also reported disconnects between women in parties, parliament and in civil society – which are not seen as united or as identifying with a common agenda. In part, this reflects political dynamics, which are likely to grow as other parties seek to challenge the SPLM's dominance (see the section on Context Analysis above) as well as challenges regarding the capacity of some actors - civil society capacity, for example, is seen as having been depleted where prominent figures have been absorbed into government. Starting at the grassroots, and with particular concrete issues which are most pressing, could therefore be a more effective way forward.
- There were also perceptions that any strategy could do more to engage with men, particularly in relation to issues like Gender Based Violence, girl child education or issues of livelihoods.

Sustainability

- Partners reported limited follow up once projects were completed, and most of the support to elections/referendum took the form of short term grants which ended following the voting period. In part, this reflects the process of reflection and change currently underway, for example in UN Women, but it also points to real challenges of short termism. Now that independence has been achieved and new institutions are being created, much longer term investment and focus will be needed.

Effectiveness

- A number of positive practices were highlighted, where pragmatic approaches were adopted which sought to work around the significant capacity constraints in place. For example, heavy emphasis was placed on partners reaching rural and more isolated areas for the elections and referendum support (even using motorbikes/walking to maximise reach where there was no infrastructure). This was seen as important for ensuring effectiveness in light of these wider challenges.
- However, challenges were identified in the choice of activities, including the high numbers of workshops and one off trainings which were seen as less effective in light of the underlying capacity constraints and needs.
- Some interviews pointed to the need for greater reflection on which parts of government were partnered with for this work. The tendency has been to work through the Ministry of Gender but this is not seen as helping with wider visibility. Proposals

were put forward for links with other government departments, including those with more influence particularly as state processes are being (re)made, such as the Ministry of Justice or sector line ministries such as health.

- The choice of partners for UN Women/UNDP can be viewed as highly politicised, making it important to have clear criteria in terms of who is selected and their relevance to these agendas. Some interviews pointed to the need to better understand political cliques and networks in South Sudan and to ensure that some networks were not overly represented in terms of the organisations receiving funds.
- There are some signs of a shifting approach, particularly in the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women, and a draft strategy has been prepared which emphasises issues of education and illiteracy; economic empowerment; peace, security and the protection of girls and women; alongside governance and leadership (although the latter remains likely to be the biggest component).
- However, tensions were identified, where there are massive capacity gaps and pressures for scale up and increasing the reach of activities but also the need to prioritise and possibly to start small to ensure interventions are effective. It was not clear that there were processes and arrangements in place to manage these tensions and to ensure that adequate prioritisation occurred.
- Interviews generated a wide number of other suggestions in terms of work in the future to improve women's political participation and representation. These included:
 - A stronger focus on developing policy ideas and research, which can be shared with others. This includes forms of 'gender audits' of legislation, policy proposals, as well as addressing cross cutting issues such as early marriage and gender-based violence. Whereas issues of political participation are seen as 'crowded' in terms of donor support, there was a recognised policy vacuum on women's issues that future support could help address.
 - A potential role was put forward for UN Women as an 'information broker,' providing information and tools to a wide variety of organisations working on women's issues. This could link to the facilitation of greater lesson learning within the region (e.g. Kenya, Uganda) and from other fragile states (e.g. Timor-Leste through the g7+ platform).
 - Core issues of maternal health were raised in focus group discussions, as a major issue currently not well addressed in political and policy debates.
 - Moreover, issues of impunity and access to justice (as well as informal justice mechanisms) are stressed in the sub-regional strategy (2008-2011) but not reflected in programming in South Sudan, beyond some small support started in 2011 to a women's lawyers association, despite being highly relevant to ongoing challenges.

Efficiency

- The low level of existing capacity of partners was well recognised as posing challenges to the efficiency of support. For example, UN Women could not work with some local organisations around the referendum where they did not have adequate financial management systems in place. Some pragmatic approaches were evident here too, with third party organisations used to manage grants to those lacking in capacity.
- However, a wide number of partners interviewed pointed to challenges where the funding process was very slow; a number of partners stated that funds were received late, which delayed the start of time-critical activities, and that they still had not received the final instalment of funds for referendum support. In addition, there were perceptions that the standards expected by UN Women were very stringent or unrealistic for local organisations. Reporting formats and processes were reportedly

challenging for many partners, for example where narrative reports were expected to be very long (30 pages), and with the expected use of unfamiliar indicators. In part, there are attempts to address this including through an evaluation (currently underway) of all partner organisations to get a better sense of capacity levels and to cut down on transaction costs for individual projects; staff recognised the need for earlier planning and outreach to partners in the future. But a shift towards 'good enough' procurement standards and financial management processes may need to be explored in light of ongoing capacity constraints in South Sudan.

- Some interviews criticised the limited presence of UN agencies in Juba, which reportedly made it difficult to monitor and support partners when there were difficulties in the field. This is likely to be an ongoing challenge, in light of the security and infrastructure constraints, but where possible, a focus on greater monitoring and advice to partners was identified as key.
- In terms of UN Women/UNDP collaboration, challenges were identified relating to a lack of coordination. For example, in relation to election funds, transferred from UNDP to UN Women there were reportedly funding delays. External stakeholders also expressed the perception of a lack of clarity regarding the division of roles and responsibilities between UN Women and UNDP on these issues.
- For the UN Women office specifically, there was some criticism of the tendency to use short terms advisors and consultants. This reduces the potential for longer-term support and strategy, with problems identified in terms of poor turnover and handovers between staff. This is in part likely to be a function of operating in a fragile environment – but again, following the referendum there may be new opportunities to build a more sustainable approach to staffing.
- Furthermore, challenges were highlighted in terms of the need to work through a regional office (for UN Women) which again, was seen as contributing to delays in decisions and funding, with minimal substantive contributions on strategy from the regional level.

Levels of Change and Cross-Cutting Issues

- As the analysis above suggests, the focus to date has been on women's (formal) political participation i.e. support for women voters, support for women candidates. There has been less attention to issues of legal change and societal change. The context in South Sudan, in particular, seems to suggest the need for refocusing on forms of societal change, including its connection to substantive issues of service delivery and livelihoods to meet women's needs. This is likely to be a key challenge for the future, as attention shifts from the political governance arrangements (where it was focused during the CPA) to what the (new) state can now deliver.
- This refocus would help to move away from support that narrowly looks at formal political participation to more substantive forms of representation and responsiveness to women's issues. Major social and cultural challenges were highlighted across the interviews in terms of legacies of violence and the marginalisation of women as well as predominant views on women's roles in the family (including early marriage and lack of girl child education). These represent significant constraints to ensuring that women's issues are addressed and require pragmatic, incremental approaches to begin to shift attitudes over time.
- The post-independence period is a moment of transformation for South Sudan, with processes of state and institution building underway, alongside forms of nation building. These processes are themselves still heavily contested, and draw on a range of formal and informal practices. This means that any support to South Sudan needs to remain flexible above all else, and responsive as some of the fundamental characteristics of the state are remade. It will also need to closely monitor insecurity and conflict trends,

particularly in the border areas and particularly in terms of how they impact on women and women's organisations.

Lessons and Recommendations

- One of the key findings emerging from this study is that there has not been much evidence of an *explicit theory of change* or of longer-term strategy for reform in South Sudan. In part, this very much reflects the wider context – with governance structures themselves in flux, and ongoing conflict and insecurity, short term and ad hoc approaches have emerged out of necessity.
- This lack of a theory of change, however, means that activities have been supported but with little reflection on the wider strategy or change to be achieved – and on how this can be sustained for the longer term. This has meant a wide variety of projects and activities but with limited follow up and sustainability.
- Moreover, some of the *assumptions for support were questioned* in interviews. Interviewees felt that women's participation in the elections and in the referendum was to be expected – the importance of these votes for the future of South Sudan was such that in practice everyone was expected to turn out to vote, and there were few concrete barriers to women's participation. This challenges some of the emphasis placed on the high levels of women's voter registration and turn out as a measure of a success for UN Women/UNDP programmes.
- Reflection on the theory of change might prompt *new entry points for support* in this area. Some of the most significant challenges lie in societal/cultural issues and in the experiences of women at the grassroots, who remain largely disconnected from political processes. Starting from this perspective, and how to realise greater responsiveness to and representation of women's issues, would open up the options for support beyond a focus on formal political participation. This is likely to be particularly useful as South Sudan itself is in a process of transition and moves beyond some of the political wrangling, which has been an inevitable focus to date, and towards a focus on what the state can deliver. Moreover, support to political participation seems to be a crowded field for donor support, reinforcing the need to find new entry points for engagement rather than trying to compete with well established players.
- Challenges of *the diversity within women's groups and networks* also need to be addressed. Choices about who to partner with can be widely interpreted as aligning with one grouping over another, which means it is even more important to move beyond ad hoc approaches to more strategic engagement, with the criteria and rationale for which organisations will receive support clearly set out.
- At the practical level, much can be done to address some of the shortfalls in terms of disbursement and management of funds to address delays as well as increasing staffing levels to adequately manage and monitor implementation. Steps are underway to address aspects of this, but should proceed hand in hand with a new strategic approach (which will itself have significant implications for staffing capacity and expertise required).

