

MEASURING AND ASSESSING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

PANAMA, 10-11 JUNE 2010

WORKSHOP REPORT



Kuna woman and her handcraft products, Panama city, Panama



Parliamentary session at the National Assembly, Managua, Nicaragua

DISCLAIMER

The contents of this workshop report are based on discussions with UNDP staff and national partners from Latin America and the Caribbean during the two days of the workshop. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme, its Executive Board or the United Nations member states.

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INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Regional Background:

Latin American countries are celebrating two centuries of independent rule. Their path to development, despite such a relatively long history, has not followed a progressive line up to what today could be defined as a modern democratic state, namely a democratically legitimized political and geopolitical entity *and* a legally organized and accountable bureaucracy with public sector serving the general interest and its citizens. Although Latin America and the Caribbean have made significant progress in terms of democratic governance in the last three decades (the 2009 Millennium Development Goals Report states that Latin America and the Caribbean are leaders among the developing regions in several aspects of democratic governance such as the political representation of women), the region seems to have entered an ill-defined transition period with a search for changes or reforms. LAC is a heterogeneous region, with important differences between the geographical sub-regions [Mexico, Central-America, Spanish, French and English speaking Caribbean, South-America], and even between the countries within these sub-regions. But they all share high levels of inequalities which, in certain areas, threaten social and political stability. In most of these countries there is a demand for change in the political, economic, social, cultural and ethnical spheres. Regardless of economic development, the new generations of Latin Americans feel that the model of the state, society and the economy could be different, that it would be possible to fight insecurity and crime more effectively, that the public institutions are too fragile and the law states incomplete or discriminatory, that regional integration could follow another course, and that the representativeness, effectiveness and legitimacy of their democracies require improvements. At this historical turning point for the region – after the transition from authoritarianism to democracy and depletion of the structural reforms encouraged under the Washington Consensus –, the way in which progress is made in strengthening the political institutions and solving equity issues will determine to a large extent the possibilities of this turning moment to become a path of renewal for democracy and development. The principal challenge of democracy here is to increase the political system's response capacity in order to satisfy citizen's demands, needs and expectations.

UNDP has been recognized for providing innovative and cutting edge analysis on democracy and human development in the region including the seminal 2005 publication "Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy." UNDP aims to contribute to the region's efforts to strengthen democracy and its institutions, consolidate the rule of law and promote the participation of members of society, notably through knowledge management, including promoting inclusive participation (especially for women, young people, persons with disabilities, people of African descent and indigenous groups), and strengthening government institutions so as to ensure better conditions for human development.

In this context, the inclusive approach offered by country-led governance assessments provides a privileged way to facilitate a deepening of Latin America's democratization process. The value of a country-led governance assessment is that it serves as a critical accountability and transparency mechanism for governance performance. Democratic governance is more likely to be sustained if targets for attainment and expectations of how governments should perform are formulated by those

who live within the political system. When local actors participate in the assessment process, it stimulates their demand for governance information and a demand for greater accountability from government. For country-led assessments to provide more depth into a particular policy issue, UNDP emphasizes that they must integrate a focus on marginalized and vulnerable groups. Country-specific and disaggregated indicators will help identify specific institutions and practices that perpetuate unfair and sub-standard provision of services to these groups.

For example, the support to Paraguay through the Democratic Governance Trust Fund (2008-2009) resulted in the development of an assessment framework of 19 indicators as a policy-making tool for the government with a multi-stakeholder and consensus-building approach. The particular relevance of the country-led governance assessments approach in the LAC region was highlighted again when 17 COs in the LAC region submitted proposals to the UNDP Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments in 2008. While only 4 country assessment projects could be directly supported in the region (Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua and Barbados & Eastern Caribbean), the 2009 Project Board Meeting for the Global Programme concluded that a regional workshop on country-led governance assessments for LAC was a top priority.¹

A joint OGC-RBLAC initiative:

This workshop on assessing democratic governance in Latin America and the Caribbean was elaborated as the starting point of a joint initiative between the Oslo Governance Centre and the Regional Bureau to support governance assessments in the region more strategically and systematically.

The **Oslo Governance Centre (OGC)** was established in 2002 as part of the decentralisation of knowledge development services within UNDP. A unit of the Democratic Governance Group in the Bureau for Development Policy, the OGC is a global thematic facility designed to work with both UNDP policy specialists and external partners to assist developing countries in finding their own solutions to the challenges of governance facing them. The Centre has a special focus in addressing new and emerging areas of democratic governance and in building the capacity of UNDP's front-line staff to address these new challenges. The **Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments** managed by the OGC develops knowledge and provides support to regions and countries based on a country-led approach to governance assessments. It offers guidance, technical assistance and financial support aimed at strengthening national capacity to conduct democratic governance assessments, driven by the principle that a nationally-owned assessment mechanism is in itself a sustainable democratization process. It operates through three windows: a global, a regional and a country window.

Through its **Regional Centre in Panama**, UNDP's **Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC)** offers support to Country Offices to strengthen their capacity in project management, and to endorse the creation of strategic alliances and distribution of knowledge in high-priority areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Centre is a regional hub for development knowledge and expertise, providing policy advisory and capacity development services across UNDP's core mandates of supporting MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction, Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention & Recovery, and Energy, Environment for Sustainable Development, with gender,

¹ In an open call for country support through the global programme the LAC region submitted more proposals than any other region (17 out of 40 in total). For more information on the activities of the current 4 beneficiary countries please see http://www.gaportal.org/undp-supported-initiatives?field_undp_projects_country_value_many_to_one=All

HIV issues and the human rights based approach to development mainstreamed into these core mandates. Additionally, the Regional Centre Office in Port of Spain is also consolidated to fortify the capacity of governments and communities to promote sustainable development and to support the completion of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the workshop were

- ✓ To take stock of UNDP's efforts to assess democratic governance in LAC within the overall assessments landscape in the region, and to explore ways to increase the particular relevance and impact of UNDP's support to countries in this area
- ✓ To determine specific needs of countries (including and beyond the ones currently supported through the global programme) and how assessments can play a role in the larger democratic governance reform context supported by UNDP
- ✓ To promote intra-regional as well as cross-regional fertilization on democratic governance assessments practices
- ✓ To identify operational follow-up mechanisms for an expansion, increased effectiveness and sustainability of democratic governance assessment processes in the region

3. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The workshop targeted primarily the direct practitioners of governance assessments from UNDP Country Offices as well as governments and other relevant national institutions in Latin America and Caribbean countries.

