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Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) Meeting

MINUTES

Project: Improving the quality of Moldovan democracy through parliamentary and electoral support

Venue: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

Date: Wednesday, 4 July 2012, 14:00

- 14.00 – 14.15** Introduction and opening remarks:
Aliona Niculita, UNDP Officer-in-Charge
Liliana Palihovich, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament
Iurie Ciocan, President of the Central Electoral Commission
Alexandra Yuster, UNICEF Representative
- 14.15 – 14.25** Presentation of the Programme “Improving the quality of Moldovan democracy through parliamentary and electoral support”
Johan Hommes, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Parliament
Kate Sullivan, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Elections
- 14.25 – 14.45** Discussions
- 14.45 – 14.55** Programme Plan, Budget and management arrangements
Alla Skvortova, Assistant Resident Representative/Governance
- 14.55 – 15.20** Discussions
- 15.20 – 15.30** Closing remarks

Participants

Parliament, Government, Central Electoral Commission

1. Liliana Palihovici, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
2. Igor Corman, Chairman of the Parliament Committee on European Integration, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
3. Adrian Fetescu, Head of Secretariat, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
4. Iurie Ciocan, President of the Central Electoral Commission
5. Stefan Uritu, Member of the Central Electoral Commission
6. Mariana Musteata, Head of CEC Apparatus

Development partners, Civil Society Organisations

7. Bjorn Kavalkov-Halvarsson , Head of Mission, a.i., Embassy of Sweden
8. Nina Orlova, SIDA, Programme Officer
9. Alexandra Yuster, UNICEF Representative
10. Alexandru Stratulat, UNICEF
11. Andrei Brighidin, Eurasia Foundation Moldova,
12. Nicolae Panfil, Coalition for Free and Fair Elections

UNDP

13. Aliona Niculita, UNDP Officer-in-Charge
14. Johan Hommes, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Parliament
15. Kate Sullivan, UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Elections
16. Alla Skvortova, UNDP
17. Veaceslav Palade, UNDP
18. Sergiu Galitchi, UNDP Project Manager

(Also invited: Arcadie Barbarosie, IPP NGO; Lucretia Ciurea, State Chancellery; Stela Leuca, USAID)

Proceedings of the meeting

1. Introduction and project justification

Ms. Palihovici, Dr. Ciocan, Ms. Yuster and Mr. Fetescu have addressed the meeting with short introductory speeches. In particular Ms. Palihovici mentioned the project is a very welcome and needed initiative for the Parliament of Moldova. Previous experience and achieved results is a good prove of this and there are strong arguments that needs for the further sustained support of the on-going work exist. Ms. Palihovici thanked the Swedish Government and UNDP for their continued support.

Dr. Ciocan has mentioned that the project document to be discussed at the meeting further builds on the previous joint work of the CEC and UNDP supported by the EU Commission. In particular, Dr. Ciocan stressed that joining of two streams of work (Parliamentary and electoral processes) under one programme is very logical, while it is very important that the independence of the involved institutions, (CEC in particular) is ensured.

Ms. Niculita has briefly presented the justification of the new programme. She highlighted that although much support had been already offered to the Parliament and CEC, they both need further support, as the institutions that have a central role in the process of strengthening Moldovan democratic governance. UNDP has had supported these institutions before through two separate projects, and now it was decided to merge the institutional development support for both under one Programme, in line with the UNDP policy aiming at applying a programmatic approach to development support. The intervention is based on thorough needs and enabling environment assessment and a sound programmatic approach to setting the development objectives, proper planning of the results, activities and budgets, and to establishing and closely following of a rigorous monitoring and evaluation system.

Ms Alexandra Yuster, UNICEF Representative, welcomed the possibility that is being offered by the Programme to UNICEF to continue its traditionally close and fruitful cooperation with the Parliament on issues related to child protection. In particular, with the UNICEF's support, the Parliament will be able to

strengthen its oversight function over the Children's Ombudsman and to collaborate more closely with the CSOs preoccupied with the protection and promotion of children's rights.

2. Presentation of the Programme

2.1. Project strategy and management arrangements

The project strategy, components and activities were presented by Kate Sullivan, CTA Elections, and Johan Hommes, CTA Parliament.

The overarching goal of the Programme is to improve the quality of the Moldovan democratic processes and systems in line with the European standards.

The Programme will focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of the Parliament and Central Electoral Commission, improving their main functions and entrenching gender and human rights considerations in formal political process. In particular, the Programme will improve the legislative, oversight and representation functions of the Parliament, provide a solid basis for the improvement of the electoral process and supporting, when necessary, an inclusive process of constitutional reform. The Programme will assist the Parliament to increase the participation of civil society and citizens in policy making and oversight processes. It will also build the capacities of Members of Parliament in budget understanding and consideration, and in monitoring of its implementation. At the Central Electoral Commission, the Programme will support the further development of an enabling environment for the delivery of modern and inclusive electoral services.