List of Interviews

Julia Aker Duang, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

Christina Aya and Scopas Ladu, ACORD International

Kuer Dau, New Sudan Women's Federation

Juliet Deng, South Sudan Women Lawyer's Association

Hon Mary Elias, Member of the gender committee in the South Sudan legislative assembly.

Lona Elia, Voices for Change.
 Gudrun Fridriksdottir, UN Women.
 Angie Grace and Frank Phillip, International Republic Institute
 Sarah James, Sudan Women's Association
 Ulrika Josefsson, SIDA.
 Alfred Lukoji, University of Juba.
 Jok Madut Jok, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Culture.
 Edla Muga, Norwegian People's Association.
 Deborah Ongewe, UN Women.
 Lilian Riziq, South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network.
 Dan Ryan, PACT International.
 Zahara Saidi, SUNDE.

Focus Group Discussions:

Focus group with grassroots women (seven women in Juba market)
 Focus group with young women ((4 women at the Women's Union aged between 20-24) working in civil society organisations)

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Annex 4: Nigeria Country Case Study

Lisa Denney and Salihu Lukman

Introduction

These field notes summarise the findings of the Nigeria case study, part of the UN Women/UNDP-commissioned evaluation of women's political participation in sub-Saharan Africa. The notes set out the methods used in conducting research and the Nigerian context, before turning to UN Women's strategy and projects. The findings, related to relevance, sustainability, effectiveness and efficiency of programming are discussed, informing the final section on recommendations for UN Women. The recommendations are particularly pertinent for the Nigeria case study, given that the project evaluated, Democratic Governance for Development, is now in a transition phase, during which it will review project activities and prepare for its next phase, 'deepening democracy', beginning in January 2012. An internal review has been conducted and an independent external review is due to begin shortly. The timing of this UN Women evaluation is therefore ideal in taking stock.

Methodology

The substantive methodology employed in the ODI-led evaluation is set out in the Inception Report. Here, it is important to note the intervention selection and methods used in operationalising this methodology. In the case of Nigeria, selection of relevant project(s) for evaluation was straightforward, as there is currently just one project falling within the thematic focus of women's political participation and through which all UN Women support to women's political participation is currently provided. This project, the Democratic Governance for Development project (DGD) is administered by UNDP and is comprised of six pillars. Gender constitutes one of the pillars and is administered in partnership with UN Women. The gender pillar of DGD is the focus of evaluation.

In undertaking the Nigeria case study, a ten-day field trip was conducted in Abuja, Nigeria in August 2011. This involved interviews with UN Women and UNDP representatives, as well as some of the contributing donors to the project under evaluation in order to build an understanding of the strategic rationale and the motivations and relationships of the actors involved. Interviews were also conducted with project partners and beneficiaries to gain insight into project implementation and challenges faced. Complementing this, Nigerian government officials and other election-focused NGOs were interviewed in order to gauge the impact, visibility and impressions of UN Women/UNDP work on this issue. The spread of interviews provided a broad range of views that allowed for triangulation with UN policy documents and wider literature. The expertise of the ODI researcher was supplemented with in-depth local knowledge of a Nigerian researcher who attended interviews and was involved in the compilation of field notes.

Context Analysis

Since the end of military government in 1999 Nigeria has been consolidating democratic civilian rule. Elections have taken place in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. Women, constituting half of the Nigerian population, have increasingly taken part in these elections, both as voters and candidates. From 1999-2007 there were steady but marginal increases in political participation of women through either election or appointment. This is in keeping with Nigeria's commitments to gender equality, under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the National Gender Policy, which sets the benchmark for the number of women in Parliament at 35% - 5% higher than the international standard. Yet despite these commitments, marginalisation of women continues and in 2011 women did not gain any more seats than in the 2007 election. This was a huge disappointment given that in each past election there has been approximately a 2% increase in numbers of women elected. The good news to come from the 2011 election, however, is that significant gains were made in appointive positions - with President Goodluck Jonathon appointing 33%

of cabinet positions to women (up from 10% in the last government), including the portfolios of Ministers of Finance and Education.

Interviewees and the broader literature are unanimous on the challenges facing women in becoming increasingly involved in Nigerian politics. These include:

- Cultural and religious attitudes and the disparity in opportunities for men and women
- The manner in which Nigerian politics is conducted
- Institutional constraints
- Political party structures, including 'godfatherism'
- Financial constraints

It is important to note, of course, that Nigeria is a large and diverse country, which makes it difficult to generalise across regions in depicting the challenges that women face. Not all of the constraints necessarily apply to all women and all regions, however they provide a snapshot of the challenges.

Nigerian culture is highly patriarchal, with men enforcing social norms dictating that a woman's place is in the home, not in public life. Many women perpetuate such beliefs, making it difficult for those who choose to pursue a different path. This cultural discrimination against women is also, at times, reinforced by religious sanction that deems a political woman to be immoral. These attitudes serve to ensure that women receive less educational opportunities than their male counterparts. Across Nigeria women have higher rates of illiteracy and lower rates of school enrolment than men. This means that not only do politically ambitious women face attitudinal barriers, but they also frequently possess less education than male candidates. This means male candidates often have greater educational merit than female candidates, making election into political life more difficult.

Nigerian politics also involves activities discouraging women's participation. Meetings are often held late at night on an ad hoc basis. This makes attendance difficult for women, who face greater personal risk in travelling at night and often have to arrange for assistance to care for families. Women who do attend meetings are often labelled as prostitutes or otherwise morally unfit women due to their late night activities and absence from the home. Politics is considered more generally as a 'dangerous' career and women politicians are frequently considered of dubious moral character.

There are also institutional obstacles to women being involved in politics. For instance, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) voter registration process was not women-friendly, with no separate registration lines for pregnant women or those with children not able to wait in queues for long periods of time. As a result, some women gave up waiting and returned home without registering, making them ineligible to vote at election time. Furthermore, electoral laws in Nigeria denote that women may only stand for election in the constituency that their father or husband is registered in. Particularly after marriage, this is frequently not the constituency where a woman has grown up or lived, meaning that her ability to build a support base is limited.

Internal party democracy is one of the biggest challenges facing women in becoming involved in Nigerian politics. Parties are renowned for their lack of internal democracy, with 'godfatherism' (or patronage) determining most party decisions, including who runs on the party ballot. As a result, the greatest hurdle women must overcome in getting elected is at the party primaries stage, where political deals are often made by male candidates and the party leadership in advance of elections and party delegates who vote on the candidates are virtually all male. Such party structures ensured that in the 2011 elections, women candidates constituted just 9.1% of the total number of candidates contesting the polls after the political primaries. While one or two *godmothers* are now emerging with influence in political parties, they are not as effective at dispensing patronage.

This leads to the final challenge women face in getting elected – financial backing. The costs of running an electoral campaign are high. Aside from paying for the campaign itself and the materials and coverage that are involved, many candidates also dispense ‘patronage’ in the form of cash handouts to secure votes. Women are at a disadvantage as they consistently earn less than men and are usually not in charge of household finances, limiting their ability to make independent decisions without consulting their husbands. While candidates receive donations from patrons, there are few patrons willing to risk their money on female candidates given the low likelihood of their election. As a result, women’s campaigning is frequently smaller, with less coverage than that of males. This also helps to explain the low success rate of women at the Federal level. At this higher level of politics, candidates require advocacy efforts beyond their immediate locality. This requires both effective campaigning and greater financial resources to launch the campaign. The level of ‘godfatherism’ in federal politics is higher than at the State level, skewing results towards male candidates.

It is in this context that UN Women and UNDP have undertaken programming to assist women in becoming more politically active. In order to be successful, programming will need to go some way to addressing the obstacles highlighted above, which span the societal, political and legal spheres.