For practical and budgetary reasons, not all countries of the region could be invited, but a representative group of countries was selected. These included the countries that had already received support from UNDP for a past or on-going country-led governance assessment project, so they could share the lessons learned from their experience with the others, but also countries with less experience in the field. Governance practitioners from UNDP COs as well as national partners from each of the selected countries participated in the workshop. The 10 countries represented were Argentina, Barbados & Eastern Caribbean, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, El-Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay.

The complete list of participants and their contact information can be found in Annex 2 at the end of this report.



Panama, 10 June 2010, group photo - see the list of participants in Annex 2

WORKSHOP MINUTES

SESSION 1: OPENING

Beat Rohr, Director of the Panama Regional Centre for LAC, Alvaro Pinto, Governance Coordinator for RBLAC, and Myriam Mendez-Montalvo, Accountability Adviser for UNDP's Democratic Governance Group (DGG), welcomed participants and opened the workshop on behalf of the hosting and organizing institutions.

Apart from recalling their respective institutions' mandates within UNDP's work, and stressing the importance of achieving the above-listed workshop objectives, the three speakers highlighted the following points:

- **Unequal value of governance assessments:** Although more and more governance indicators are being developed in and out of the UN, this profusion of indicators is not linked to an improvement in governance or in human development, in other words not all assessments of democracy have the capacity to influence actions. Rather than making lists of things that *should* be done, assessments should be used to find out and bring to light causal relations and facts on the impacts of specific policies.
- **Value of country-led governance assessments:** UNDP believes that a nationally owned governance assessment, when conducted successfully, can serve to strengthen democratic governance at the country level. The workshop should highlight what UNDP has been doing in the LAC region and more importantly what we can do in the future to support ongoing and new initiatives that seek to strengthen accountability lines in countries.
- **UNDP's niche:** UNDP has a comparative advantage in the region as a privileged interlocutor for change with a wide range of national stakeholders. It is crucial to develop its work in strategic niches such as governance assessments. This workshop will bring great added value if it shows that the alternative offered by UNDP on democratic governance assessments is useful for UNDP's country-based work in general and links governance work to all human development areas. This is why one of its key objectives is to forge a UNDP niche and unique identity on country-led governance assessments for LAC.
- **Enhancing cross-practice work:** this workshop on governance assessments and its outcomes will be an important input not just regarding UNDP's democratic governance work, but also for the other areas of practice in the region. Coordinators for other practices at the Regional Centre have thus been invited to participate in the workshop.
- **Reaching better to COs:** UNDP COs are the main clients of the Regional Centre, and it is important to reach them better and in a more integrated cross-practice manner.
- This workshop should not be an end in itself, but a means to identify needs for strategic support to COs, and how governance assessments can help COs better design and assess the impact of their DG work in general.
- **Learning lessons from experience:** Participants are encouraged to speak openly and frankly so that lessons can be learned from what worked but also what didn't work, in order to find out what should be done better. It is important that participants express their concerns freely so that HQ and regional services to COs can be improved.
- **Developing regional and cross-regional network:** in addition to cross-practice work within the LAC region, and to strengthening a regional network of colleagues and experts on governance assessments, this workshop should be used as a starting point to exchange and network more pro-actively with colleagues from other regions.



← *Beat Rohr, Director of the Panama Regional Service Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean*



Alvaro Pinto, Governance → Coordinator, RBLAC



← *Myriam Mendez-Montalvo, Accountability Adviser, DGG*



Joachim Nahem, Manager → of the Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments

SESSION 2: WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES AND PARTICIPANTS EXPECTATIONS

Participants briefly introduced themselves to each other and shared their main expectations from this workshop. These included:

- *A cross-area perspective:* representatives of other areas and groups (capacity development, gender, etc.) from the Regional Centre were present, and expressed their interest in the theme of governance assessments, and how it related to their specific areas of work. They were concerned that the discussion on governance assessments would take dimensions such as gender, capacity development and relation to poverty reduction and MDGs into account.
- *Learn from other countries:* Participants from countries or COs who did not yet have any experience in country-led governance assessments expressed high interest in learning from the experiences of the countries who did, to understand what it is all about and how they could implement this approach back home.
- *Adjust ongoing projects:* Participants who were already in the process of implementing a UNDP-supported country-led governance assessment expressed their interest in adjusting their ongoing project based on lessons, advice received and new ideas learned from the workshop.
- *Go beyond the workshop:* All participants hope that the workshop will not be an end in itself but a means for creating new projects back home, using ideas and the network created between colleagues and partners.
- *Use it for NHDRs:* Some of the COs represented are preparing a National Human Development Report (NHDR) on a governance-related theme, and hope that the workshop will help them to use governance assessments more strategically within the NHDR preparation.

In response to participants' expectations and as a presentation of the workshop's agenda, Elizabeth Arciniegas from the Virtual School (Escuela Virtual) clarified the workshop objectives and explained that it was not a training workshop as such, but rather a regional exchange or encounter with two main learning dimensions:

1. Listening to other countries' experiences and exchanging views and practices (Day 1)
2. Learning country-led governance assessments principles and putting them into practice (Day 2)

SESSION 3: OVERVIEW OF RECENT AND ONGOING EXPERIENCES IN MEASURING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN THE LAC REGION

Professor Gerardo Munck presented the background paper prepared for the workshop (see *Democratic Governance Assessments in Latin America and the Caribbean: An overview and some proposals*² by Gerardo L. Munck).

