

SUNY Center for International Development

Governance Information Bulletin #10

Governance, Democracy Assistance, and Public Sector Performance

Carothers, T. (2009), [“Democracy Promotion under Obama: Finding a Way Forward,”](#)
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

In his latest missive, Carothers argues that the Bush’s administration’s highly problematic legacy on democracy promotion and general pessimism about the global state of democracy create pressure on the Obama administration to pull the United States substantially back from supporting democracy abroad. Although dissociating U.S. democracy support from the errors of the Bush approach is crucial, a broad realist corrective of U.S. policy is not necessary. He adds that the way forward for Obama will be more about changing how the United States goes about supporting democracy abroad than about what emphasis to place on democracy relative to other interests. Cardinal values of Obama’s political philosophy and style—non-confrontational, measured, persistent, bipartisan, cooperative, effective, and empowering—provide a natural basis for a new framework to help the United States regain its place as a respected, trusted, and influential ally of democracy around the world.

UNDESA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2008), [“World e-Parliament Report 2008,”](#)
Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

Zip file [here](#).

The World e-Parliament Report 2008 constitutes the first assessment from a global perspective of how information and communication technologies (ICT) are being employed by parliaments across the spectrum of activities for which they are responsible. It is based on the responses and comments provided by 105 assemblies from around the world to a survey on the use of ICT in parliament. It also draws on experiences exchanged during the World e-Parliament Conference 2007 and relevant publicly available information, it draws on experiences exchanged during the World e-Parliament Conference 2007 and relevant publicly available information. The Report 2008 is a joint product of UNDESA and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, prepared as part of the work of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2009), [“Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites,”](#) Global Centre for ICT in Parliament

In 2000 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) published *Guidelines for the Content and Structure of Parliamentary Websites*. In late 2008, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, in consultation with the IPU, undertook the task of updating the Guidelines to reflect advances in technology and new practices in parliaments that have emerged in the last several years. As with the 2000 Guidelines, the Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites are intended to provide recommendations that are practically oriented to facilitate the task of planning and overseeing websites and to enable parliaments to provide concrete guidance to their website designers, developers and managers. Based on the evolution of technology and on the growing needs of members of parliament and other users, recommendations are made in the following areas: **1.** General information about parliament; **2.** Information about legislation, budget, and oversight; **3.** Tools for finding, receiving, and viewing information; **4.** Tools for communication and dialogue with citizens; **5.** Designing for usability, accessibility, and language; **6.** Management

Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. (2008), [“Legal Informatics and Management of Legislative Documents”](#)

This working paper, commissioned by the Global Centre in preparation for the World e-Parliament Report 2008, aims at providing an overview of the state of the art and of the prospects of the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the legislative domain, in particular concerning the management of legislative documents. The paper introduces the concepts of legal informatics and legislative informatics, describes the evolution of the ICT-based management of legislative documents and identifies and evaluates emergent approaches, focusing on those based on open standards.

Djankov, S., La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F. and Shleifer, A. (2002), [“Appropriate Institutions,”](#) paper presented at the World Bank Conference on Appropriate Institutions for Growth, Washington, D.C., September 13, 2002

This conference paper by a group of scholars from the World Bank, Harvard University and Yale University discusses the historical evolution and the current conditions shaping institutions. It notes that comparative economics experienced a revival, with a new focus on comparing capitalist economies. The transition from socialism, the Asian financial crisis, and the European economic and political integration, have challenged our understanding of how capitalism works. Capitalist economies differ in how they regulate both market activities and political competition, and comparing these differences sheds new light on economic and social outcomes. The historical origin of a country’s legal system has proved to be an important factor shaping institutions. Understanding the historical evolution and the current conditions shaping

institutions is central to explaining the differences in economic performance, as well as to the design of economic and political reforms.

Wehner, J. (2004), ["Back from the Sidelines? Redefining the Contribution of Legislatures to the Budget Cycle,"](#) World Bank Institute

Following a period of decline in influence, many legislatures are starting to reclaim a more active role in the budget process. This paper published by the World Bank Institute surveys the changing landscape of legislative budgeting. It argues there is a need to establish supportive institutional mechanisms to reconcile legislative activism with fiscal prudence, and tailor these mechanisms to different national circumstances. A formalized process of scrutiny does not translate into a meaningful budgetary role for legislatures. Parliamentarians are therefore asking how they can engage more effectively with the budget process. Democratization and constitutional change have opened up possibilities for legislative participation in many previously closed systems. This increased engagement can ultimately make a positive contribution to budget outcomes, but should not detract from sound budget outcomes and fiscal prudence. There are risks involved in legislative participation. The central question is whether legislatures can be both more disciplined as well as more independent in budgetary matters. But the case for effective participation is often not fully appreciated. While some legislatures exert significant influence and affect budget outcomes at various levels, others remain passive rubberstamps. A number of variables interact to define the ability of parliament to engage with budget issues. These relate to its constitutionally intended role and its legal, party political and technical capacity. This paper explores the effects of these variables in depth.