UN Women/UNDP Strategy and Activities

Strategy

- UN Women Nigeria country strategy focuses on improving development prospects for women by increasing the quantity and quality of women’s political participation.
- Activities must fit within the global thematic priority areas (laid down by UN Women HQ) which were derived from country consultations. However, it was felt that global priorities did not always reflect the particular challenges and context faced in Nigeria.
- Absence of a current West Africa regional strategy (still drafting its post-2008 strategy).
- UN Women Nigeria used country strategy to weave local issues into global thematic goals.
- Incorporating local context was perceived as critically important in order to differentiate UN Women from UNIFEM, which had been more bound by top-down directives.
- Goal of increasing women’s political participation through increasing numbers of women in elected roles was adopted on the basis of global and national calls for such change.
- Alongside calls for bolstering numbers, UN Women Nigeria also recognise importance of improving quality of political leadership to improve women’s development prospects. Many interviewees noted the often poor quality of representation provided by female politicians who do not deliver on gender issues.
- To be indicative of real change it is important that women’s increased political participation is based on merit, rather than tokenism.
- Some have thus questioned whether the quota approach will lead to better policy outcomes for women. Recognising this concern, UN Women Nigeria adopts a two-pronged approach to programming – to increase numbers *and* to improve quality.
- UN Women Nigeria shied away from claiming that increasing the numbers of women in Parliament, alone, would lead to greater representation of women’s interests. Instead, they argued that improving the quantity and quality of women’s political participation in Nigeria would lead to better representation of women’s issues in national decision making bodies, which would in turn lead to policy changes to improve women’s development.
- Ultimately, UN Women’s approach is about women’s development – and democratic participation is the vehicle through which to achieve this more equitable development.

- UN Women Nigeria programming is also influenced by donors to UN Women projects, in this case, Democratic Governance for Development. Activities derive from a combination of UN Women global and country strategy, UNDP strategy and the inputs of DGD contributing donors (the EC, DFID, CIDA, South Korea and UNDP).

Projects

The governance programme of UN Women Nigeria is focused solely on the Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) project. DGD is administered by UNDP, in partnership with UN Women on the gender pillar (one of 6 pillars). DGD is a joint-donor basket fund for support to the electoral cycle, funded by UNDP, EC, DFID, CIDA and South Korea. The project involves partnerships with civil society organisations, the media and political parties. DGD programming has focused on increasing the numbers of women elected in the 2011 elections. The second phase of the DGD (beginning in January 2012) will develop a focus on elected women and provide training to help them deliver better representation.

Democratic Governance for Development

The DGD project was preceded by a similar project known as the Joint Donor Basket Fund (JDBF), which ran from 2005-2010. Upon a UN Women proposal in 2006, a gender pillar was adopted and this has remained under the DGD. The gender pillar of the DGD is a partnership between UN Women and UNDP, with UN Women responsible for specific outputs for this pillar. Learning from the JDBF suggested a need to shift away from focusing on elections themselves within DGD, in favour of a broader approach to the democratic process and electoral cycle in Nigeria, with support to civil society in order to 'deepen democracy'. While under JDBF civil society received 30% of programme funding, these interventions proved to be the most effective. Under DGD, therefore, civil society was to receive a greater portion of funding.

The substantive phase of DGD began in May 2010. Despite initial efforts focusing on electoral and constitutional reforms, in which UN Women and partners hoped to achieve greater gender focus, by late 2010 it became apparent that avenues for legal reform were limited. UN Women efforts have thus since focused on changes at the political and societal level. Engagement has therefore taken place with women's CSOs, the media, political parties and female politicians across the country.

CSOs

Civil society organisations are sub-contracted to implement projects that sensitise, raise awareness and provide training to communities, traditional and religious leaders, media, political parties and female politicians on women's political participation. In relation to the gender pillar, UNDP transferred funds (USD 6,000,000) to UN Women who were then responsible for disbursements. In late 2009, UNDP and UN Women opened calls for support for the 2011 election cycle. DGD provides financial support to partner organisations to implement their projects. Civil society partners are selected through a standardised UN process, which identifies and assesses potential partners according to set criteria, related to their implementation, managerial and staff capacity. CSOs are pre-registered by the UN country office on this basis, which is meant to speed up the contracting process. In total, 12 CSOs have worked on the gender pillar of DGD.

Research

UN Women conducted research, in collaboration with civil society partners, on violence against women during elections around the 2011 elections. It considered not domestic violence, but specifically violence in the political arena – against women aspirants and women voters. A preliminary report has been submitted.

Media

Support to the media has aimed to increase coverage of women's issues in politics and women candidates. However, partners who intended to carry out media projects reported that this ended up not being possible due to the very short timeframes of DGD support.

Political Parties

UN Women has engaged with political parties in an effort to build greater gender-sensitivity into their manifestoes and structures. A contracted team of consultants carried out a survey of the largest political parties in Nigeria to identify gaps in women's inclusion. The survey found that there were significant obstructions of women's political participation and suggestions for greater inclusiveness were made. However, survey results were sufficiently late that political parties claimed there was not enough time to make any meaningful changes for the 2011 election. Training sessions for female aspirants were also conducted to provide them with improved campaigning and leadership skills, as well as to promote the importance of representing women's issues.

Work with women politicians

UN Women has also worked, to a lesser extent, with current female politicians to help improve the quality of their leadership. UN Women attempts to sensitise them to the fact that they must fulfil their election promises in order to lend credibility to future female candidates. While this component of UN Women's work under DGD has been relatively minor to date, this area of work will expand in the next phase starting in early 2012.

Findings

Theory of change and results

The theory of change implicit in UN Women Nigeria's DGD programming is centred on increasing both the quantity *and* the quality of women involved in politics in order that women's development prospects improve. This ToC assumes that women politicians will advocate for policies that support women's development. This assumption, however, is not always supported by the practice of women's political participation. All too frequently, women politicians represent elite interests, or other identity interests, rather than those of, particularly poor and marginalised, women. UN Women Nigeria has attempted to address this challenge by building in a focus on the quality of female politicians. However, this element has not received as much focus in programme implementation as boosting the numbers of women. In order to be demonstrative of a credible ToC, UN Women Nigeria will need to focus more on supporting *representative* female politicians, rather than just supporting the election of female candidates. The ToC also assumes that women's interests are most effectively represented by women themselves, neglecting the fact that male politicians may also represent the interests of their female constituents. While UN Women Nigeria's partners have worked with male community leaders and political party stalwarts – engagement with male politicians and aspirants has been negligible. The theory of change guiding UN Women Nigeria's work could be refined and deepened by considering these issues and developing arguments about how they impact upon achieving women's political participation.

Relevance

Outcome Challenges

Some contributing donors have been critical of the gender pillar within DGD, on the basis that little seems to have happened and that some of the activities undertaken have not addressed the greatest challenges facing women. It is felt that as a new agency with many demands placed upon it, UN Women is not as dynamic as the Nigerian context requires and as a result some opportunities have been missed. This leads to a perception of UN Women not being proactive. Some partners felt that the gender pillar of DGD was the least effective of the

pillars. In part, their concerns reflect a tension in the theories of change internalised by the contributing donors and the project implementers they fund. Contributing donors would like to see UN Women taking a more proactive role with a more nuanced strategic direction, focusing not just on top-down processes, such as the introduction of a quota system (which some donors have doubts over the value of) but focusing more on grassroots education of women voters in order to build a stronger support base for female candidates. Future programming would benefit from a greater focus on improving the quality of women candidates, rather than on the quota or tokenistic approach that advocates for the straightforward inclusion of more women.

It is felt that while UN Women is well-intentioned, its strategies for promoting change are very traditional, focused on elites and top-down approaches that view the immediate challenge as one of increasing numbers of women, rather than on promoting issue-based politics that advocate for policies that address challenges facing women, or grassroots interventions. More engagement, some argue, should be made at the local level – for instance in the practices surrounding political party primaries, which are consistently pointed to by women’s CSOs as the primary impediment to women’s political participation. A more nuanced political analysis would reveal the incentives and opportunities for change at this level. Indeed, some feel that UN Women is not sufficiently sceptical of high level, legalistic approaches to change and the limited impact such change often has on the lives of the majority of women. One way of building a stronger bottom-up focus would be to pinpoint ‘champions of change’ at the level where obstacles exist. Some champions will need to be men, in order to carry weight in decision-making bodies as they are currently constituted. Such champions can then press for policy changes in areas that affect women, particularly poor women, who are often not effectively represented by either their male or female representatives.

Overall it was felt that UN Women Nigeria programming needs a much more long-term strategic approach. Currently projects, even when effective, seem ad hoc and not grounded in a sustained logic pushing towards a particular vision of change. In part, this requires much longer term planning. It is already too late to be thinking about the 2015 election given that political dynamics in Nigeria mean that many of the results of this election have already been negotiated. Strategic planning should be thinking about the 2019 election. Clearly, it is not possible for UN Women to do everything at once. Such realities may mean that UN Women does need to focus on its value-added, exploiting the connections it has. However, in doing so, the agency must recognise that its approach is just one part of a much bigger and more complex puzzle.

Sustainability

Choice of project strategies

All women’s organisations met with indicated that the greatest barrier to women’s involvement in Nigerian politics are the financial costs – both throughout campaigning and also in using the judicial system to ensure due process – and that there is not sufficient donor support in this area. While they claimed that it is important to focus on the other challenges that prevent women from participating in politics, if no one is providing financial support, then the greatest challenge is being left unmet. UN Women did not get involved in the area of financial support.