Among other highlights of the paper's findings, he outlined the distinctions between the different assessment initiatives reviewed based on their methodology, their purpose, the leadership and ownership of the assessment, the type of data used and the production or non-production of new data by and for the assessment. Important remarks include:

- **Methodology vs. goal of the assessment:** The constant generation of methodology on governance assessments by different sources has both advantages (such as offering multiple options for carrying out different types of assessments) and disadvantages (such as creating confusion). Before undertaking any assessment process the first question to answer is what the goal of the assessment is. All existing methodologies have been designed with a certain goal in mind. Even within the LAC region, the goals of different recent or current assessment projects differ greatly.
- **Assessment “by whom” and “why”?** As above-mentioned the goal of the assessment is a determining element, and so is the leadership, the “who” of the assessment. No assessment initiative or assessment tool should be considered without asking these two questions first.
- **Limited scope of some assessments:** Several regional and sub-regional governance assessment experiences focus mostly on the legal aspects of democracy – these are of course important but provide only a very limited picture of democratic governance in the countries assessed.
- **Poor quality of some data:** The quality of the data used for assessments is unequal, and thus data should never be taken for granted. The high **disaggregation** of data is one of the conditions of its quality.
- **Importance of data production:** Some projects use only existing data, and some include the generation of data. The production of own data by the country or the entity that leads the assessment is crucial for the ownership of the assessment project. This is still very rare – in the initiatives reviewed, it seems that Paraguay is the only country which has actually produced data for its assessment, and thus has the highest ownership of the assessment.
- **UNDP's position:** an important target for UNDP is the **institutionalization** of governance assessments, as it is in a privileged position to work on this key part of the assessment process, without which the whole assessment remains only an academic or a punctual exercise. More generally, UNDP has its own role to play in the current burning conceptual debate on governance assessments in LAC and globally.
- **Beyond the desk study:** The desk study conducted for the background paper helped highlight some aspects of these assessment initiatives, but a closer look at the concrete implementation process and results of these projects is needed, so as to learn concrete lessons from them. This is precisely the aim of this workshop – and the direct exchange process it aims to launch.

The presentation was followed by a rich debate, of which some points are summarized below:

- **Moving from “what to do” to “how to do it”:** While the paper provided a good insight in existing initiatives and on what should be done to make governance assessments more successful (for

² The paper is freely downloadable online on the Governance Assessments Portal: www.gaportal.org/support/workshops/panama2010.

example producing better quality, disaggregated data in-country, increasing ownership, institutionalizing the assessment processes, etc.), the important question of *HOW* to do it remains. → To answer this question it is crucial that countries establish a systematic mechanism for exchanging good practices.

- **The indices debate:** The participants had diverging views on the “hot” issue of indices:
 - The latter are highly criticized because of the simplification of reality and the usual lack of disaggregation that they imply.
 - However, some experiences have shown that indices can capture reality, such as the work on the climate change index that clearly reflects the phenomenon and helps make an evidence-based point on climate change. Another interesting case is the current debate on re-thinking the HDI and creating an alternative one, including region-specific HDIs...
 - In-country indices can be more useful than global or regional indices (ex: Indonesia³).
 - But the defiance towards indices in general remains, even at the country level in certain cases: the example of Mexico shows that a multiplicity of indices at the country level does not necessarily provide useful information, and that fully disaggregated data is more relevant to evidence-based policy making.→ In fact, the question of *how* the data is obtained, its quality and the level of disaggregation it allows is more fundamental than the question of using an index or not.
- **Increasing country-led data production:** The importance of generating and owning data at the country level for the assessment has been taken into account in the design of projects supported through the Global Programme. Some of the countries which are currently implementing a UNDP-supported governance assessment are precisely in the process of producing data through different means – these include Chile and Barbados for example. Others, such as Nicaragua, have not been able to include the generation of new data in their project due to insufficient funding, but also political sensitivity.
→ UNDP should continue its efforts to support the increase of country-led data production.
- **The issue of political sensitivity of governance assessments:** Several LAC countries are concerned by the fact that their complex, polarized and sensitive political context makes governance assessments appear as a threat to governments. For example, in Bolivia, certain governance-related issues are polemic, such as the issue of freedom of expression. In Nicaragua, uttering the word “governance” is in itself sensitive. This is why the project implemented there is strategically called “information system” rather than “governance assessment”, to make progress in the definition of indicators possible while avoiding dealing explicitly with “governance” as such. In general, since the country-led governance assessment approach inevitably implies or promotes freedom of the media, transparency and wide stakeholder participation, it is important to take this question of political sensitivity and political impact of governance assessments seriously.
→ A key argument to consider is the following: “if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it!”
In other words, assessments can be an important tool for governments to identify problems and manage them better. The data generated and analyzed through the assessment can be used to make a point, to identify a problem based on evidence and not just impressions or overall opinions, to make a credible diagnosis of the state of a country in a certain area. In the example of Mongolia, the national consensus on creating an MDG-9 on governance shows that it was considered relevant by all parties, regardless of the specific results of the assessments. In the LAC region, Chile offers another interesting example of consensus on the assessment process.

³ For more information on the Indonesia Democracy Index see the GAP presentation attached to this report as well as www.gaportal.org/undp-supported/indonesia.

- About public opinion surveys:** The countries reviewed in the paper and represented at the workshop offer different views on public opinion surveys. While the Paraguayan assessment project was mainly based on public opinion surveys, the Mexican team remarks that these surveys are totally subjective and can't measure many elements of democratic governance, and justifies its decision to leave any opinion-based indicators out of the current assessment initiative in Mexico.

→ It is worth noting that there are many innovative and efficient ways to consult the public on relevant governance issues, such as citizens score cards, or public surveys that are not necessarily opinion surveys but rather experience-based.

→ It is for each country or project to decide, according to the specific aim and scope of the assessment, if it is relevant to use these means or not. This comes back to this central question for any assessment: the question of what type of data is wanted and how it will be obtained.
- “Gobernanza” or “governabilidad”?**

Although the word “governabilidad” is the most commonly used Spanish translation for “governance” in the UNDP context, it is clearly governance or “gobernanza” which is measured here – much more broadly than just the government as such, it is the way of governing at all levels of the State and society. However, political conditions play a role and are to be taken into account in any governance assessment process.



Prof. Gerardo → Munck presents his paper on democratic governance assessments in LAC



Participants reflect on the paper and presentation.