United Nations Development Programme. (2009), ["Practice Note on Supporting Country-Led Democratic Governance Assessments,"](#) UNDP

Based on the experiences of selected Country Offices, the Practice Note on Supporting Country-Led Democratic Governance Assessments outlines the principal objective for UNDP's engagement; that is to support national ownership and capacity development of national partners to be able to undertake and use governance assessments to enhance democratic governance. With capacity development at the centre of UNDP's approach, the Practice Note defines four key areas for UNDP support: 1) Promoting multi-stakeholder participation; 2) Aligning governance assessments with national development plans; 3) Promoting pro-poor and gender-sensitive governance assessments; and 4) Strengthening evidence-based policy making.

Eastern Europe

Jarábik, B. (2009), ["Belarus: Are the Scales Tipping?"](#) FRIDE

Belarus' relative isolation has not protected the country and its ruling elite from the impact of the global economic crisis and the Lukashenka regime is under pressure to reform. Russia has decreased Belarusian imports and refined oil exports to the EU are suffering from falling prices. This FRIDE policy brief argues that, as the crisis hinders Lukashenka's capacity of positioning the country as a buffer between Moscow and Europe, Belarus's leader might make a radical shift towards Europe in the hope that Brussels decides not to renew sanctions on Belarus and instead incorporate the country into its Eastern Partnership. Favorable conditions exist for the EU to try harder to prize Belarus away from Russian influence and as Ukraine falters, Brussels needs to shore up its soft power in the East and overpower Russia's strategic incentives.

Journal of Democracy

In the cluster "**Reading Russia**," ten authors explore the nature of the Russian political system.

[Religion and Democracy](#)

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

The secularization hypothesis has failed, and failed spectacularly. We must find a new paradigm to help us understand the complexities of the relationship between religion and democracy.

[Reading Russia: The *Siloviki* in Charge](#)

By Andrei Illarionov

The holders of political power in Russia today are the *siloviki*—the people who work for, or who used to work for, “the ministries of force.”

[Reading Russia: The Rules of Survival](#)

By Ivan Krastev

The centrality of the sovereign state is the binding bond in the political imagination of both the Kremlin and Russian society at large.

[Georgia's Year of Turmoil](#)

By Miriam Lansky and Giorgi Areshidze

A domestic political crisis began brewing in Georgia long before the current conflict with Russia. Since the Rose Revolution, the country has been troubled by flawed elections, a "superpresidency," and a malleable constitution.

Southern Africa

ActionAid International. (2005), [“Engaging the New Pan Africanism - Strategies for Civil Society.”](#) ActionAid International- Southern Africa Partnership Programme and Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa

The past decade witnessed many efforts to give new meaning and substance to Pan-Africanism. This new Pan-Africanism remains as committed to African unity and solidarity as previous attempts. But it also goes further; it links issues of development with issues of peace and security, democratic governance, co-operation, and economic integration. For Africans therefore there is no choice between development, peace and security, and democracy. These three elements are inextricably intertwined. All actors engaging this new Pan-Africanism should take this challenge on board. They therefore need new innovative tools and strategies to influence political, economic, and social developments in Africa.

This is a guide for civil society organizations aimed at empowering non-state actors to effectively develop strategies for influencing inter-state institutions and programmes in Africa. The manual seeks to inform civil society organizations and social partners in Africa on the most important aspects of the new Pan-Africanism and new African agenda. It also details how, and under what conditions, on-state actors can participate in new African inter-state institutions and programs. This guide recognizes from the outset that, apart from campaigning, protests, lobbying, and workshopping, there is a need for engagement as a means of reforming Africa's regional bodies and making them people-centered; it makes the case for a participatory approach to helping to shape the new continental architecture in the spirit of democratization.

Malan, M. (2005), ["Quid Pro Quo: A Journalistic Look at Media-NGO Interaction in Africa,"](#) *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Volume 11, Issue 2

This paper shows how NGOs in Africa use the media as a powerful advocacy tool. Where governments disseminate misinformation, NGOs can inform communities through the media about problems like HIV/AIDS. Some NGOs also support news networks, which cannot afford journalists with a scientific education, by providing expert statements on health issues. The author concludes from case studies in Kenya and South Africa that NGOs and the media "cannot serve the public effectively without assistance and support from the other."

South and Central Asia

Panday, P. K. (2006), ["Central-Local Relations, Inter-Organisational Coordination and Policy Implementation in Urban Bangladesh,"](#) *The Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*

What happens to policy implementation when the process suffers from problems of coordination? In this article, the focus is on how central-local relations create interorganisational coordination problems, which in the long run affect the implementation of policies in urban governance. In the case of the Rajshahi City

Corporation (RCC) in Bangladesh, the central-local relationship is determined by the political identity of the mayor. By virtue of his attachment with the party in power, the RCC receives more favors especially in terms of the allocation of resources from the central government. These resources facilitate the completion of many development projects

Hossain N. (2009), ["Rude Accountability in the Unreformed State: Informal Pressures on Frontline Bureaucrats in Bangladesh,"](#) Institute of Development Studies