Women’s disadvantaged economic position within Nigeria means that they are limited in their ability to contest elections, which is costly in terms of gaining support and promoting oneself. Interviewees consistently pointed to the financial challenge particularly at the party primaries stage. Once a candidate has been endorsed by the party, the party itself will assist in bearing some campaign costs. It is at this earliest stage in the political campaign that women’s economic disadvantage translates into political disadvantage. While UN Women recognises the challenge that financial disadvantage creates for women, handing out grants to individuals is not a modality used by the UN and was not considered by UN Women.

The call for financial support to women aspirants was, however, taken up by the government. A Women’s Trust Fund was established in 2007 and used during the 2011 elections, but received only limited government funding, with contributions also made by civil society.

Women aspirants submit proposals for support to INEC and the Trust Fund decides which candidates should receive funding. It is uncertain as to whether this Fund has been effective in improving the ability of women aspirants to contest elections – however its limited funding has meant that it has certainly not provided sufficient sums for a woman of no means to conduct an entire campaign based on it. Efforts are now underway to attempt to attract greater investment to the Fund. Both civil society partners and government officials were disappointed in UN Women’s lack of support to the Fund, which they feel is a crucial and innovative mechanism for addressing a key obstacle to women’s political participation. UN Women’s lack of engagement has been interpreted by some to indicate that the agency is unaware of the greatest challenges facing women in Nigerian politics.

Institutional Capacity

There have also been some challenges for UN Women institutionally. The establishment of UN Women created heightened expectations about the capacity of the agency, which have not always been met. For example, UN Women has not attracted as much funding as was initially anticipated. This has obvious flow on effects for the capacity of the agency to fulfil its expansive mandate. Furthermore, UN Women was, at the time of fieldwork, just 7 months old. The newness of the agency combined with the demands placed upon it mean that UN Women faces high expectations that will be challenging to meet, particularly in light of funding shortfalls. For example, in relation to DGD, while partners were generally pleased with UN Women, little difference was perceived between UNIFEM and UN Women. If UN Women was hoping that an institutional makeover would lead to changes in field operations, this is yet to be acknowledged by partners. This might require a reassessment of agency practices but also reflects a broader challenge of changing institutional behaviours. Transition will inevitably be long term and incremental with results improving over time, rather than with the advent of a new institutional facade.

Effectiveness

Outcome Challenges

The numbers of women elected to the National Assembly during the 2011 elections was disappointing with women winning just 96 of a possible 1531 elected positions in Nigeria. This represented no improvement from the 2007 election. However, the message of the importance of women’s participation was effective. The numbers of women who voted in the election increased, as did the numbers of women who put themselves forward for election. Gender has become a serious issue that candidates must at least have a perspective on and women candidates received significant media coverage during the 2011 election. This is indicative of the fact that there is now a greater space for dialogue around the issue of women’s political participation – even if levels of such participation are yet to be realised. Furthermore, significant strides were made in women’s appointed political positions, increasing from 10% under the last government to 33% after the 2011 elections.

Funding Challenges

DGD has faced challenges in financing their partners, which has impacted on the effectiveness of project implementation. While some NGOs received grants, most had to be financed through service providing contracts, as the UNDP grant ceiling of USD 150,000 was too low to accommodate the funds being given. This was a challenge in Nigeria given the size of the country, which meant that many partners received higher levels of funding than in many other UNDP programmes due to the breadth of the geographical area to be covered. The service providing contracts required some unconventional finance checks for NGOs, such as advance payment guarantees (APGs). Civil society partners criticised these, claiming that they were time consuming and costly, with the organisation itself incurring the costs of the finance check. The APG is essentially a solvency check on partner organisations. The problem, of course, is that many NGOs are donor dependent and not always solvent, which led to complications in

attaining the APGs and delays in the release of UNDP funds. The service providing contracts also required the release of funding in tranches – a first payment (which, if it was over USD 30,000, required an APG) and then payment on performance. For contracts, UNDP would release up to 40 per cent of funds upfront while the remaining 60 per cent was withheld until the UNDP was satisfied with the financial assessment through the APG. CSOs undertaking large training and awareness raising activities required significant resource mobilisation, with many funds required upfront for the production of materials, travel costs, etc. DGD's use of tranches was problematic and perceived as too rigid for NGOs, who required more flexibility in order to effectively implement projects. As a result of waiting for the next tranche of funding, some partners felt that their projects were delayed and 'patchy' with implementation beginning and halting depending on cash flow from DGD. Part of this was due to some contracts being signed late – at times not until March 2011.

These delays in accessing funds meant that partners were, at times, without funds at the time they were carrying out projects for DGD. In some cases, funds were not actually released until after the 2011 election, and some partners report that they are still waiting to pay staff for the work undertaken on DGD-funded projects. As a result, some partners were forced to borrow funds from other sources and were then 'reimbursed' by DGD once funding was approved. The funding process overall slowed project implementation. In some cases this has had negative effects on the women that the funding is meant to support – for instance, filing petitions for law suits after an election has a limited timeframe, so late funding meant that women could miss out on filing their petitions in time. The milestones for the disbursement of each tranche throughout the project lifecycle was also criticised for not factoring in the lapses between reporting and release of the next tranche of funds. For example, a second tranche of money was dependent on reporting from the spending of the first tranche. When the report of the first tranche activities was provided, UNDP would not sign off on the report and release the second tranche until up to a month later. It was often during this month gap that activities to be funded under the second tranche were being carried out. As a result, partners were without the funds they were relying on at the time of implementation.

The lateness in the disbursement of funds might, in part, be due to delayed donor contributions. Several of the contributing donors to DGD have not yet paid their contributions and others have decreased initial pledges. Only some contributors pay their contributions in full upfront and this may have caused problems for the disbursement of funds to partner NGOs. However, it is also widely claimed (and accepted by DGD) that partner financing has been problematic. DGD is aware that it needs to build greater flexibility into its funding modalities in order to assist partners. This will be important in sustaining partnerships, as some partners are considering not working with DGD in future.

Relationship Challenges (UN Women and partners)

UN Women and civil society partners

Overall, partners were pleased with UN Women and at a personal level felt that relationships were strong. Partners note that UN Women has made attempts to take a more consultative approach and communicate better with partners than UNIFEM. However, it was felt that this could still be improved and that the effectiveness of programming would be maximised by UN Women adopting a more consultative approach in designing interventions. More broadly, partner opinions of UN Women are shaped by the ongoing transition from UNIFEM to UN Women. This transition is particularly pertinent in the Nigerian context, where the West Africa Regional Office was previously located under UNIFEM, but has now relocated to Senegal. This move has led to some disgruntlement amongst Nigerian civil society who feel that they have lost influence and that decision making now takes longer, with sign off at times required by the regional office.

UN Women and Nigerian government

Most in need of improvement is UN Women/UNDP relationships with key Nigerian government counterparts. Interviews yielded some confusion over these relationships and UN Women felt that they took a particularly consultative approach in involving government counterparts. Yet government officials felt that ministries should know more about UN Women programmes and could do more to engage with them. For instance, while the UN holds meetings that government agencies are invited to, it is felt that the UN agencies do not attend government events. This means that the UN agencies are not as coordinated as they could be with government strategy. More worrying is the fact that government officials seem largely unaware of UN projects related to women and elections. They were aware of some UN Women engagement with civil society, but did not know the specifics of projects being implemented. Less was known about UNDP programming, even in relation to DGD. This is particularly surprising given that, according to the DGD project document, the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Independent National Electoral Commission are meant to be strategic partners, suggesting that engagement or coordination has fallen short.

UN Women and UNDP

While DGD is a partnership in relation to the gender pillar, UNDP is the implementing agency and UN Women is required to report on a monthly basis to UNDP. This has largely been done effectively. Yet reporting requirements amongst UN Women, UNDP and donors has, at times, been complicated. While the physical separation of the DGD programme office from the UNDP office has made the DGD team more accessible to those outside the UN, it has also led to some confusion within UN Women over reporting and information flows. It is not always clear whether UN Women should be liaising with the UNDP or DGD office. On top of this, contributing donors have at times requested direct reporting from UN Women, multiplying the number of reporting relationships UN Women upholds. Clarifying and streamlining this process would help to minimise time spent on reporting.