Above (left to right): Erica Machado (UNDP Brazil), Gerardo Noto (RBLAC), and Marcela Smutt (UNDP El Salvador)

Hereunder left: Gerardo Berthin (Panama RSC); right: Dr Georges Belle (University of the West Indies) and Paula Mohamed (UNDP Barbados & Eastern Caribbean)



SESSIONS 4 & 5: LEARNING LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELD

The countries which are already conducting country-led governance assessments shared their experience in detail with all participants, in two roundtable sessions which allowed getting deeper into each country experience and exchanging views and ideas on them. The following paragraphs only outline the most interesting characteristics of each country-led assessment and some of the points of comparison that were raised during these two sessions:

Barbados & Eastern Caribbean:

- The first country-led governance assessment experience in the Caribbean islands, this project is pioneer in several ways. As Barbados & the Eastern Caribbean cover several sovereign nations, it is in fact a sub-regional project, with the ambition to help defining democratic governance in the island context. It is thus a pilot initiative meant to refine existing approaches and methodologies on governance assessments for Caribbean small island developing states (SIDS).
- The leadership of a local, recognized and independent academic institution (the University of the West Indies - UWI) ensures the local ownership of the assessment, its technical quality through a multi-disciplinary research cluster, and its inclusivity through wide stakeholder consultations convened at the University. It also aims to guarantee the sustainability of the assessment process, as the University plays the role of repository of the data generated by the assessment, thus “protecting” it from political changes.
- A wide range of techniques will be used, inspired by modern data collection methods and adapted to the local context – these include focus groups, opinion pools, town hall meetings etc.
- The communication strategy has been thought through as an integral part of the assessment, whose process and results will be publicly disseminated through the UWI’s website and other means.
- The country-led governance assessment process, in the Caribbean SIDS context, can also act as a conflict prevention mechanism (example of Jamaica)

Mexico:

- This project comes to fill a conspicuous absence of information to evaluate the performance of the States, which are gaining more and more autonomy in the Mexican context. Thus data production is its central preoccupation. To achieve this essential output of generating new data, the assessment team has created groups who will work on different sectors of local governance (education, health, citizens’ security, etc.), and embarked on an ambitious nationwide data collection project.
- The variables to be informed with the new data were selected through a participatory process which involved several NGOs as well as governmental institutions.
- Although governmental entities are involved in the assessment process as partners, the fact that it is lead by a non-governmental institution (CIDE) gives it more independence and flexibility for the project team to develop an assessment framework and generate “neutral” data.
- A pro-active communication strategy is being adopted throughout the assessment process, which is completely publicly available and interactive through CIDE’s website, blogs and the use of different new and social media.
- The institutionalization of the assessment remains its main challenge. Although it is indispensable for the assessment results to be systematically used, it is delicate as the political context is complex and the States governments are changing.

Chile:

- The most striking aspect of this project is that it brings together representatives from the whole Chilean political spectrum, and thus functions as an efficient means of political dialogue. The mixed political/academic leadership of this assessment process, involving think tanks of different political allegiances with UNDP facilitation is its strength. Even after the change of government in Chile the assessment team members seem committed to the process.
- Chile is using the IDEA framework for its governance assessment process and finds it extremely clear and helpful to structure the assessment.
- The biggest added-value of UNDP lies in the fact that it is the only institution that could have provided the “locus” for all these actors with diverging political views to sit together – just that made the whole difference for the success of the project.
- The Chilean democracy is being increasingly criticized from inside the country, but without precise facts to help put one’s finger on what exactly causes the general malaise. This assessment aims to change this by creating very concrete indicators and sharing them widely. Bringing solid facts to the table for discussion even helps thwart high political polarization.
- Although the assessment process involved both political and academic actors, one regret is that it could have been even more inclusive since the beginning, with more citizens’ consultations.

Paraguay:

- Paraguay completed a national governance assessment project in 2009, whose full report has been officially published and disseminated.⁴
- The assessment process created an opening for dialogue that was absent before, and was successful in bringing together all sectors of power including the government, the Congress’ deputies, as well as academic institutions and civil society organizations.
- It contributed to the debate on governance in the country with concrete indicators and data, and gave the Congress and government a tool for analysis and identification of issues.
- Its main challenge lies in the follow-up or second phase *after* the initial project. The purpose of the assessment process was to repeat the data collection exercise on a regular basis – in this case every one or two years. Now at the time of planning for the second assessment, it seems that the national ownership or buy-in of the project has weakened, notably after a change of government. If the political will and the government’s funding or co-funding of the second assessment phase is missing, the risk is that this assessment which was initially successful in generating dialogue will lose its impact and utility.

Nicaragua:

- The most original aspect of this project is that it is led from within the National Assembly of Nicaragua. It is part of a wider UNDP-supported project of modernization of the National Assembly, directed by the President of the Assembly himself. The sub-project on indicators is led by a technical commission of the Assembly headed by one of the Deputies. This ensures a high level of ownership and institutionalization of the project inside the State apparatus, all the more interesting that the legislative is progressively gaining significant influence in Nicaragua.
- In spite of being conducted inside the National Assembly in the politically polarized Nicaraguan context, the assessment process is performed by a technical unit (the public expenditure monitoring unit) which is very protective of its “technical” label and thus avoids any political dependence and ensures sustainability through political changes.

⁴ The Paraguay Governance Indicators report is available on the Governance Assessment Portal: gaportal.org/sites/default/files/Publicación%20de%20Indicadores%20Gobernabilidad%20Democratica.pdf

- The aim is to come up with a complete set of indicators, focused mostly on the economic and social sectors as first phase, to empower the National Assembly by giving it its own tools of analysis of national expenditures, independent from the government's official data.
- This interesting choice of assessment process leadership doesn't come without several challenges: in spite of the "technical" label of the public expenditure monitoring unit, the selection of indicators depends on the approval of the Deputies and therefore leaves out some politically sensitive issues.
- Another challenge is the integration of more actors in the assessment process. Certain non-governmental academic actors have been involved, but many civil society organizations are not welcome by the project leadership who doesn't want the process to be "polluted" by the high political polarization reflected in civil society as well as political parties.
- Dissemination of the assessment's results and communication in general is another challenge, as the media, again, reproduce the high political polarization.

Bolivia:

- So far Bolivia has not implemented a country-led governance assessment project as such, but it shared its experience in the project of construction of an index for assessing governance at the municipal level, as well as with PAPEP (Political Analysis and Prospective Scenarios Project).
- Bolivia faced a political crisis in 2000/2001, which motivated the eventual start of the political analysis project. The latter focused on actors of the political system, and identified their different roles – for instance the church appeared to have a mediation role, etc.
- Communication is a challenge. The information generated by the PAPEP was sensitive and could not be made public. There is a strategic use of information based on what can be published and what shouldn't. However, the need to provide solid information for decision making remains pressing.
- A "flash" public opinion survey was conducted in 2007 with the beginning of the new presidency.
- A country-led governance assessment would be useful at this point to provide more systematic information to the government for evidence-based decision-making, and to open up the assessment process. Although they are two different approaches, possible synergies between PAPEP and a country-led governance assessment could be mutually enriching.