The programme is designed in five components:

1. Introduction of Gender and Human Rights aspects into the parliamentary activities and electoral processes

In this component the programme activities will be directed towards introducing of gender and human rights standards into the parliamentary activity and legislation, as well as in the electoral processes in general. For this purpose a series of outputs are planned. A women's caucus will be established in the Parliament. The support for this is designed in a way that will ensure that the caucus could reach its objectives and therefore is focused on the key elements leading to a success. As for the elections, a series of activities will be undertaken to introduce gender considerations into the work of CEC and into the electoral processes in general. For this, a needs assessments exercise will be carried out to identify the current status of gender aspects in the electoral process to inform about the immediate needs for learning events and training on gender issues, as well as on necessary adjustments to the existing legal and institutional framework to include gender aspects. Other activities under this objective will aim at mainstreaming gender and human rights, and in particular children's rights, considerations into the legislative, oversight and electoral processes.

2. Improve the representative role of the Parliament

In this component the Programme will focus on strengthening the representation role of the Parliament alongside the legislative and oversight functions. For this purpose the programme will build on existing initiatives and plans and support the practical implementation of the Manual on Public Hearings by Parliamentary Committees. All parliamentary committees will be encouraged to and supported in organizing regular public hearings on different issues (legislation and oversight), to collect views from citizens and civil society and provide a platform for exchange of opinions. As for the institutional infrastructure that would facilitate closer interaction between the Parliament and the citizens, a feasibility study on the establishment of the Parliament's Constituency offices outside of Chisinau will be

carried out that will provide informed and substantiated recommendations on the types, geographical location, functions, and other pertinent issues.

3. Further capacity development for the Central Electoral Commission

To continue the capacity development of CEC, the programme will focus on a range of actions to implement a new structure for the CEC's apparatus, establish management and mentoring relationships for CEC bureau members, consolidate CEC's leadership role in elections through the establishment of cross-government task forces on key issues, support the work of other parts of the public sector with electoral and registration responsibilities, in recognition of the framework that spreads electoral tasks beyond the CEC, improve the internal environment for staff and CEC members through a thorough training needs analysis, training plan development and implementation, and other activities.

4. Improve the voter registration processes.

UNDP has provided support to CEC since 2008 on this issue and this programme will continue, in order to sustain and further build on the previous efforts. The Programme will support the CEC to operationalize a roadmap through an implementation plan to include some expansion of the existing IT system for voter registration (SIAS). The operational plan will also encompass a rollout plan for the electronic voter register - the component of SIAS piloted on the local election day in 2011, and which the CEC is required to implement nationally by 2015.

5. Support for a constitutional reform

If there will be an appropriate context and if the programme will be requested, it is planned to provide support to Moldovan authorities for an inclusive and participatory Constitutional Reform. The programme could provide expertise; build capacities of the Constitutional Review Body for establishing and implementing a consultative and participative mechanism for engaging the civil society and citizens in the discussions around new constitutional provisions that would ensure transparency of the process.

2.2. Project outcome and outputs

The project outcome is *"Improved quality of Moldovan democracy through parliamentary and electoral support"*.

The outputs contributing to this outcome are:

- Improved quality of Moldova's formal political processes by mainstreaming gender and human rights in parliamentary development and electoral assistance
- Fostered quality of the representative role of the Parliament and strengthening the capacities of the Parliament to deliver on its functions
- An improved institutional environment for electoral management bodies that can deliver inclusive and modern electoral processes
- Improved public registration process for Moldovans and supporting the modernization of Moldovan electoral processes
- Support provided for an inclusive process for constitutional reform

2.3. Project Budget and project work plan

Ms. Skvortova presented the Multi-annual Work Plan and Budget of the Programme.

