ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE: SPACES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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Abstract

Slightly over two decades ago, Africa reverted to multi party political dispensation after years of single party dictatorship. The struggle that was christened the second liberation began in 1989 following the collapse of the Soviet Union and gained prominence in 1992 when most African countries repealed constitutional provisions that had entrenched single party regimes. Twenty years since the restoration of multi party democracy, the realization of the democratic promises that underpinned the struggle for pluralistic politics is yet to be achieved. This is due to a myriad of reasons including the fact that while the opening of a free democratic space is worth celebrating throughout the continent, this has also ushered in a plethora of challenges to the nascent governance institutions. Hence the last two decades have witnessed increased assistance on democracy programs by various actors in a quest to ameliorate some of the challenges besieging the continent. This paper interrogates democracy assistance to Africa over the last decades. It argues that the impact of this assistance has ambivalent results due to a number of factors which include among others lack of common understanding of what the democratisation project entails, regime types, political and electoral systems in the recipient countries. In cases where contributing countries and or agencies have paid attention to these factors there tends to have been some measure of success. But, where they have used a one size fits all approach, the results of their intervention have added little or no value to the democratisation process. The paper provides suggestions and recommendations on how democracy assistance can effectively contribute to the sustainability of democracy in Africa.
1.0 Introduction

Following the demise of the Cold War in the late 1980 and early 1990s, post-colonial Africa is still faced with many challenges which make its realisation of democratic promises a distant mirage. Put differently, while Africa has without doubt attained the political kingdom by having an open multi party political dispensation, its aspirations for democratic governance are yet to be achieved. This owes to the fact that the continent is marred by intra-state conflicts mainly due to ethnicity and agrarian question, poverty and HIV/AIDS as well as election related disputes to mention but a few. The intra-state conflicts which are often a result of power hungry elites or ethnic groups who want to thrive at the expense of others (Murithi 2006:10) as well as the other ailments mentioned above have warranted the intervention of international donors to provide assistance, also referred to as democracy assistance, which is geared to assist the continent to address its challenges. This generous gesture notwithstanding, it is argued in this paper that the impact of democracy assistance may be affected by lack of common conceptual understanding of the meaning of democracy between the donors and the recipients.

As a result of the foregoing, democracy assistance has produced a mixed bag of results. For instance, where the donor countries and or agencies have been cognizant of factors such as regime types, political and electoral systems in the recipient countries in providing assistance, there have been positive results. Yet, where the contributing countries and agencies have been oblivious of these factors and adopting a one size fits all approach, the results of their intervention have added little or no value to the democratisation process.

Following this introductory section, the paper provides a conceptual entry point focusing on democracy and democracy assistance. This approach is important as it helps to establish whether or not the two parties namely the donor and the recipient have a common understanding of democracy and therefore agree on how best to achieve it. The paper also makes a clear distinction between democracy assistance and electoral assistance so as to assess which of the two has been predominantly rendered. The significance of this is that I will then be able to propose possible constitutional, legal and administrative reforms in order for democracy assistance to be effective and sustainable.
2.0 Current Democracy Assistance

Democracy assistance in Africa has taken the following forms; elections and electoral support, civil society strengthening, women political empowerment among others. These supports have taken direct grant to the recipient NGOs, assistance through international NGOs and Foundations from the donor country, among others.

2.1 Election and Electoral Support.

The essence of democracy assistance in Africa over the last two decades has primarily focused on election assistance. In the past, electoral support has generally taken the form of; development of civic education materials; support to domestic election observation group; deployment of international observers; civic/voter education, procurement of electoral materials among others.

Over reliance on electoral support has generally been premised on the conviction that election is synonymous with democracy. An analysis of past elections in Africa however point to the fact that periodic elections are not by themselves a guarantee for sustainable democracy.