El Salvador:

- Similarly to Bolivia, El Salvador is implementing a PAPEP.
- The national counterpart of UNDP is the national Presidential Office.
- Like other LAC countries represented, notably Nicaragua and Bolivia, El Salvador faces the problem of high political polarization as an issue for any assessment tentative. Hence, the process of convening different stakeholders around a table is perhaps more important than the results of an assessment. Opening the discussion has value in itself, even if it is hard to come to any agreement on the contents.
- A key challenge for governance assessments, from the point of view of the national counterparts, is the question of how to increase the public relevance of the assessment, to make the context relevant and usable for the government and for opening the discussion to the public at the same time.

Discussions in these two sessions were extremely rich as all the countries represented in the workshop reacted to the presentation of the other's experiences and discussed similarities and differences between them. Here are a few **highlights from the comparisons drawn during these discussions:**

- Although the entry points for the different UNDP-supported country-led governance assessment experiences (Barbados, Mexico, Chile, Paraguay, and Nicaragua) differ significantly, the intended outcomes are similar – opening dialogue between stakeholders on governance issues that matter at the national level, empowering strategic institutions through giving them the means to produce information, bringing concrete facts to the table to enlighten the national debate.
- Countries with very different backgrounds, sizes, demography, economic context etc. can still learn from each other. For example, Mexico and Barbados found similarities in that both projects are led by independent academic think tanks, and deal with local governance issues (even if Barbados & Eastern Caribbean actually deals with different island-countries). They will remain in contact after the workshop to use each other’s good practices in their ongoing projects. Chile is also interested in learning from these two experiences to work more on local governance, as a means to fill the democracy gap it is trying to deal with.
- Mexico and Chile provide an example of “reverse” processes but similar problematic: the Chilean assessment started from a problem in the practice of democracy (the social malaise that contrasted with apparently exemplary democratic institutions), which stimulated a questioning on its institutions, while the Mexican initiative was motivated by a problem at the institutional level (the lack of clarity on the functions and services provided by the States), and the need to transfer institutions in construction to concrete practice. But in spite of this reverse process, it is interesting to note that the problematic remains the same – an issue of accountability.
- UNDP’s role is precisely to make this link between the institutions and the practice of democracy, and country-led governance assessments help define the lines of accountability to achieve this.
- The problem of high political polarization is one of the principal challenges identified by most LAC countries, but more prominently by Bolivia, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It is a great risk to the assessment process, and specific thought needs to be further developed on how to conduct relevant and useful governance assessments in LAC countries with this type of political context.
- A clarification: PAPEP, although a type of assessment (political analysis), is very different from the country-led governance assessments approach. PAPEP seeks to analyze the power relations between actors in a country and produces confidential reports, while country-led governance assessments are, on the opposite, processes that require open communication because they are meant to act as accountability mechanisms by themselves. However, the results from the regional PAPEP initiative in LAC countries are useful information to be considered when making choices on governance assessment processes, and reciprocally information generated through a governance assessment can enrich political analysis. Synergies between these two different approaches should be explored to ensure a more consistent UNDP delivery to LAC countries.
(From the countries present at the workshop, those included in the PAPEP network are Argentina, Bolivia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Paraguay.)



SESSION 6: SUMMARY OF DAY 1 - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Joachim Nahem, Manager of the Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments, summarized day 1 and announced day 2 by outlining 3 main challenges and 3 strategic opportunities that seemed to stand out during the first part of the workshop:

3 Challenges:

- 1. Communication:** The analysis of governance runs the risk of becoming an elite's discussion because of the vocabulary and technical methods used. It is thus critical to seek concrete answers to the following questions: How can governance assessments be communicated? How can we make people aware of the issues at stake in governance assessments and the importance of their process and results? How should the media and citizens be involved? How can we make governance assessments publicly relevant and more "attractive", to ensure they have an impact on governments and bring change?
- 2. Institutionalization:** Governance assessments risk losing their impact over time if they are not kept in institutional memory and systematized at the institutional level. How can this be done effectively, to ensure the durability of the assessment process?
- 3. Choice of key actors:** Selecting the most relevant actors and stakeholders for a governance assessment is a challenge to be apprehended seriously. The examples discussed from Latin America and the Caribbean have shown a certain tension between the necessity to implicate political actors, who tend to change frequently, and the need for the institutional durability of the assessment. The guideline here is to implicate persons who will feel ownership for the assessment, either as the leaders or as main counterparts of the assessment process. Each country has to find its own dynamic to select the appropriate mode of implementation (direct or national execution, etc.), while keeping in mind the sustainability of the projects beyond project cycles and government changes.

3 Opportunities:

- 1. A regional learning network:** This workshop is an opportunity to learn from others, from the similarities and differences between the countries of the region. The discussions have shown that there is a lot to be exchanged and learned, and have thus made obvious the need for a regional network on governance assessments. We need to think of how to create and maintain such a network.
- 2. UNDP's niche:** There is international competition in the governance assessment field (World Bank, Transparency International and others). Discussions here have begun to outline UNDP's added value, but its specific niche needs to be further defined. This workshop is an opportunity for us to analyze our strengths and weaknesses and answer the question of how to make our work more relevant and attractive to governments.
- 3. Ownership:** Who owns the assessment? Is it UNDP, its national partners, or the citizens of the country? What happens to assessments beyond projects and programmes, and the question of their public ownership is also an issue to be addressed in the following sessions.

Day 2 brings the opportunity to further comprehend and learn how some of the above questions can be answered, and to apply what has been discussed through group exercises including the design of a mock assessment and the expression of specific needs for support and follow up.

SESSION 7: UNDP’S APPROACH TO COUNTRY-LED GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENTS

Joachim Nahem presented the key principles, main operational features and step-by-step process of country-led governance assessments, thus answering some of the participants’ concerns on how these assessments should be designed and conducted in an effective way.⁵

He also presented the case of **Mongolia**, which offers an example of a successful, institutionalized and repeated assessment.

The participants were also shown how to navigate on the **Governance Assessment Portal (GAP)** www.gaportal.org, where they can find a mine of resources to help them in each step of their governance assessment work, including a “How to” section, Users’ Guides on governance indicators and others on specific aspects of governance (corruption, local governance, etc.), regional and country initiatives, specific assessment tools, thematic pages, as well as latest news on governance assessments from diverse organizations worldwide.