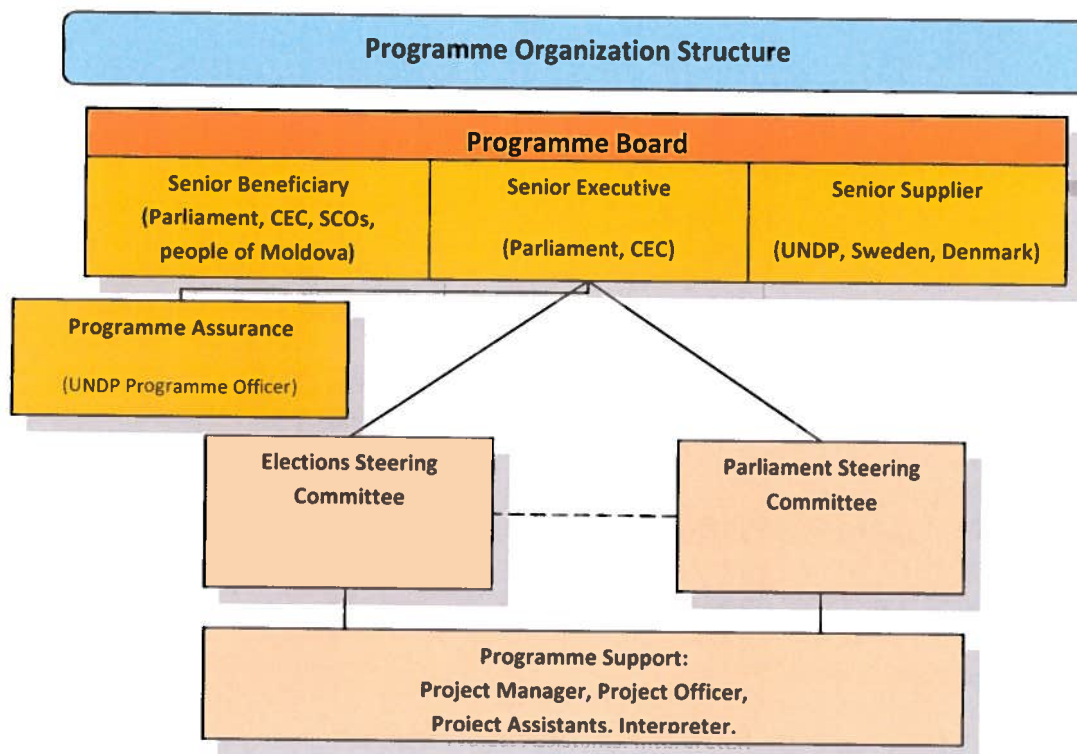
The total overall budget of the Programme is USD 4,737,455 for a four year period. Parliamentary development component's budget is USD 3,279,320 and the one for the Electoral Support is USD

1,458,135. The UNICEF subcomponent's budget for the entire period is USD 197,950, including the GMS 7%. The budget is financed by the Government of Sweden, Government of Denmark and UNDP. The Constitutional Reform component budget is at this stage unfunded – USD 250,000.

3. Proposing and approving the project's leading partner and members of the Project Steering Committee

The management arrangements, implementing partners and the composition of the Programme Board and Steering Committees was presented by Ms. Skvortova

Programme Structure



Implementing partners

The implementing partners will be responsible for the overall implementation of specific components of the Programme in compliance with the Programme workplan and budget. Independence of both institutions shall be ensured.

The Implementing Partners of the Programme are:

- Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, responsible for the implementation of the Parliament Component and
- Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, responsible for the support to elections component.

The Programme will be managed in close coordination between UNDP, UNICEF and the Implementing Partners. UNDP will provide quality assurance, Programme inputs and support services.

Programme Board

The main Programme authority will be the Programme Board.

The Programme Board will:

- Provide strategic guidance to the Programme;

- Review and approve of the Annual and the Final Programme Reports and Overall Programme Work Plans;
- Convene once per year (December).

The following composition is proposed for the Programme Board:

1. Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
2. Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova
3. Institute for Public Policies
4. Coalition for Free and Fair Elections
5. Government of Sweden
6. Government of Denmark
7. USAID
8. UNICEF
9. UNDP

The Programme Board Co-Chairs will be the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and the President of the Central Election Commission. Other members representing important stakeholders might be suggested to be included into the Board.

Steering Committees

Steering Committees for the Parliament and Elections parts of the Programme will be created to:

- Provide guidance to the components' teams during the year;
- Provide oversight of the operational activities of the Programme's respective components;
- Review and approve intermediary progress reports and changes to the AWP and budgets according to the needs;
- Convene twice per year, unless there will be need for more meetings.

The following composition is proposed for Steering Committees:

Parliament Component:

1. Head of Secretariat, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
2. Government of Denmark
3. Institute for Public Policies
4. UNICEF
5. UNDP

Elections Component:

1. President of the Central Electoral Commission
2. Head of Apparatus, Central Electoral Commission
3. USAID
4. Coalition for Free and Fair Elections
5. UNDP

4. Summary of discussions and recommendations

(a) How relevant are the project objectives in relation to national priorities, and to the Country Cooperation Framework (CCF), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Common Country Action Plan (CPAP) or CSN?