While many countries in Africa have faithfully held elections as provided for in their constitutions and legal framework, electoral outcomes have not translated into sustainable democracy. Indeed in certain instances, electoral results have been used to legitimize authoritarian regimes; examples abound across Africa that vindicate this claim; since the advent of competitive politics, elections in Zimbabwe which are referred to as “a continuation of war of liberation through the polls” by Booysen and Toulou (2009:629) have been manipulated to perpetuate the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) in power. The elections in 2000, 2005 and 2008 elections are classical case in point. the same can be said of Kenya where following the repeal of Section 2A of the Kenyan constitution in 1991 that introduced multi party democracy, the 1992 and 1997 elections did not reflect the aspirations of Kenyans but instead perpetuated the dominance of the incumbent Kenya African National Union (KANU) regime.

To a larger extent, electoral assistance also reflect the general thinking of most development partners which is event/activity based approach. The tendency of this approach is to render assistance to high profile one off events with the potential of wide publicity and coverage. While in the short term such an approach may meet certain set objectives, the spate of literature
suggests that such efforts are not sustainable (Anstey 2006, Otieno 2007, Chiroro 2010). In the run up to the 2006 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for example, huge resources were devoted to support the electoral process as shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Contributions to the DRC electoral process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>Contributions in US $</th>
<th>Support to the electoral process</th>
<th>Support to CEI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRC Government</td>
<td>40,000,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>1,070,438.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>16,746,521.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5,801,377.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>176,403,462.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,016,259.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>12,278,331.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>580,386.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>508,937.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9,066,746.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONUC (logistics)</td>
<td>100,000,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>13,670,771.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>3,210,856.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>49,197.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa (with Denmarks’ financial contribution)</td>
<td>50,000,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>587,266.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>7,340,378.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>704,626.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>20,568,263.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,700,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>269,603,812.20</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>196,700,000.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no gainsaying that in the post election period, the enthusiasm demonstrated by the development partners in the pre-election period in the DRC has simply waned. The consequence of this has been a reversal of gains made during the election as the Eastern DRC is marred with conflict and cross violations of human rights while governance institution are either enfeebled or non-existent at all. The state of affairs in the eastern DRC calls into question the vaunted success and transition since 2006.

Therefore, the significance of elections as a critical element of democracy cannot be overstated. And, preoccupation with elections at the expense of other elements in the democratisation process often defeats the whole purpose of the democratisation project. I have stated elsewhere (Odhiambo Owuor 2009:113) that the fact that elections are almost assured on regular basis does not take away the equally important need to focus on elements that can ensure sustainable democracy. It is axiomatic that, recognising the interests exhibited by development partners and the international community on elections, most ruling elites have reduced elections in Africa to a mere formality which is held not as a means to democratic consolidation, but as a reassurance to the international donors that the country is democratic. The notion that “better a sham election than no election at all has taken the center stage”. Nigeria 2003, 2008, Zimbabwe 2000, 2005, 2008; Kenya 2007, Zanzibar 2005, 2010, Uganda 2011 can be cited as examples.

The stakes that accompany the electoral process especially the cost of winning or losing elections has led to a new development namely electoral and political conflict. Increasingly, electoral conflict is fast emerging in Africa as a new area of conflict and a new manifestation of intra-state conflict. Over the last decade countries in Africa have witnessed electoral violence with far reaching ramifications. Soon after the announcement of results in 2007 general elections, Kenya degenerated into violence of unprecedented proportion that claimed 1300 deaths, over 600,000 displacement and destruction of property of unknown value. Since 2000, elections in Zimbabwe have been marred by serious violence targeting the rural communities that has led to disenfranchisement of many voters. In the recent elections in Nigeria, violence broke out as soon
as President Good luck Jonathan was announced the winner of the elections. The linkage between elections and political violence points to serious problems in terms of democracy assistance in Africa. The 2007 elections in Kenya provided a trigger for deeply entrenched institutional imbalance that had been in existence since 1963 (Khadiagala 2008, Waki Report 2008, Abuya 2009).