Efficiency

Timing

Related to the above problems of financing, a challenge articulated by UN Women Nigeria themselves, was that DGD began late. By the time UN Women began seeking engagement with civil society, political parties and female politicians (May 2010) political mobilisation was underway and these actors had little time to meaningfully work with UN Women. Overall, UN Women's work within the first phase of DGD ran for 11 months in the lead up to elections. This was not sufficient time to change party structures and rules, for example; sensitise traditional leaders; or build media interest in women's political participation. This is symptomatic of a broader concern that support to women's political participation (and to democratic governance support more broadly) by all donors has been too focused on elections. As a result, donor support is often mobilised too late in the electoral cycle when changes are difficult to make. The lack of early funding has scuttled some results (for instance, incorporating a greater gender focus within political parties). DGD is trying to rectify this with projects particularly focused in 2012 and 2014, a year after and a year before elections. All interviewees agreed, however, that funding needs to be provided significantly earlier. Although DGD is attempting to move away from election-focused assistance, it seems that the bulk of funding has still been provided immediately around the 2011 election (particularly in the six months leading up to it). Now that elections are over, contracts have ended and will not be renewed until the next phase in 2012. It will be crucial, during this next phase, to demonstrate consistency of support outside of the election moment.

Furthermore, within late donor programming, it was widely felt that core resources are not committed (and, where they are, are provided latest) to women's political participation. Even within DGD the gender component is the smallest – attracting just \$6 million from an \$80 million envelope, spread across 6 components in total. Activities within the gender component

were also the last to get off the ground within the DGD, only 11 months before the 2011 elections – making meaningful change difficult to implement in such a short timeframe.

Staffing and Capacity Challenges

DGD and UN Women have both faced a number of staffing, and thus capacity issues. The DGD team was meant to be in place by March 2010, however several positions were vacant for considerably longer than this, and there is still no deputy head of the programme. Recognising the limited capacity that these staffing shortages represented, some contributing donors felt that their funding would be better spent on donors' own projects. This resulted in some of the pledged donor support to DGD not materialising. Furthermore, UN Women's predecessor, UNIFEM Nigeria, also had long term staff vacancies that limited the capacity of the organisation. While most of these vacancies have been filled under UN Women, the Nigeria office is only now overcoming capacity challenges that clearly have flow on effects for the efficiency of programming.

Levels of Change and Cross-Cutting Issues

DGD initiatives carried out through UN Women have focused primarily on the societal and political levels of engagement, rather than the legal level. This is due to initial failures at incorporating a stronger gender focus in electoral laws and the constitution. Indeed initially, efforts were focused strongly at this legal level, with the hope that review of the constitution and electoral laws in the lead up to the 2011 election would result in greater gender awareness and the codification of the Nigerian government's 35% women's quota benchmark. However, when it became clear that gender-aware reforms were not to be incorporated, UN Women shifted to focus on the other levels of change – related to attitudinal and institutional transformation. These societal and political levels of change can in turn inform legal changes further down the line.

1. Distinction between national and sub-national or local

Some contributing donors and partners felt that UN Women has focused too much at federal level in Nigeria and continues to take a top-down approach to change. Instead, it is suggested, they should work more at State and community levels. The danger of focusing at the higher, federal level, is that changes that occur there (such as the inclusion of more women in Cabinet positions) do not filter down to the State or community level, where more women are involved and likely to be effected. These criticisms are interesting given that UN Women in fact shifted from focusing on high-level legal change to political and societal change, as set out above. The diverging perceptions may stem from the fact that the shift only occurred quite recently. Alternatively, it may be that at the political level, UN Women continues to focus too much at the federal level, and not sufficiently at the State level. Talking with UN Women staff did reveal that most engagements, for instance with women politicians, was at the federal level in the National Assembly, rather than in the State parliaments.

2. Distinction between formal and informal institutions and processes

UN Women has engaged partners who work across both formal and informal institutions and processes, reflecting an understanding of the importance of both in the Nigerian political scene. At the informal level, civil society partners conducted awareness raising and sensitisation campaigns with traditional and religious leaders. More could perhaps be done to work with the informal political party 'godfathers', rather than just working through the formal mechanisms of party leadership. This would deepen work with political parties to engage with the actual locus of decision making. However, overall, UN Women programming seems to have built in an understanding of the importance of working with both formal and informal actors and processes.

3. Distinction between post-conflict states and more established polities

While Nigeria is not a post-conflict state it is, at the very least, a conflictive state, in which violence has broken out in various incidents – including ethnic and religious violence in the North, particularly around the town of Jos, terrorism both in the North and in the Niger Delta (and increasingly in Abuja), and more widespread incidents of violence around the 2007 elections. Along with Nigeria’s weight in the West African sub-region, this makes the country an important and potentially fragile donor recipient. This is despite the fact that Nigeria is a resource-rich country and far from being donor dependent. The fragility of Nigeria’s security and political stability has precipitated a donor focus on elections – particularly given the election violence in 2007. Such a focus is all the more important in a dominant party system, where electoral assistance may be perceived to be necessary to protect democratic process. Thus while Nigeria does not fit into the ‘post-conflict’ category, its history of political violence has skewed donor assistance in particular ways.

4. Relevance of the political, socio-economic and socio-cultural environment (context)

Nigeria is a large and diverse country, making it difficult to generalise about ‘context’ at a national level. Dynamics of class, religion, ethnicity and intergenerational issues manifest differently across the country. Amongst this diversity, it is difficult to articulate common agendas, meaning that there is likely to be no one straitjacket for all of Nigeria. During its recent internal review, DGD itself recognised that it could build a more nuanced understanding of this context into its programming. As set out above, UN Women is perceived by some donors and partners as particularly lacking in nuance and the ability to adapt to the ever-changing context of Nigerian politics. As a result, UN Women may need to invest in building more thorough understandings of context into programme design. This would assist in making UN Women Nigeria a more agile and responsive organisation that can take advantage of opportunities that arise in the quickly changing environment.

It is also important for UN Women Nigeria to be realistic about what can be achieved in the Nigerian context. While the theory of change focuses on improving the quantity and quality of women involved in politics, this is set against a background in which women are routinely subjugated by a patriarchal culture. This is not to say that UN Women should not be setting their sights high in an effort to maximise the rights of women – but it is also important, particularly in measuring results, that goals are realistic and cognisant of the difficult context in which change is being pursued. Having a *realistic* theory of change should also assist in reassuring partners/donors that UN Women possesses an accurate understanding of the context in which they are working.

Lessons and Recommendations

Implications for UN Women’s strategic thinking and theory of change

More nuanced strategy

The most vocal criticisms of the gender pillar of the DGD were in regard to a perceived lack of nuance within UN Women’s strategy to increase women’s political participation. It will be important for UN Women Nigeria to deepen this strategy to speak to issues such as the limitations of greater numbers of women and the importance of addressing not just legal and political obstacles that can benefit from top-down approaches to change, but also social and economic obstacles that require long term commitments to achieve change. Building in a more explicit awareness of these challenges would help to convince partners and donors that UN Women understands the complexity of the issue of women’s political participation. Speaking with UN Women Nigeria staff, it is clear that a more nuanced understanding of the challenges is possessed but the challenge remains to transfer this knowledge into explicit strategy to demonstrate it to others.

More proactive

Related to developing a more nuanced strategy is the need to be more proactive. Some partners and contributing donors, as well as those working more broadly within the political system in Nigeria, felt that UN Women could play a more active role in promoting women's political participation. Part of this is developing the capacity to respond quickly and flexibly – which it is currently felt UN Women is not able to do. A more nuanced strategy would encompass a detailed understanding of context, requiring that UN Women keep abreast of the rapidly changing nature of Nigeria politics. Such a strategy would provide UN Women with a more credible theory of change as well as the agility to take advantage of opportunities that arise that were not necessarily foreseen in strategic planning. Efforts to work with political structures – be it the government, political parties or traditional and religious leaders – must recognise that these structures are a reflection of the broader incentives and social attitudes that constitute them. These incentives and attitudes are constantly changing and there are opportunities within such change that need to be taken advantage of. Doing so will require UN Women to be a much more political astute, flexible and proactive agency.

Managing expectations of institutional capacity

Finally, it is also important that UN Women manage expectations about its capacity and extensive mandate. Currently, it is too easy for UN Women to be criticised for not doing enough – precisely because so much needs to be done. As a result, it is up to UN Women to prioritise and make those priorities (and the bigger picture which they are a part of) clear to partners and donor agencies. This should assist in providing people with a better understanding of what UN Women does and is capable of doing – which should, in turn, assist in managing the expectations placed upon the new agency. It is also important that UN Women's funding shortfalls be made known. In part this will help to manage expectations but also, potentially, prompt greater support for UN Women. As part of the UN system, UN Women is perceived by partners to have access to limitless funding, which does not help in building an understanding of the limitations faced by the agency.

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are put forward. This is timely given that DGD is in a transition phase, evaluating projects to date and preparing for the next phase.