All participants made positive statements about the new Programme, in particular with the reference to its alignment to the national priorities, as spelled out in the major country strategic documents and in the agreements signed between the UN and the Republic of Moldova. Mrs Palihovici and Mr Ciocan stated that the project was fully consistent with the Parliament's and CEC's priorities and with the UNDP mandate (country UNDAF, CPAP). Mr. Corman expressed the satisfaction with the very positive experience of the current work of the Parliament's Committee on Foreign Policy and European Integration with the current UNDP project on Parliament development and noted strong experience and commitment of the project team. He stressed that the new Programme and further UNDP's and the Programme Donors' support will enhance the achieved results and will help the Parliament to effectively contribute to the implementation of the European Integration agenda of the country.

(b)How relevant are the objectives in relation to aspirations and needs of the target groups and the UNDP mission to promote sustainable human development?

The project was found relevant to the needs of target groups. Ms Palihovici stated that the Parliament colleagues had been largely consulted during the elaboration of the Programme from the very beginning, and expressed the view that the Programme is in line with the Parliament's Strategic Development Plan. In particular, she appreciated the focus on gender that is very important for Moldova's progress on MDGs. Mr Ciocan added that the Programme, as it is designed, is based on CEC's priorities as they are spelled out in the institutional Strategy approved at the end of 2011. He also stated that the objectives of the Programme are clear and pertinent for other relevant policy documents, while the activities proposed are not overlapping with other Donors' initiatives and have a sustainable perspective. It was mentioned that the Programme Plan of actions and the budget are well structured and respond to the most of the current and future needs of the Parliament and Central Electoral Commission.

(c)Does the chosen operational strategy represent the most promising approach to address the development problem?

The proposed operational strategy ensured the observance of all key principles for successful project implementation. The innovative approach to bring the parliamentary and the electoral processes under one Programme encouraged by the main Donor had been also highly appreciated. Mrs. Aliona Niculita highlighted that the operational strategy provides for the engagement of the stakeholders as either participants of the Steering Committee, partners, or direct and indirect beneficiaries. To ensure the sustainability and increase the ownership by the national partners, the National Execution was the modality chosen for the implementation of the project.

(d)Have all the relevant stakeholders been identified, including government and civil society organizations, local communities, beneficiaries, donors and private sector?

Mr. Stefan Uritu welcomed the invitation and participation of the Civil Society organizations at the meeting and subsequently in the Programme Board and the Steering Committees to be established. He stressed the importance of a thorough selection of those organizations, in order to ensure that there is no a conflict of interest, and the organizations that are well known and respected for their dedicated work in the area of ensuring the transparency of the parliament's work and in improving the electoral process are consulted at the different stages of Programme design and implementation. Mr Andrei Brighidin on behalf of EastEurope Foundation highly appreciated the attention allocated in the Programme to Human Rights issues, while Mr Nicolae Panfil, representing the Coalition for Free and fair elections, highlighted the that the organization is very supportive to the work that is planned under the programme aiming at further development of the institutional capacity of the CEC and at improving the quality of the electoral processes. Both expressed their satisfaction with the approach of the Programme and the commitment to coordinate and share the experience with the NGO sector. In

particular, it will be very good to continue cooperation between the Programme and the East Europe Foundation projects for support of grassroots initiatives as both efforts' when combined will supplement each other and bring added value in the processes of achieving the Programme's goals and objectives. Mr Johan Hommes suggested that other stakeholders, in particular, Donors and international organizations working in the area, such as EU, OSCE, the Council of Europe, might be invited to join the Programme Board and/or Steering Committees for the components.

(e) To what extent did the main stakeholders of the project participate in the identification and design stages?

UNDP Moldova ensured that all relevant stakeholders were actively involved in the formulation of the project. The formulation team held extensive consultations with all relevant stakeholders, first of all with the Parliament and the CEC, but also with Donors and CSOs. The process was conducted in a constructive, impartial and transparent way; all relevant proposals received were taken into consideration and incorporated into the project document.

Recommendations/suggestions:

- In the Programme Document to replace SIDA with the Government of Sweden
- To invite for participation in the Programme Board representatives of the EU Delegation, OSCE and the Council of Europe as relevant and strategic partners
- To support efforts for granting the CEC of financial independence as a key issue in ensuring CEC's overall efficiency and effectiveness
- To ensure a better cooperation between the Programme and relevant NGOs
- For the gender and human rights aspects the Programme shall work closely with relevant experts to identify and propose to the implementing partners concrete mechanisms for implementation of gender and human rights policies
- To include into the Steering Committee on the Elections Component Mr. Stefan Uritu, Member of the CEC

5. Decisions

- To introduce the proposed corrections and completions to the Programme Document and Management arrangements, and
- To approve the Programme Document and the Multi-year Work Plan and Budget.

Attachment: Project document

Approved by Aliona Niculita

Officer-in-Charge, UNDP Moldova