2.2 Assistance to Civil Society

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have remained the largest recipients of democracy assistance over the last two decades. In new and emerging democracies, CSOs have been at the forefront of agitating for reforms and increased involvement of the citizens in the governance structures. As non state actors, CSOs, be they Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Trade Unions, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Religious Organisations, have presented alternative voices that have often demanded accountability on the part of the government.

The proliferation of CSOs in most African countries began in the late 80s and early 90s when combined pressure from the various sectors forced the authoritarian regimes to conform to the New World Order following collapse of the Soviet Union. The emergence of the CSOs as alternative voice to challenge single party dominance was necessitated by the fact that most Countries in Africa had outlawed multi party politics thereby making the CSOs the only alternative voice against such regimes. As Carbone rightly reminds us,

“civil society became an appealing concept to all the spectrum of politics. For liberals, they could balance state and business interests, preventing abuses from both sides; for neo-liberals, they were part of the private sector, advancing the cause for a sort of privatization of aid; for the left, they were a promise of the dream of “new politics”, capable of offering the chance of social transformation” (2003:14).

Decades of single party system that majority of the population had accustomed themselves with coupled with raw power ambition that had charaterised the operations of oppositions parties led to disillusionment by the public with political parties which further reinforced the perception that CSOs formed the best means of organizing. Indeed they have also had to step up to the task by undergoing a rapid and profound transition in the manner in which they can ably interact with
other key actors such as government and state institutions on governance matters. This has been most manifest in civil society engagement with institutions such as the regional economic communities (RECs), the Africa Union (AU), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and even the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). These inter-governmental institutions have indeed affirmed non-state actors as key pillars of the nascent democratic process in Africa by including them in the policy development processes (Masterson 2007, Shale 2010). While it is beyond doubt that a key ingredient of a stable democracy is vibrant civil society, the preoccupation with CSOs at the expense of other governance institutions in the past decades has led to unintended consequence of weakening of these institutions. As observed by Ivan Doherty (2001: ), the international community has promoted civic organizations, assisted them, and supported their expansion and development, often building on the ruins of discredited political parties.

2.3 Women Political Empowerment Programs

Women continue to be marginalized and underrepresented in elective and other leadership positions in Africa. The underrepresentation of women in important sectors of society has militated against women empowerment and denied them a critical voice in the development discourse of their countries. While women continue to be underrepresented, the irony is that substantial amount of democracy assistance across Africa since early 90s have been devoted to increasing women participation in elective positions. To a larger extent, programs aimed at enhancing women representation were informed by the development at the international scene that sought to empower redress gender imbalance across the world. Beginning with the Mexico Conference in 1986, and the Beijing Platform for Action 1995, these international conferences succeeded in highlighting gender disparities and made concrete recommendations for redressing gender imbalance. As follow up strategies, international community committed substantial assistance to CSOs and other agencies that were advocating for women empowerment.

Regrettably, the noble initiatives that were being undertaken at the international scene did not effectively trickle down in the domestic plane. A number factors can be advanced to explain this. Firstly, many African countries were moulded on patriarchy that clearly favours the male gender at the expense of female gender. Efforts aimed at advancing the course of women were trivialized and explained as attempts to introduce “foreign” practices that were anti African, (FREDA Report 1999). Secondly, African governments and political parties did not fully commit
operationalising the pronouncements at the international scene. In numerous instances the ruling elites and state owned media were used to spread propaganda and trivialize key recommendations reached during the Beijing Conference. Finally, the top down nature of implementation of the broad commitments reinforced the perception of foreign ideology.

