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ACVFA WORKING GROUP

Governing Justly and
Democratically

May 23, 2007



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Working Group's Summary Findings



Introduction

- The Framework defines the goal of governing justly and democratically as promoting and strengthening effective democracies by moving recipient states along a continuum toward democratic consolidation.
- Despite the Framework's focus on strategic coherence, we are concerned about the obvious stove-piping or compartmentalizing that is evident.
- One cannot intervene in any one development area in isolation; economic growth or improvements in education, or gender integration, for example, are clearly linked to democracy building.
- USAID's poverty reduction goal is consistent with the Agency's long history of serving the poor, and we believe that it's important that a clear distinction be made between the core elements of a D&G project, and a project whose primary focus is addressing the social needs of beneficiaries.



Cross - cutting Themes

- While programs must be tailored to country-specific circumstances, USAID should consider how to promote those essential governance priorities that should apply across every country, such as combating corruption and gender equality.
- It is widely understood that citizen access to information, transparent procurement processes, capacity building for citizen oversight of government, etc., impact the effectiveness of assistance in all sectors.



Donor Coordination

- Experience in recipient countries indicates that governments have difficulty managing the sometimes different or overlapping governance programming and reporting requirements of donors working in their countries.
- While USAID may in practice address this issue on an ad hoc basis, the Framework should require a commitment to gather information about other donor activities, and emphasize complementary programming.



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Incorporating the Private Sector into Broader Civil Society

- In the Foreign Assistance Standardized Program Structure the private sector is not considered a part of civil society.
- We propose the following new Sub-Element: **Program Sub-Element 2.4.1.6:** “Business Associations and the Private Sector” - defined as: Develop and strengthen independent and democratic business associations and other private sector and professional (e.g. lawyers, accountants, engineers) organizations to promote transparent policymaking, strengthen accountability and governance, and improve standards of living.



Role of Women

- In the new framework, there is practically no mention of the very critical role women play in democracy building and good governance.
- Therefore, more emphasis is needed on gender focused strategies and Agency wide use of gender analysis in strategic planning. Gender should be seen as a cross-cutting issue, and one that should be considered in all the program areas, with appropriate indicators.



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Rebuilding Countries

- In rebuilding countries, emerging from authoritarian regimes and conflict, the dismantling of repressive institutions often increases, rather than decreases instability in the short term. Our concern with the framework is that it implies that the rebuilding process is much more amenable to standard approaches than experience on the ground reveals.
- USAID and other donors can play an important role in providing support to reformers, but the re-establishment of the social pact that underpins stability is fundamentally a process that national actors must lead and manage.



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Importance of the Policy Making Process

- In addition to the structural changes needed for governing justly and democratically, it is important to pay attention to the policy-making process in a democratic system.
- Inclusive and cross-cutting policy making, that recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the full range of societal actors—government, NGOs, the private sector, labor and civil society—contributes significantly to achieving stability, effective service delivery, and legitimacy.



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