Rude' forms of accountability are central to how poor people negotiate their entitlements on the frontline of service delivery in Bangladesh. This paper documents the unorganized, informal pressures that poor citizens exert on officials in a context where effective formal systems for accountability are absent, and the state remains unreformed in key respects. The paper explores the impact of 'rude accountability' on services, as well as their limitations and the consequences for formal accountability systems. Based on extensive research into how poor people experience safety nets, schools and health services, the paper argues that strong social and local political pressures go some way towards supplying a rough responsiveness to demands for service. These work through shame and embarrassment, pressures to maintain reputation and status, and the threat of violence. Poor people have good reasons to use these methods in preference to formal accountability mechanisms. And poor women may have a particularly strong comparative advantage in doing so – not because they are so much better than men or rich people at complaining and shaming, but because it is comparatively less difficult for them to do so than to engage in more formally structured means of complaint or feedback. The idea of rude accountability is seductive: when formal governance systems fail, the idea that there are informal mechanisms that are better suited to context and culture is intrinsically attractive. Yet the paper concludes that the gains from rude accountability are often short-lived and may backfire, as public officials fear and resist efforts to enable citizen participation in holding them to account. There are features of contemporary Bangladeshi state-society relations that lend themselves to informal means of accountability, the analysis here of informal accountability mechanisms has wider implications for the move towards citizen involvement in performance based accountability in other contexts.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Albrecht, H., Aucoin, L., and O'Connor, V. (2009), ["Building the Rule of Law in Haiti: New Laws for a New Era,"](#) United States Institute of Peace

"Building the Rule of Law in Haiti: New Laws for a New Era," examines shortcomings of Haiti's current criminal legislation laws and opportunities to reform the criminal code. The report finds promising signs that Haiti's criminal laws and criminal justice system will undergo huge transformations in the coming years. It is anticipated that new

criminal laws could be passed by 2011, whereupon a two-year period of training and institution-building would take place prior to the laws coming into effect in 2013. In order to be effective, the law needs to be implemented and properly applied and the reasons why it has not been applied in the past should be researched and analyzed. There is an old Haitian saying that “law is paper; bayonettes are steel,” but as Talleyrand said “one can do a lot of things with bayonettes, but one cannot sit on them.”

Middle East and North Africa

Yacubian, M. (2009) [“Lebanon’s Parliamentary Elections,”](#) United States Institute of Peace

Lebanon's pro-Western bloc, known as the "March 14" coalition, will retain control of the country's government despite a strong challenge from a Hezbollah-dominated alliance, according to results from the country's June 7 parliamentary elections. In this short article, Mona Yacoubian, a special advisor to the Institute's Muslim World Initiative, examines the high stakes of Lebanon's elections, what the results suggest about the level of support for Hezbollah and the country's future direction.

Kraft, M., Al-Mazri, M., Wimmen, H. and Zupan, N. (2008), [“Walking the Line: Strategic Approaches to Peacebuilding in Lebanon,”](#) Working Group on Development and Peace, The Forum Civil Peace Service, German Development Service, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Following Lebanon’s 2006 war and ensuing tensions throughout 2007, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, the German Development Service (DED), the Forum Civil Peace Service (forumZFD) and the Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt) jointly commissioned a study whose objective is: 1) To identify relevant fields of activity for peacebuilding by German development and peace organizations; 2) To identify potentials, deficits and needs of existing approaches and give recommendations for coordination with Lebanese and international actors in order to strengthen coherence and relevance of peacebuilding activities. This study begins from a systemic conflict analysis, the study looks into structural challenges, core problems and escalating factors and evaluates their relevance by analyzing how their varying reciprocal impacts may foster and enable conflict and the use of violence in Lebanon. It then identifies strategic entry points and discusses main challenges, stakeholders, and peacebuilding needs in selected fields of activity. Existing approaches by Lebanese and international actors are assessed and gaps and opportunities to foster peacebuilding identified.

Interesting Blogs about Development and Governance

[Texas in Africa](#) is an assistant professor of political science at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where she teaches international relations and African politics. The

topics she discusses on her blog reflect her research interests in state-building, security, and humanitarian and development policy. The Democratic Republic of the Congo features prominently.

[Rachel Strohm](#) is a Client Assessment Fellow at FINCA International in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She studies the intersection of quantitative research methodologies, the psychosocial lives of the poor and accessible financial services in sub-Saharan Africa. Strohm's blog chronicles interesting developments in these various fields.

[Discomfort Zone](#) is a multi-blogger site that scrutinizes aid and development efforts in unstable countries.

[Aid Watch](#) is economist William Easterly's blog for the NYU Development Research Institute. One of the most controversial blogs in the aid/development blogosphere, Aid Watch takes aim at what Easterly views as harmful or poorly-performing aid and development efforts, as well as individuals and organizations. Responses by those criticized by Easterly are published as well.

[Cosmopolitan Democracy](#) is Daniele Archibugi's *openDemocracy* blog about the intersection of democratic principles and security, governance, and political change. Daniele Archibugi is a Research Director at the Italian National Research Council (CNR) in Rome, affiliated at the Institute on Population and Social Policy (IRPPS), and Professor of Innovation, Governance and Public Policy at the University of London, Birkbeck College, Department of Management. He works on the economics and policy of technological change and on the political theory of international relations.