On a positive note however, many countries around Africa have realized the interrelationship between integrating Affirmative Action Policies as a strategy for sustainable development. The nexus between representation and development is premised on the fact that no meaningful development can be achieved when over a half of the population (women) are marginalized. As a result of this realization, countries across Africa have recorded gains in increasing women participation. The broad framework within the SADC of ensuring that women occupy a third of the leadership position as in essence translated into increased women representation. As a result of government policies in Rwanda, the country now boasts as one of the leading countries in the world in terms of women representation. The quota systems in Uganda and in Tanzania have also seen an increase in women representation. The new constitution promulgated in Kenya in 2010 has also made impressive provisions on Affirmative Action which will no doubt enhance women participation. It is imperative to recognize the fact that home grown solutions and initiatives embarked on by the countries cited above resulted into increase numbers of women positions of leadership. Accordingly, democracy assistance should strengthen such initiatives to consolidate the gains made so far.
3.0 Towards A Paradigm Shift: Sustainable Democracy Assistance

As a strategy for consolidating democracy in Africa, a paradigm shift that cut across all sectors should be explored. The initiatives below require urgent attention and address.

3.1 Comprehensive Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Reforms

At independence, most of the constitutions in Africa were negotiated by the colonial powers to pave way and facilitate the attainment of independence. As such the process of constitutional development did not involve the participation and inclusion of the citizens. The post independence period in Africa was characterized by constitutional amendments that were intended to maintain the status quo while at the same time emasculating other organs of state namely the Judiciary and the Legislature. The consequences of the centralization of power in the Executive reduced the other organs as mere appendages.

An analysis of constitutional frameworks in Africa reveal that most African countries adopted representative constitutional democracies (at least on paper). The salient features of representative constitutional democracies include; the supremacy of the constitution vis a viz other laws; clear separation of powers between the organs of state; the rule of law; protection of fundamental rights and liberties and independent Judiciary. Theoretically, these broad provisions exist, however, the extent to which the provisions operate in practical terms is wanting.

Comparatively across Africa, the study of the efficacy of the constitutional and legal framework as an instrument of governance reveal the use of law to secure political advantage and the perpetuation of incumbent regimes in power. The colonial legacy and administration was perpetuated by a legal regime that had been designed to sustain colonial administration. While the struggle for independence was defined by the need to introduce constitutional democracies, the irony is that the independent constitutions retained the very same law that they were fighting against. Laws like detention without trial, public order laws, and preservation of public security laws were retained and used in the immediate post election period to repress dissent.

The need to comprehensively review the countries constitution in a participatory and inclusive manner as well as coming up with a legal framework that is reflective of the aspirations of the
citizens remains a critical opportunity for democracy assistance in Africa. Countries that have successfully introduced comprehensive constitutional reforms have recorded modest gains in the democratic path. For instance, Ghana and South Africa can be cited as best practices in this regard. Conversely, countries with repressive constitutional framework continue to be on the decline.

3.2 **Strengthening the Institutions of Political Parties as a strategy for Deepening Democracy Consolidation.**

As traditional institutions of representative democracy, political parties play a critical role in the overall functioning of democratic governance system. Parties still remain the primary institutional vehicles for political representation, interest aggregation and articulation, and as a constituent mechanism for the formation and organization of government, as well channels for maintaining oversight and demanding accountability from governments (Shale 2010). The quest for multi party political dispensation in Africa was catalysed by the curtailment of fundamental rights and freedoms following the banning of multi party politics by the independent regimes. Due to the existence of single parties, it became increasingly difficult for citizens to organize and mobilize. The difficulty was further exacerbated by detention laws that were invoked to deal with those who challenged the ruling elites. Examples abound in African countries that better illustrate this. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Nigeria, DRC, and Senegal the story is the same.