Recommendations

Strategic

1. UN Women headquarters should consult more closely with country offices to discuss how national priorities that are not necessarily explicitly included in global strategy documents can be incorporated into programming.
2. The relationship between UN Women Nigeria and the UN Women West Africa regional office should be strengthened through increased interaction so that it can effectively support national strategy development and coordination.
3. UN Women strategy must be deepened in order to reflect the challenges of increasing women's political participation as well as the varied and rapidly changing Nigerian context. UN Women would benefit from hosting a joint meeting with contributing DGD donors where varying theories of change can be discussed and an agreed approach adopted. UN Women could then hold a meeting with civil society partners to explain the strategy/theory of change and how project implementation will operationalise this.
4. In operationalising the strategy/theory of change, more attention should be given to the issue of increasing the *quality* of women's political participation, rather than focusing on increasing the quantity. Accordingly, programming should work to strengthen the interface between women's organisations and political parties.
5. UN Women needs to manage expectations about its institutional and financial capacity.

Operational

6. Responsibilities of UN Women, UNDP and the DGD office should be clarified prior to the commencement of phase two of DGD, particularly in relation to selection of civil society partners under the gender pillar.
7. UN Women should ensure that a representative attends relevant government events in order to improve relations.
8. UN Women must address the problem of finance for women aspirants. Even if UN Women is not able to provide funding to the Women's Trust Fund, it should at least be involved in the Fund and provide other forms of support. Part of the support given could include capacity development, especially around fundraising strategies.
9. Efforts going forward should focus on political party reform as a priority in order to get more women elected as delegates and build support for women candidates amongst male delegates and 'godfathers'. There is a further need to promote internal political party reforms that would strengthen accountability and internal democracy.
10. Donor programming needs to start much earlier. Support is still too focused around elections and not the broader political process, which is often already entrenched by the time donor programmes begin. Programming would benefit from commencing when the environment is not so politicised.
11. DGD must reappraise its financing mechanisms for civil society partners and identify ways to ensure that the mechanisms are not costly (in both time and resources) for partners. Partners themselves should be consulted in re-designing financing arrangements to ensure that their concerns are appropriately addressed under any new mechanism. One strategy to avoid the problematic advance payment guarantees would be to conduct more small scale pilot projects in order to test ideas before investing in them at a larger scale.

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Annex 5: Southern Africa sub-regional case study

Shireen Hassim

Introduction

This report summarises the findings of research on projects facilitating women's political participation supported by UNDP/UN Women in the Southern African region. This office is responsible for projects in Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands (SARO).

Specifically, the projects assessed dealt with the implementation of the SADC Protocol on increasing women's participation, with the training of women politicians to use media effectively in their campaigning, and with the implementation of government plans to end violence against women. These projects fall under the Gender Equality Programme which encompasses work relating to political participation and economic empowerment, and the UN Trust Fund.

Methodology

The assessment followed the theory of change methodology outlined in the inception report.

Projects assessed were carried out by NGOs based in Johannesburg, although their focus was multi-country. UN country offices in the region have their own partnerships with government departments and civil society, and the SARO entity tends to favour regional initiatives or at least those initiatives in which cross-fertilisation of expertise and resources can take place. In this case fieldwork was not possible, and to a large extent not necessary for this case study. The regional scope of this assessment limits the depth of the findings. Given the wide disparities in country contexts, it was not possible to reflect on the success of projects in each of the countries in which activities were carried out. The case study therefore focused on the assumptions and the outputs of the projects and the implications of these for the theory of change.

Interviews were conducted with UNDP/UN Women staff in Sunninghill, and with project leaders. In addition, I have drawn on several exercises not directly sponsored by this assessment but in which I participated. In particular, this includes a workshop bringing together gender activists in civil society, political parties and women politicians (September 2011), and a meeting of South African civil society assessing the national machinery (August 2011). At both these meetings I took the opportunity to assess civil society activists' views on UN funding programmes. In 2010 I participated in a UNDP-led initiative to bring together gender experts, the Ministry of Women, Youth and the Disabled, and various UN agencies based in South Africa.

UN project documentation and interviews were assessed against this in-depth knowledge of the background of strategies to facilitate increased, and more effective, participation of women in the region.

Aid Context

The projects were funded from several UN sources. These include:

- The UN Development Assistance Framework (2007-2011) which aims to provide a collective, coherent and integrated UN system response to national priorities and needs. The key relevant priority for these projects was 'good governance', and gender as a cross-cutting issue.
- UNIFEM.
- UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women.
- UNDP.

At this stage UN Women have a country office for any of the countries in the region; all programming is done through the SARO. However, there is a strong relationship to Country Teams (apart from Madagascar which does not have one). The view was expressed that the advantage of programming through the sub-regional office carries an advantage in that SARO is better able to provide technical expertise rather than just funding assistance. On the other hand, in some countries (e.g. Madagascar, where there is enormous instability in government) country-level UN Women offices would be better placed to reach the appropriate partners.

In both projects UN funds provided for the initial proposal were used to leverage funds either from other UN agencies or other donors and sources in local government (South Africa).

Interviews with several UN staff raised the question of how important gender issues were in programming within the SARO office. There is no clear understanding of who will take responsibility for gender as it is seen as a cross-cutting issue. There was a very clear articulation by all staff interviewed that they were committed to gender equality and incorporated notions of gender relations and power in their thinking. However, their energies tend to be taken up by their core areas of responsibility. In 2011 especially, the entire organisation seems to be preoccupied with preparations for COP17 in November.

Apart from a clear allocation of primary responsibility for gender, staff turnover seems to be high. In the course of this research three staff members who were initial contacts for the project left UN SARO and there is a sense of discontinuity in the organisation as far as gender issues are concerned. Although other staff have been incredibly helpful, gender does not seem to be a central concern in their actual work.

Regional Context

The Southern African and Indian Ocean Islands region is characterised both by interconnections in terms of human and capital mobility, as well as significant disparities in equality indicators, forms of government and the nature of political systems. The UN SARO office has to balance a wide range of different electoral systems, governments, and conditions in which civil society has to work. In the past 25 years, most countries in the region have liberalised, moving to multi-party, regular elections. Opposition parties have more space to operate freely. In Botswana, for example, opposition parties are now challenging the dominance of the (freely elected) ruling party and shifting from ethnically based parties to more diverse constituencies.

Southern Africa as a region is one of the poorest in the world. The average Human Development Index of 0.512 for all countries in the region places it among the lowest in the world on the UN ranking. Table 1 shows how far the countries in the region lag below developed countries. It also shows the large gap between the countries, with Mauritius well above the regional average and Zimbabwe drastically below it. In Zimbabwe, human development indicators have shown retrogression as a result of political problems. In Swaziland, the rise of HIV/ AIDS in producing similar effects to those seen in South Africa in the 1990s, and the relatively undemocratic government environment does not offer meaningful openings for women to participate in decision-making. In Lesotho, agenda-setting for women and development is driven by donor agencies rather than by local women's organisations.

These contextual differences make it difficult to evaluate the impact of the regional office without substantial research into each country context. Nevertheless, the gap between the politics of representation and the politics of economic policy-making is noteworthy in the region. This begs the question of how to ensure that the women (and men) in parliaments and councils take up the fundamental concerns of women in terms – at the very least – access to services and state resources to mitigate the effects of their gendered responsibilities.

Table 1: 2010 HDI Southern Africa

African Rank	Country	HDI	World Rank
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2	Mauritius	0.701	72
6	Botswana	0.633	98
8	Namibia	0.606	105
9	South Africa	0.597	114
13	Swaziland	0.498	121
20	Madagascar	0.435	135
24	Lesotho	0.427	141
28	Angola	0.403	146
35	Malawi	0.385	153
46	Mozambique	0.284	165
50	Zimbabwe	0.140	169

These disparities limit the extent to which common strategies can be implemented to advance gender equality. Although there is scope for (and an emphasis on) south-south learning within the UN system, in practice it is not easy to meet these expectations.

There has been a global focus on increasing women's representation in parliaments and the region has adopted many of these campaigns. Sub-Saharan African performs poorly on the representation scorecards, and the response of several civil society organisations has been to focus on the potential of quotas for breaking through barriers to women's representation.

Table 2: Women in National Parliaments By Region, 2011

<i>Region</i>	<i>Percentage Women</i>
Nordic countries	42.3
Americas	22.5
Europe (OSCE excl. Nordic)	21.8
Asia	18.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	19.7
Pacific	14.7
Arab States	10.2

Source: Adapted from Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 'Women in national parliaments: Situation as of 30 September 2011', <<http://www.ipu.org>>

New electoral rules and political liberalisation frequently mean that there are openings for women to make claims for representation. In 2008 the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the SADC Gender Protocol which established the aim of attaining 50% representation of women in national parliaments by 2015. The Protocol has been a strategic lever for many women's organisations, with calls for quotas to be adopted in order to facilitate meeting the goal. The SADC regional average for women in parliaments is 24%,

above the global average of 19% and below the Nordic average of 42%. Three SADC countries feature in the top ten countries globally (Angola, Mozambique and South Africa). Note, however, that two of these countries are also among the lowest in the world in terms of HDI as reflected in Table 1.