Although the whole Portal is not yet in Spanish, several of its resources are.

Resources in Spanish can be found on this page: <http://gaportal.org/recursos-en-espanol>

News in Spanish can be found on this page: http://gaportal.org/support/news_stories?tid=spanish

Regional page for LAC: <http://gaportal.org/regional-initiatives/latin-america-and-caribbean>

Direct access to LAC news: http://www.gaportal.org/support/news_stories?tid=latin%20america

What about governance assessment failures?

→ Out of 16 countries currently implementing a country-led governance assessment project with the support of the Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments, about half have had somewhat “turbulent” roads through the different steps of the assessment process, and “trouble-shooting” is part of the daily work of the governance assessments team at the Oslo Governance Centre. Even when projects have been carefully conceived, specific challenges can always appear, for example if key people from the Country Office or national partner’s office leave, or if the government’s buy-in is not as high as expected, etc. A change of partner for the leadership of the assessment has sometimes been necessary.

→ Different types of challenges and impasses can turn up on the way of a country-led assessment process, and it is important to document these obstacles and the “bad practices” as much as the good practices, so as to constantly learn lessons from experience and refine the approach.



⁵ This presentation of UNDP’s Global Programme on country-led governance assessments is available on the Portal’s workshop page www.gaportal.org/support/workshops/panama2010.

SESSION 8: DESIGNING COUNTRY-LED GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENTS

During this exercise (see fictional case study and exercise instructions in Annex 3), participants had the opportunity to sit in small groups and take the time to discuss what choices they would make for the design of a specific governance assessment project in a LAC country.

Groups' debates and diverse results reflected some of the issues and dilemmas practitioners face when designing an assessment, such as the choice of who leads the assessment (government or independent academic entity? etc.), what the best entry point would be, how the assessment could be made inclusive and participatory while avoiding political risks, if and how the political and the technical sides of the assessment should be combined, etc.

The main recommendations that came out of this exercise are included in the “Main conclusions and recommendations” of this report.



Above (left to right): Francisco Diaz (Chile), Julian Bertranou (Argentina) and Ricardo Yorg (Paraguay) report on their respective groups' conclusions about the fictional governance assessment design.

Hereunder (left to right): Luis Bravo (Nicaragua) reports his groups' findings; Claudia Melim-McLeod (OGC), co-organizer of the workshop, and Luz Rincon (Escuela Virtual), facilitator.



SESSIONS 9 & 10: IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO NEEDS FOR UNDP SUPPORT IN THE REGION

The participants, national partners in one group, UNDP staff in the other, discussed to identify

- the FUNDING issue identified as a primary challenge, especially as generation of new data is costly (public surveys etc even publication, dissemination...)
- need to do for more funds-raising (when clear added value for the project (ex: Nicaragua) UNDP track funds, to be completed with further funds-raising)
- Problem: LAC is always last in funds allocation, even though there are clear needs...would there be a possibility for more resources?
- When multi-donors: problem of heavy procedures, reporting...
-
- capacity issue as well more generally beyond just the funds – in-country human resources and technical capacities (ex: Nicaragua: lack of in-country capacities, hard to get 3 offers when advertise for designing assessment framework or training for the national partner from in-country)
need for institutional capacity assessments first
- technical support from OGC very helpful, appreciated
more generally it has proved very useful to consult, exchange, receive technical assistance from different sources (ex: Chile: OGC and IDEA → double conversation very useful + also feedback from different places in the world with this type of experience → questions from national partners were answered)
Barbados: having international support clearly boosted the project
IDEA framework seems interesting (from Chile expce) → others might be interested to use it in similar joint ventures OGC-IDEA
- EL-Salvador and Bolivia would be interested in doing UNDP-supported country-led governance assessments (opportune moment in these 2 countries respectively)
- Paraguay's assessment is in the process of institutionalization, but it faces several challenges in a changing context. The mobilization of resources is an issue
- Importance of South-South support in the region
- All 4 countries very happy with support and would like to continue (ex: Nica 2nd phase)
- El Salvador: need is there. It is now a very opportune moment as there are concrete demands from the new government. → need to explore funding possibilities
→ ex: now in the process of mapping poverty with Norwegian support (could have a similar alliance)
Bolivia: there is space for focus on certain aspects: sub-national governments, sectoral approach, need for specific indicators for the indigenous population
Paraguay: also problem of mobilization of resources in-country for the repetition and institutionalization of the assessment

Remark: some countries didn't express a high need, for different reasons – mostly because skeptical about government buy-in in certain contexts. Ex: Panama CO finds it very interesting but government isn't interested; Argentina: not relevant for government

On the funding issue:

- need to increase funds-raising activities, to complete the UNDP track funds and limited funds provided by OGC / but OGC can support funds-raising initiatives from COs by using contacts, network. Donor-dependent countries like Nicaragua or Bolivia can also use the Global Programme to raise funds (to end of 2011 and will probably be extended to end of 2013)
possibility of co-funding with higher income countries
even if LAC is not a priority continent there will be other solutions
- challenge: LAC not a priority continent for UNDP although there is high poverty inside LAC countries. But there are other solutions through funds-raising with high income countries and other donors
- Global Programme can support South-South cooperation (ex: Eastern Caribbean donor group...)
OGC can provide seed money and then more funds-raising can be done
- OGC provides seed money which has an important impact in positioning UNDP
- Solution on heavy reporting for donors:

On South-South support:

- Global Programme can help support South-South cooperation ex: study tours between countries, intra-regional and cross-regional...
- OGC can help put together a South-South consortium of LAC organizations

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

See the evaluation report

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF WORKSHOP:

- The workshop was welcomed and appreciated by all participants as an extremely useful opportunity for LAC countries to learn from each other, both for those who were already implementing a country-led governance assessment project and those who weren't. Countries like Mexico, Chile or Barbados were surprised to discover how much they could learn from each other in spite of them being already in the process of a country-led governance assessment, and intend to continue to communicate bilaterally.
- In spite of differences in country contexts, approaches, types and forms of assessments conducted, the workshop identified clear similarities in challenges faced by LAC countries and initiated the process of bringing country solutions through regional exchange. This regional learning and exchange process should continue, this workshop being only a starting point for it.
- The workshop also served to strengthen the RBLAC/OGC partnership towards a joint approach and support to governance assessments in the region
- The workshop reached its objectives of learning lessons from UNDP-supported experiences in the region, identifying more precisely UNDP's niche and promoting UNDP's approach to country-led governance assessments in the region, promoting regional fertilization on governance assessment practices and identifying follow-up mechanisms.