Despite the critical role that political parties play in a democracy, democracy assistance in the past has predominantly focused on CSOs at the expense of political parties. Substantial amount of resources have been channeled to CSOs to help them mobilize and function well while political parties continue to be neglected. The strategy adopted by many development partners overtime has been to strengthen civil society and only help political parties when some level of development has been attained. The result of this approach has led to weak political parties and strong incumbents which often exploit the weak political party institutions to sustain their hold on power. Strengthening civic organizations, which represent the demand side of the political equation, without providing commensurate assistance to the political organisations that must aggregate the interests of those very groups, ultimately damages the democratic equilibrium (Doherty 2001).
A number of factors can be attributed to weak political party systems 20 years since the restoration of multi party democracy. The challenges occasioned by these weaknesses have lend credence to the fact that parties remain the weakest link in the democratic process. Save for very few exceptions, nationalist and independent political parties that had entrenched themselves for decades transited into the new multi party dispensation with majority contesting elections and winning due to the political environment heavily tilted in their favour; the constitutional and legal framework of most countries also favoured the incumbent regimes, since the restoration of multi party democracy was not accompanied by constitutional reforms that was reflective of the new dispensation; the opposition parties that were registered following the introduction of multi party politics exhibited raw ambition for power thereby casting an impression that political parties were mere vehicles for accessing political power; finally, Political parties lacked sound policy platforms that could be used to articulate and aggregate public interests.

Comparatively across Africa, evidence suggest a direct relationship between political parties, political stability and economic development. The role played by political parties and their strategic position in democratic consolidation cannot be replaced by civil society or other actors. Indeed, examples abound across the world where gains made by strong civil society are at constant jeopardy by weak political party culture. While the fight for reforms in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Ghana, were championed by CSOs, it was not until political parties threw their weight when meaningful gains were realized. In Bangladesh, despite an abundance of advocacy and citizen action groups, the recurring partisan political stalemate consigns the country and its citizens to abject poverty (Doherty 2001).

The consolidation of democracy in Africa must of essence recognize the critical role political parties play and no amount of democracy assistance can translate into meaningful results if political parties are not part of it. Granted, assistance to civil society groups is necessary given the roles that they play, the work of CSOs often grapple with matters that are political for example electoral monitoring and constitutional reforms issues, that are better handled by political parties.
3.3 Decentralization and Devolution

Most governance structures in Africa are centralized and top down in character. It is imperative to mention that this legacy was inherited from the colonial administration. It was however, retained under the justification that, what was needed in Africa was national unity. While the pursuit for more unified states was necessary, given the divide and rule tactics, and ethnic regionalisation, national unity was narrowly defined to mean pulling all resources at the center under the overbearing control of the Executive and the power elites. This contributed substantially to corruption and inequality because resource allocation was premised on political affiliation. The development in the regions was also stifled and rural urban migration became rife.

Devolution and decentralisation are critical to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Democratic governance requires citizen participation and inclusion in the management of their affairs. To this end, devolved system of governance provides a framework for participation of the citizens in their daily affairs. In redressing past inequalities in the regions, devolution must embrace all aspects associated with it and must include political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation to spur growth and development. Democracy assistance will continue to yield no result if this is not adopted.

3.4 Anti Corruption Legislations and Campaign

The greatest vice that militate against development in Africa is corruption. Corruption permeates all forms of society and cut across virtually every country in Africa. There is a direct correlation between political governance and corruption. In Kenya for example, various reports and surveys by the Transparency International and the Center for Governance indicate a direct linkage between corruption and its proximity to political power. Mega scandals among them Goldenberg scandal and Anglo Leasing where the country lost billions of tax payers money were committed ostensibly to finance electoral campaigns. Reports of mega scams are frequently reported in Nigeria every election year.

Democracy assistance must recognize the governance challenges posed by corruption and other malpractices. To effectively defeat the vice, meaningful anti corruption legislations must be enacted and vigorous campaigns to expose the vice initiated. Given the constitutional mandate of
parliament, relevant committees need to be empowered to facilitate the enactment of the statutory framework. Prosecution departments and the department of police must be empowered to bring the culprits to book. Of greatest importance is the nurturing of political goodwill at all levels of society if the anti corruption campaign is to be successful.