As with the HDI, there are disparities in measures of representation parity between the countries. These reflect differences in the political systems in different countries, and particularly reflect the impact of the adoption of quotas. Botswana and Mauritius, which use First-Past-the-Post electoral systems, have resisted calls to implement a quota and indeed the introduction of this mechanism would require considerable change to electoral laws. Lesotho has created reserved seats for women at local government level but not at national level, and similarly South Africa has a legislated quota for proportional representation seats in local government but no quota at the national level. South Africa's high parity level reflects the commitment of the ANC to including women.

Table 3: Women's Representation in Southern African Countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>Electoral System</i>	<i>Type of Quota</i>	<i>% Women in National Legislature, 2011</i>
Angola			38.6
Botswana	FPTP	No quota	11.1
Lesotho	MMP		24.2
Madagascar			12.5
Malawi		No quota	20.8
Mauritius			18.8
Mozambique	List PR	Voluntary party	39.2
Namibia	List PR	Voluntary party	24.4
South Africa	List PR	Voluntary party	44.5
Zimbabwe	FPTP		15.0

Source: Adapted from Tripp, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2004; Dahlerup, 2006, IPU, 2011; www.quota.org

The differences in electoral and political systems make demands for quotas complex. Some countries have regular elections, with the outcome acceptable to the electorate (for example South Africa, Mauritius), others are in transition from dominant party systems to more diverse forms of robust party contestation (e.g. Botswana) while yet others are volatile (Zimbabwe) or dysfunctional (Madagascar).

In this context, the extent to which women MPs will be able to effect substantive representation (as opposed to descriptive or numerical representation), set agendas and be accountable to constituencies who demand gender equality depends not only on women's commitment to gender equality, but also to the extent to which the institutional settings of party and parliament allow women to engage as equal partners in the legislative and policy making process and to put women's issues on the parliamentary agenda. The nature of political parties, their openness to influence from constituencies other than deeply entrenched party elites, and the degree to which electoral manifestoes bear any relationship to policies parties pursue when in office are central. Electoral rules and systems do not only determine the outcomes of elections, but also shape processes of representation.

There are two dominant approaches to women's political participation in the region. The first focuses on access to elected office, and where that is achieved it focuses on access to decision-

making positions. The second approach focuses on agenda-setting and accountability; that is, on what women will do once they are in office. Given the disparity in representation in some countries shown in Table 3, it is understandable that issues of access dominate. However, the experience of South Africa is instructive. There, where access to office and decision-making is high, concerns have been raised in civil society about the limited nature of their impact on policies and priorities in government spending, as well as the question of whether women in office create access for civil society. A more open parliamentary process in South Africa does offer opportunities for women's organisations and NGOs to make presentations to portfolio committees but the access is created by the larger framework of participation than through increased number of women in parliament per se.

These approaches are also shaped by the institutional context for advancing women's needs and interests in the state. Some governments such as Botswana and Lesotho have departments dealing with gender, whereas South Africa has recently created a composite Ministry that deals with women, youth and people with disability. As a new structure the Ministry is still relatively weak and has not yet made appointments of staff in the gender directorate. By contrast, Mauritius has a functional gender Ministry. These institutional conditions shape the nature of access to the state. Additionally, state capacities to provide reliable empirical data for evidence-based policy-making is lacking in the region, limiting the ways in which state bureaucracies, even those dealing with gender issues, can be relied on for shaping policies. The knowledge base of how policies affect women is often more reliably determined by organisations working on the ground with communities.

Key Findings

Analysis of projects in relation to the theory of change

The two interventions studied were both undertaken by NGOs based in Johannesburg, with country level project teams working on localised activities.

- 1) Project 1: Assisting the implementation of SADC member governments' plans to end gender-based violence in their countries. This project had three key aspects: a) working with the SADC Gender Unit to develop a standard set of indicators for measuring progress in ending gender-based violence; b) monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national plans and c) an education and dissemination programme to popularise the campaign to end violence.
- 2) Project 2: Strengthening women politician's capacities to engage in advocacy and 'transformative leadership'. The main aim of the programme was to achieve higher visibility for women candidates as well as for gender platforms in elections. The project aimed to 'improve the capacity of women to participate in politics through capacity building workshops as well as the development of tools and checklists for advocacy; to raise public awareness through sustained advocacy and to create south-south learning experiences for women parliamentarians. Advocacy entailed generating positive stories about women in politics (particularly at election times) and sharing these through a variety of media from conventional print media to websites and twitter. Journalists were targeted so that they could better reflect the needs of women in reporting.

Both projects were substantial in cost and duration (three years, and eighteen months respectively).

The key successes identified by the NGOs were the following:

1. Project 1 found the partnership with UNIFEM SARO useful in identifying partners in countries in the region. The NGO also found that UNIFEM SARO assisted greatly in aligning their project with a rights-based approach to women's empowerment.

2. From a training perspective, both projects identified the importance of empowering women politicians with knowledge of governance processes. The women politicians who benefited from these projects are also better able to work with the media.
3. Both projects worked with NGOs in different countries and there was capacity building at a number of levels (that is, through mechanisms such as training of trainers and support for country teams to define specific ways in which to advance the goals of the projects).
4. An indicator was developed to measure progress towards ending violence against women; this is a unique tool in Africa. The UN Economic Commission on Africa (UNECA) has shown interest in replicating the survey used to assess prevalence in other parts of Africa.
5. The Women in Politics project was able to train journalists within the Inter-Press Service network. Journalists trained by the project are able to report on women candidates, to use gender-sensitive language and non-stereotypical modes of communication about women and to seek out women's views in reporting.
6. Both projects translated training materials into local languages.

Relevance

Both projects are well located within a broad definition of support to women in politics. The projects advance CEDAW priorities as well Millennium Development Goal 3. In general there is an awareness of the need to go 'beyond numbers' in the overall framing of the project. However, one problem with a multi-country focus is that when the broad aims are translated into local contexts, there tends to be a more simplistic understanding of the problem of women in politics that reduces to measuring how many women are in different positions of office.

In effect, the overall direction of funding has more relevance for national governments in terms of attempting to meet their numerical targets for representation than they do for women's organisations that want policy change and better delivery of services to women. This is reflected in the tendency to couch projects in terms of meeting SADC-identified goals. The advantage for UN Women is that it can avoid potentially controversial support to feminist organisations and NGOs that might be seen by governments as being too critical. In the region, the UN is seen by women's organisations as a donor that is close to government ministries and departments, rather than a funder of civil society. In this sense it is seen to be a donor that sets an agenda through international commitments, and then works through governments in ways that are not always accessible to civil society. One notable exception is the soliciting of shadow reports for CEDAW reporting, when civil society organisations can make independent assessments of government programming.

However, this government-focused approach has long-term consequences that might undermine the effectiveness of UN Women's overall goals.

There are two challenges here that need to be addressed in programming:

- a) Ensuring that political participation is understood as encompassing women at grassroots level. This requires identifying and supporting NGOs that may not be involved in providing services for government but who are articulating the needs of women in communities. It also requires a shift from questions of representation. When the HDI indicators presented in table 1 are read alongside the representation information in table 2, it is clear that the relevant question for programming should not only be 'how do we get more women into office' but 'how do we get more women into politics'. The latter question shifts the emphasis from numbers and elections to understanding politics as relating also to the capacity of women (in this case) to self-organise, to articulate their needs and interests, and to use democratic procedures to advance those interests.

- b) Incorporating strategies of accountability into programming so that the increasing numbers of women in government continue to work with constituencies of women, and male politicians are similarly held accountable to their women voters.

For these aspects of political participation and gender equality, tools need to be developed so that organisations do not fall back into easy measurements of numerical targets. One way in which to do this might be to support campaigns designed to implement specific national policies. The partnership of NGOs with regional reach has some merit of course. However, if there is limited partnership directly between UN SARO and local women's organisations there is likely to be limited gain in empowering women politically. For local women's organisations in Mauritius, Lesotho, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana (countries I was able to access through civil society) the problems relate to access to justice, poor infrastructure (especially in health and clean water delivery), and social services. These concerns are difficult to address through large regional NGOs.

It was not easy to get clarity on how funding these projects relates to an overall strategic understanding of what kinds of interventions are most likely to make a significant difference to increasing women's political participation and to the effectiveness of women politicians in elected positions. Due to a number of changes in personnel in the UN SARO office there appears to be a general weakness in planning for change consistently and proactively. The office has been hampered in South Africa by the weakness of the national gender machinery and despite some intense effort in 2010 to build a strong relationship with the new Ministry for Women, Youth and the Disabled,

Assumptions

That said, it can be argued that funding to these programmes is underpinned by an assumption that the task of gender equality in politics is primarily located in a) facilitating women's access to government office and b) equipping individual women politicians with the kinds of personal skills and knowledge that will build their confidence to participate. Project 2 goes beyond this narrower framework by addressing the cultural perceptions of women in politics that abound in the media, and to that extent it makes an important link between society and political institutions.