MAIN LESSONS LEARNED FOR COUNTRY-LED GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENTS IN LAC:

- The generation of data is a key element of a country-led governance assessment and is critically needed all of the countries represented. Although most UNDP-supported projects include the generation of own data through different methods (Chile, Mexico, Barbados), not all do (Nicaragua doesn't so far). Means should be provided for data production within all these governance assessment processes, as much as possible.
- One of the main dilemmas identified during the workshop is in the choice of leadership of the assessment, as it has major implications in all the aspects of the assessment. For example:
 - If a high profile independent academic institution conducts the assessment (like in Mexico or Barbados), this increases the chances of an assessment of high technical quality, conducted through a more inclusive process, and likely resulting in open public communication of the assessment results. However, the institutionalization and actual use of the assessment for policy-making can be a serious challenge in these cases.
 - Reversely, the leadership of the assessment by an institution of the State (like in Nicaragua) provides good chances of the assessment results being used at a political and policy-making level. However, the high political polarization of many LAC countries makes it difficult for these assessments to be highly inclusive and participatory, and sometimes limits the possible choices of indicators for political reasons – at the risk of harming the relationship between UNDP and the government if UNDP “pushes” for higher inclusivity or some specific governance indicators.
- The country-led governance assessment process in itself can be a way to thwart political polarization by bringing measurable facts to the discussion table and facilitating an agreement on the facts, even if interpretations of these facts, conclusions drawn from them and uses of the assessment can vary (this was done successfully in Chile by involving parties from the whole political spectrum in the process.)
- The assessment can be seen as a tool for the government itself (“if you can't measure it, you can't manage it”) and therefore UNDP should find ways to demonstrate the interest of LAC governments themselves in conducting assessments in their country.

- The institutionalization of the assessment and follow-up on the assessment results remain the biggest challenges in many cases, even after successful assessment processes like in Paraguay.
- Communication is a key element of a country-led governance assessment process, and more attention should be brought to increasing the public relevance of assessment and developing efficient communication strategies on them. UNDP should work on how to better support countries in this communication challenge.
- Political vs. technical: not all parts or steps of the assessment process need or can be done with political consultation. While the decisions on the assessment and each of its steps require broad stakeholder consensus, the elaboration of indicators and measuring tools and the collection and interpretation of data is a technical matter. Therefore the spaces of wide stakeholder consultation should be strategically selected and organized within the assessment process, and the technical aspects should remain at the technical level.

UNDP NICHE AND ROLE IN LAC GOVERNANCE ASSESSMENT SUPPORT

- UNDP's comparative advantage was clearly expressed, in terms of the alternative it offers to external assessment approaches, but mostly its unique position to convene and facilitate wide stakeholder processes
- The need was expressed for learning also from experiences from other regions
- Reflecting on failures as well (interest was expressed to learn from the Global Programme's "failed" country projects if any)
- Important for UNDP to work at the regional level to help LAC countries develop an own "Latin American voice" on governance assessments

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

- OGC to support the establishment of a South-South consortium to strengthen the regional network for country-led governance assessments
- Creation of an OGC-funded post in Panama Regional Centre on governance assessments for LAC
- Support to countries for funds-raising / funds-raising through Global Programme?
- New LAC countries to be integrated in direct country support from Global Programme: process...?

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: WORKSHOP AGENDA

Measuring and Assessing Democratic Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean Panama, June 10-11, 2010

Agenda

At the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Have a good overview of governance assessment initiatives, methods and experiences from the LAC region
- Have a better sense of UNDP's areas of expertise and comparative advantages in supporting governance assessments
- Have a regional network of colleagues and experts who work in the area of governance assessments

Time	Substantive focus	Objectives
Day 1		
8:00 – 8:45	Session one: Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beat Rohr, Director, UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean - Alvaro Pinto, Coordinator, RBLAC - Myriam Mendez-Montalvo, DGG 	<i>The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the units responsible for the area of governance assessments and introduce the overall objectives of the workshop.</i>
8:45 – 9:00	Session two: Introduction to the workshop agenda <i>Facilitator: Elizabeth Arciniegas, Escuela Virtual</i>	<i>The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of the workshop agenda and outline the specific objectives of the two days of the workshop.</i>
9:00 – 10:15	Session three: Regional Experiences with Measuring Democracy and Governance in LAC <i>Presentation by Gerardo Munck, Professor of International Relations, University of Southern California</i>	<i>The purpose of this session is to present the background paper for the workshop which provides an overview of assessment initiatives in the LAC region.</i> <i>The presentation will be followed by an open discussion.</i>
10:15 – 10.45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10.45 – 12:30	Session four: Roundtable – Distilling Lessons Learned from UNDP supported initiatives in the region: Barbados and Eastern Caribbean, Chile and Mexico <i>Facilitator: Myriam Mendez-Montalvo</i>	<i>The purpose of this session is to better understand how UNDP COs and partners have worked on governance assessments.</i>
12.30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	

14:00 – 15:30	<p>Session five: Roundtable – Distilling Lessons Learned from UNDP supported initiatives in the region: Bolivia, El Salvador, Paraguay and Nicaragua <i>Facilitator: Marcela Rios, UNDP Chile</i></p>	<p><i>The purpose of this session is to better understand how UNDP COs and partners have worked on governance assessments.</i></p>
15:30 – 16:00	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>	
16:00 – 17:00	<p>Session six: Summing up of Day One <i>Facilitators: Elizabeth Arciniegas and Joachim Nahem</i></p>	<p><i>In this session we will sum up the day and explain how the discussions of day 1 will feed into day 2, introducing the agenda for day 2.</i></p>
20:00 – 22:00	<p><i>Cocktail Reception</i></p>	
<p>Day 2</p>		
9:00 – 11:00	<p><i>World Cup 2010 Coffee</i></p>	
11:00 – 11:45	<p>Session seven: UNDP Global Experience and Niche with supporting Country-Led Governance Assessments <i>Presentation by Joachim Nahem, Governance Specialist, Oslo Governance Centre</i></p>	<p><i>At the end of this session, participants will: better understand what principles, methods and experiences UNDP supports globally.</i></p> <p><i>(The presentation will be followed by questions and answers.)</i></p>
11: 45 – 13:30	<p>Session eight: Group exercise – Designing Country-Led Governance Assessments <i>Multiple facilitators</i></p>	<p><i>Participants will discuss in groups how to design a country-led governance assessment based on a given case study. Their discussions will be guided by the following questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How can UNDP country offices foster national ownership in governance assessments?</i> <i>2. How can it be ensured that the assessment is participatory and inclusive?</i> <i>3. How are indicators and methodologies defined, by whom, for whom? How can the most appropriate indicators be identified?</i> <i>4. What are the most relevant entry points?</i>
13:30 – 14:30	<p>Working Lunch: Group exercise - Designing Country-Led Governance Assessments (continued)</p>	<p><i>The purpose of this working lunch is to complete the group exercise on country-led governance assessments of session eight, and to discuss the findings of each group.</i></p>