3.5 Security Sector and Police Reforms

Owing to years of politicisation of the security sector in Africa, a deliberate focus must be given to the security sector. Since independence the police and the military in Africa has been heavily politicised. Political interference in the security sector manifested itself in two ways. The first was the use of the military to engineer military coups and counter coups and to perpetuate the military administration in power. Africa has had a fair share of military coups and dictatorship. Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Angola, DRC, Mozambique and Ivory Coast are classical examples. In countries that did witness military coups, the police and the army were frequently used to advance the agenda of the ruling elites (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Swaziland) . This was characterised by the use of disproportionate force, extra judicial killings and the general curtailment of freedoms. Democracy assistance should be provided so that substantial reforms is introduced in the security sector to reflect the current democratic realities. Reforms should embody the legal framework, and re-training programs to the police.

3.6 Institutional Strengthening

Democracy assistance must as a matter of necessity focus on strengthening the institutions charged with protection and advancement of democracy. As mentioned, the whittling down of institutions in Africa was occasioned by the need to centralize system of governance which only benefitted the ruling elites. Programs aimed at institutional strengthening and building the capacity of the holders of the various offices will go along way in restoring confidence and trust on these institutions. To this end, efforts aimed at strengthening parliament and especially parliamentary committees to discharge their oversight roles must be promoted. Special emphasis should be laid on the Judiciary. Indeed, one of the main casualties of authoritarian regimes in Africa was the Judiciary. The process of appointment of judges and outright interference with the independence of the Judiciary has been rife. As a result of the Executive meddling in the affairs of the Judiciary, very few people in Africa have confidence in the ability of the Judiciary to
effectively and independently discharge its mandate. In Kenya following the 2007 general elections, one of the aggrieved parties the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) refused to seek redress in Courts and instead opted for mediation by the African Union. Similarly, in 2008, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) of Zimbabwe did not go to court to challenge the run off elections against President Mugabe. Other institutions that should be strengthened include the Electoral Management Bodies, Local Authorities among others.

3.7 Support to Regional and Sub-Regional Integration

Increasingly, regional integration is fast gaining prominence in Africa. Sub-regional agencies like the South African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), Central African Community, and ECOWAS for West Africa have emerged as critical players in socio, economic and political fronts. ECOWAS and SADC have promulgated progressive protocols on governance and democracy in their respective sub-regions that are binding on the member states. During the recent standoff in the Ivory Coast elections, ECOWAS and the African Union took a leading role in the resolution of the dispute. SADC negotiated the Zimbabwe settlement and has continued to monitor progress in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement (GPA). The African Union also played a critical role in the mediation process in Kenya that led to the signing of the National Accord and Reconciliation Act that established the Grand Coalition Government. These developments at the sub-regional level need to be consolidated. Recognizing that EAC and Central African Community are not at the same level of development with the SADC and West African counterparts, special efforts and programs must be introduced in the EAC and Central African Community to spur growth and development and to elevate the two sub-regions to the same level as the other sub-regions in Africa.
4.0 Conclusion

That democracy is superior to authoritarianism is a truism. Africa has made considerable progress towards democracy over the last two decades. Majority of the 53 countries in Africa have embraced multi party democracy and the coups and authoritarian systems that characterize the post independent Africa are on the decline. The challenge however, is to consolidate the democratic gains that have been realized so far. Democracy will have no meaning if the promises of democracy do not translate into tangible benefits to the citizens. To this end the nexus between democracy and development must be explored. Participation in elections and other political processes will have little meaning for hungry electorates. The development in Middle East Countries should be illustrative in this regard. The fact that citizens in Palestine could vote for Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon, both of which were credited with the provision of basic services should send a powerful message on the need to have democracy deliver. The current citizen uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Yemen also serve to underscore the dimension of development to democracy. Consolidation of democracy and rendering democracy assistance will require an almost paradigm shift and a new way of conducting business. The recommendations suggested above are by no means conclusive but will go along way in providing the useful first step. It is encouraging to note that in some countries, such processes are already underway. Special efforts are needed to sustain such efforts and explore ways of initiating them in countries that are yet to embark on them.
References


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