There is a central assumption in these projects that the barriers to women's effective participation lie in their lack of skills and abilities to negotiate the political system, and in their weaknesses in attaining chairperson position in councils. To some extent this assumption is valid of course; there is a raft of research that points to the difficulties women have in finding 'voice' once access is assured. However, the projects miss the very important gate-keeping role played by political parties. Indeed the whole question of how to democratise political parties is completely avoided. By the middle of Project 2 (Women in politics) the project team reflected that they could have paid attention to political parties; however, there was no conceptualisation of how to access parties in the inception phase.

Yet the implications of ignoring parties are major. Firstly, it takes parties at face value when they claim that they are willing to put women into senior positions 'if only they had the skills'. The history of quotas in three national and local government elections in South Africa suggests that women can be accommodated on party lists relatively easily but the price of their acceptance is their affiliation to particular factions within political parties. Secondly, the challenges of skilling women councillors are delinked from the challenges of developing long term and sustainable structures within political parties that support fair and nonviolent contestation for positions on party lists. Representation works best in multiparty systems where several parties are well-institutionalised, have clear relationships of accountability for their political actions and represent a diversity of interests. In these cases, we see evidence of the contagion effect, where constituencies of women can push parties into supporting gender equality because of the threat that they can vote for other parties (Welch and Studlar, 1988). The diversity of political parties, and not just their multiplicity, also matters. The dominance of ethnically-based and religious parties in many new democracies acts as a barrier to the gender equality agenda. As Amrita Basu (2006, p.5) shows, 'they generally do not provide women

greater access to institutional power within the party.’ The weak institutionalisation of parties is therefore a serious concern in sub-Saharan Africa, affecting the pace of democratisation in general and the extent to which women (or any new entrants) can acquire voice.

Seen from this perspective, the training of councillors is a short-term intervention that individualises empowerment. It leaves open the question of how effective this kind of training is with regard to long-term sustainable interventions.

There are limitations as well in the assumption that what is needed to advance women’s political empowerment is awareness and training. This assumption derives from the view that policy implementation follows smoothly from policy rhetoric backed up by knowledge of the scale of the problem. Without doubt it is important that there should be evidence-based policy-making and assessment. Without doubt, too, public debate about why violence against women persists is necessary and part of a broad strategy of changing existing patriarchal gender norms. However, evidence from South Africa is that broad commitments to eradicating violence are relatively easy to extract from governments and politicians. The much more difficult task lies in translating that commitment into procedures and institutions that are responsive to women who are affected by violence. In this respect, civil society organisations are less willing to spend resources on collecting statistics and much more focused on (for example) submissions to parliament committees about weaknesses in the justice system, the attitude of police officers to women complainants and the resources available for housing and counselling victims. The implication of this sustained engagement on GBV in South Africa is that it is not lack of awareness about the problem that is at the heart of the problem, but rather incapacity and unwillingness within various arms of the state at lower levels particularly to provide the proper mechanisms for women to access their rights.

Furthermore, the projects operate on a highly rational interpretation of the ways in which politics works. It is assumed that the SADC Protocol imposes an obligation on states that they are keen to meet. Project 2, for example, lists state willingness as an assumption in its logframe, and assumes that there will be ready interaction between state officials and the project teams in various countries. Research shows that government officials may be willing to address numerical targets but do not necessarily address alternative agendas. In addition, they may be quite willing to support training programmes for women councillors and MPs, but do not consider changing modes of debate and cultural stereotypes so that women can use that training to question existing hierarchies of power in councils. Creating tools to monitor levels of violence (for example) is seen by NGO 1 to create advocacy tools as well as information for governments to use in assessing progress. For SADC in particular, having comparable data could be a useful mechanism to create a ‘contagion effect’ by pushing governments into improving their statistics so that they are not embarrassed among their peers. Even given that potential effect, it is not clear whether there can be any real value in comparing data from Mozambique with that from South Africa when economic and social conditions are so different.

Furthermore, advocacy organisations in the area of violence against women find that their challenges lie less in statistics and measurement (although these are important) and more in the ability of survivors and victims of violence to access the justice system and to obtain support to become independent of abusive men (for example, by moving into shelters with their children). Thus, while it is certainly note-worthy that awareness is being raised on violence against women, the much harder tasks of building responsive systems in government is not being tackled in these projects. Rather, that task falls onto NGOs that work directly at the interface of support for victims and lobbying parliamentary committees.

It would seem from this research therefore that, if women’s political participation is to be substantively advanced, the systemic issues that retard their effectiveness need to be addressed, and the capacity to work at the coalface of policy making in government needs to be strengthened.

Sustainability

In terms of the projects studied, there is clear sustainability within the limited areas that are addressed. Training of trainers is a major component of both projects and in both cases fairly large numbers of people have been reached.

Partners have had their funding extended and the projects are seen as long term rather than once-off interventions.

However, a key area that could be strengthened is to develop the capacity of women's organisations to use democratic processes more effectively. This includes not just mobilisation for more women candidates in elections, but also better information about how laws are made, how to use public participation processes and how to articulate needs in policy terms. In other words, the notion of the political sphere needs to be expanded to include not just the formal structures of the state but also the interface between the state and citizens.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

It is striking that in both projects efficiency was hampered by the delays in transferring funds from UNIFEM to the NGOs. The delays that resulted significantly affected their ability to get the project off the ground in a number of countries. Rapid staff turnover in UN SARO might be part of the problem; however, it seems that the heavy requirements of administrative reporting also pose problems for partners. Both NGOs were able to work through such delays and impositions, but smaller women's organisations may well find themselves in a position where they cannot sustain their programmes because their energies are directed at the donor.

External factors also impacted on the projects, such as logistical difficulties with regard to transport, poor communications infrastructure in the region and poor electricity supply. One problem reported was that politicians are often unreliable (especially if they are senior politicians) and tend to pull out of scheduled training or not show up at the last minute.

National governments also delayed one project through slowness in creating the co-ordination mechanisms that enabled the project to proceed.

Implications for Theory of Change

1. The notion of women's political empowerment in the region is still tied to a formalistic understanding of increasing women's access to elected office, and to working with governments to measure progress on policy commitments. While these activities are important, they neglect a key finding of gender research: governments succeed in advancing equality and improving the conditions of women's lives when there is a strong civil society that is able to hold various tiers of elected government accountable.
2. In the absence of strong civil society, governments will set their own targets for progress (that may not necessarily be relevant) that are relatively easily identified. More difficult aspects of democratisation such as more open and diverse political parties, and empowered local communities of women, may not develop.
3. Although there is recognition of the importance of shifting from numerical measures of political participation to substantive interventions in a range of UN strategic plans, this recognition is not translated into programming. Rather, as the discussion above shows, programming falls back into the more easily measured indicators of success in funding women's political empowerment. This is not to suggest that programming should not address the representation question. However, in terms of long term sustainability, it would be logical for support to be extended for a more expansive notion of empowerment.
4. Funding for training of journalists is to be encouraged in the southern African context. This kind of support will make a dent in the deeply intractable social stereotyping of women as not fit for politics. It also has the further consequence of building the public sphere and opening questions about cultural norms.

5. The tendency to defer to government priorities means that small civil society organisations that may not necessarily focus on SADC-related activities are left out of the funding loop.
6. Programming appears to be responding to applications from NGOs rather than strategically soliciting applications that are framed in terms of empowerment of ordinary women to change political hierarchies and policy priorities in the direction of more responsive governance.
7. As a regional office, it seems easier for support to be given to large NGOs with a regional network. This seems in line with a bias to appear to be spreading resources adequately across the partner countries, rather than favouring one or other country. Unfortunately, it also results in programming that lacks depth and impact.
8. There is a gap in commitment to gender programming in the regional office, possibly as a result of major institutional shifts with the formation of UN Women, and high staff turnover. The Regional Director is highly committed, but is hampered by capacity constraints. Whatever the reasons, the poor attention to gender in the office limits its ability to act strategically.
9. This suggests that improving the capacity of the SARO office with regard to gender programming is urgently needed.

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Hon Mary Elias, Member of the gender committee in the South Sudan legislative assembly.

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Gudrun Fridriksdottir, UN Women.

Angie Grace and Frank Phillip, International Republic Institute

Sarah James, Sudan Women's Association

Ulrika Josefsson, SIDA.

Alfred Lukoji, University of Juba.

Jok Madut Jok, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Culture.

Edla Muga, Norwegian People's Association.

Deborah Ongewe, UN Women.

Lilian Riziq, South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network.

Dan Ryan, PACT International.

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Focus Group Discussions:

Focus group with grassroots women (seven women in Juba market)

Focus group with young women ((4 women at the Women's Union aged between 20-24) working in civil society organisations)

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