14:30 – 15:30	<p>Session nine: What kind of support is needed? How can UNDP support partners, and how can RBLAC and DGG support Country Offices? <i>Facilitators: Gerardo Berthin, Governance and Local Governance Advisor, UNDP Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean and Gerardo Noto, Programme Specialist, RBLAC</i></p>	<p><i>The purpose of this session is to enable partners and COs to articulate what kind of support is needed from UNDP at national, regional and global levels.</i></p>
15:30 – 16:00	<p>Session ten : Responding to needs and wrapping up <i>Alvaro Pinto and Joachim Nahem</i></p>	<p><i>In this session, RBLAC and DGG/OGC will propose responses to the needs articulated in session nine.</i></p>
16:00 – 16:30	<p>Evaluation <i>Elizabeth Arciniegas</i></p>	
16:30 – 17:00	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>	
17:00 – 18:00	<p>Bilateral meetings</p>	

ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANTS LIST

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36	UNDP Panama		

ANNEX 3: GROUP EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS

Measuring and Assessing Democratic Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean Panama, June 10-11, 2010 Group Exercise 1

Preliminary remarks:

- The case study presented hereunder is purely fictional. It is meant to represent some of the conditions present in certain countries of the LAC region, but not to refer to any real country in any way.
- The information about the imaginary country of “Independencia” provided hereunder serves as a mere background for the group exercise. You do not necessarily have to use or mention all the information provided. If needed, you can also use elements of information not explicitly included in the description of Independencia, if these are elements that are obviously present in most countries [for example, the existence of a certain “standard” type of institution in the country (ex: the presence of a Parliament, of certain Ministries, etc.), of different age and gender groups, etc.]]

Description of the fictional Republic of Independencia:

Geographic and demographic information:

Independencia is a country situated in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a medium-sized country of 40 million inhabitants, including 20% indigenous people from 16 different Amerindian groups, scattered among all the territory. 40% of its population is urban, 60% is rural.

Political and administrative information:

Independencia, after centuries of European colonial rule followed by a succession of dictatorial governments, finally held its first free and fair elections about 20 years ago, and has since then been a recognized democratic republic. The Constitution provides for the division of the executive, legislative and judiciary power, and undisputed free and fair elections are held on a regular basis at the executive and the legislative level. Two main political parties compete and alternate, but there are also several smaller parties. Traditionally, the government of Independencia has been mostly centralized, but in the last 5 years it has started a decentralization process. Administratively, it is divided into 12 provinces, each of them being divided into 5 districts.

Socio-economic information:

Independencia has been showing relatively good general economic growth, however alarming and growing socio-economic inequalities have been identified. The level of poverty is particularly high in the countryside, notably among certain indigenous groups but also other groups of population, and in the new precarious urban areas that develop randomly at the outskirts of the main cities of the country due to a fast rural exodus. Striking inequalities also exist between different provinces of the country. In general, the unemployment rate has grown in the last years, and it is particularly high among certain groups of population. In addition, the country currently faces frequent strikes and demonstrations due to this unsatisfactory socio-economic situation.

Development/governance aid information:

Independencia receives important amounts of external aid from diverse sources. Some of its donors and aid partners in the governance field include the World Bank, USAid, and UNDP. Several governance evaluations have already been conducted in the country. In the World Bank governance assessments, it was ranked towards the bottom of LAC countries, and it received poor scores in the Transparency International corruption perception Index. The government of Independencia is both offended and embarrassed by these negative rankings, and would like to

construct an answer to these external evaluations by providing more accurate and detailed information on the status of different aspects of governance in the country.

In partnership with the government, the UNDP-Independencia Country Office is currently debating on the theme of the National Human Development Report 2010, and is considering doing it on the theme: “Taking stock of democratic progress”.

Other information:

Independencia has a vibrant civil society. It includes civil society organizations that work on very different themes, such as environment, youth, gender-based violence, anti-corruption, or indigenous peoples’ rights. However, there are some minority indigenous groups in the country that are not represented by any organization of any type.

The country’s research and higher education sector in the political and economic science field is small but advanced, with several independent research institutes of high academic level, the biggest and most famous one being the Independencia Social Sciences Institute (ISSI).

The Independencia National Statistical Office is the official government institution that provides data to the country’s policy-makers and informs the official yearly national reports. But the quality of the information it offers seems quite low, and it hardly includes any governance-related data.

Exercise instructions:

You are a team composed of UNDP-Independencia governance staff, members of the Independencia Social Sciences Institute and representatives of the government [*roles within the team are indifferent*]. You are assigned the task of designing a country-led governance assessment process in your country.

1 → What would you identify as relevant entry points for UNDP to support a governance assessment in Independencia?

2 → Who/which type of entity would you recommend leads the assessment process, and why?

3 → How/through which type of process would you identify the indicators to be used in this governance assessment?

4 → How would you ensure that the assessment process is inclusive and participatory?

5 → How would you ensure that the assessment has a durable impact on the level and quality of democratic governance in the country?

Procedure:

Once groups are formed:

Step 1: Identification of the Chair (who will also be the timekeeper) and the Rapporteur for your group;

Step 2: Brainstorming on the 5 questions above, in any order you like;

Step 3: The main points or recommendations resulting from the brainstorming are written down;

Step 4: The groups go back to plenary session and each group reports on a maximum of 5 main bullet points.