

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

Providing electoral assistance to Member States is one of the key functions of the **Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)**. As the UN Focal Point for electoral assistance, DPPA ensures coordination and coherence across the UN system in responding to Member States' requests, including working closely with other entities, in particular the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

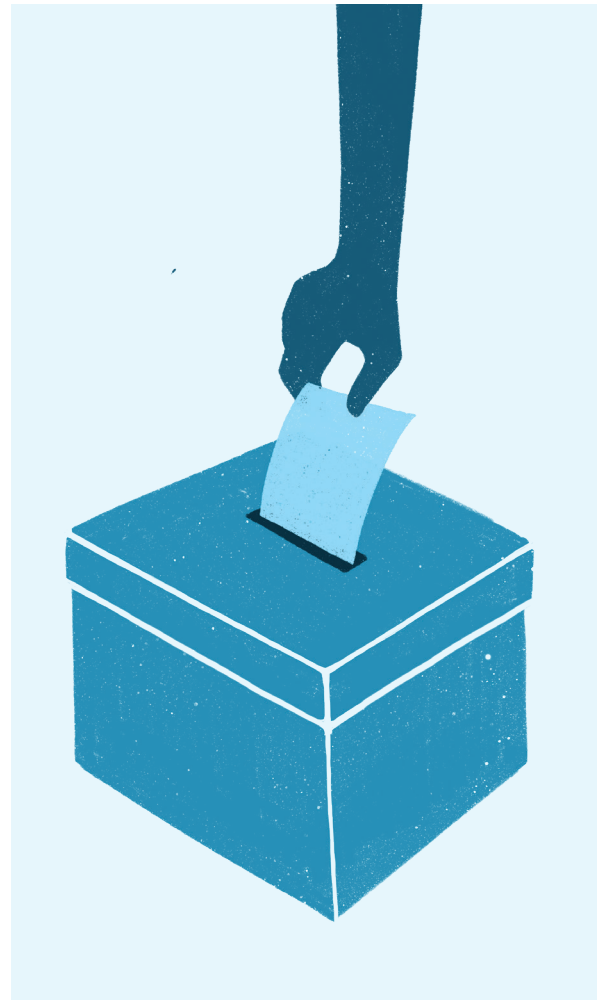
The Department mobilizes voluntary contributions from Member States through its Multi-Year (MYA), which calls for \$135 million for 2020 to 2022. MYA resources have enabled and strengthened the UN and DPPA's capacity to respond to electoral requests in a timely and efficient manner.

DPPA ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE WORK

In a given year, DPPA's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) supports over 50 Member States. The most common form of UN electoral support remains technical assistance to national election authorities and institutions. Upon request, DPPA deploys experts and staff members to conduct electoral advisory and needs assessment missions. Examples made possible in 2019 thanks to MYA funding:

- **Papua New Guinea:** Support provided for the successful conduct of a crucial referendum on the political status of Bougainville, with the deployment of specialized and complementary technical assistance to support the Bougainville Referendum Commission;
- **Uzbekistan:** Electoral assistance provided for the elections of December 2019 through technical advice on electoral procedures, training, and voter education specifically targeting women, youth, persons with disabilities and other under-represented groups;
- **Malawi and Moldova:** UN efforts focused on supporting national efforts to promote the participation of women, which contributed to an increase in the number of women parliamentarians elected in 2019.

In 2019 alone, MYA funding facilitated the deployment of over 70 electoral missions.



PREVENTIVE APPROACHES AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

Electoral assistance works best when it is part of a broader approach to promoting peace and stability. DPPA often combines technical electoral assistance with political engagement such as mediation and good offices at national and regional levels. Examples made possible in 2019 thanks to MYA funding:

- **Nigeria:** Electoral expertise provided to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, during the pre-election period to prevent violence and promote peaceful elections;
- **Guinea Bissau, Solomon Islands and Afghanistan:** Electoral support combined with good offices to mediate political challenges and create a conducive environment for peaceful elections;
- **Bolivia:** Immediate deployment of electoral advisers to support the UN Country Team's (UNCT) efforts to promote peaceful elections and dialogue.

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL CAPACITY

Since 2016, DPPA/EAD has conducted 15 electoral trainings for seven regional and sub-regional organizations, benefitting more than 400 participants (about half of them women) from 100 Member States. These trainings are organized in cooperation with UNDP, UN Women and UNCTs on the ground. They have enhanced the electoral capacity of Member States and regional organizations, created networks among electoral officials and institutions in various regions and promoted South-South and Triangular cooperation.

In 2019 alone, DPPA/EAD trained over 90 participants (around half of them women) from 30 Member States on election observation, gender and elections, media and elections, and prevention of electoral violence.

WOMEN/GENDER EQUALITY IN ELECTIONS

Despite some improvements in recent years, progress on women's representation in elected and appointed positions continues to be slow. As of 1 January 2020, at the global level, only 24.5 per cent of members of parliament, 7.2 per cent of Heads of State and 5.2 per cent of Heads of Government were women. Promoting the participation of women in electoral and political processes is a key priority in UN electoral assistance activities. All electoral needs assessment reports now include analysis and specific recommendations on gender.

- **El Salvador:** Technical advice provided on women's political participation during the 2019 presidential election and helped raise awareness on violence against women during elections;
- **Guinea-Bissau:** Support provided to national authorities in drafting and adopting a gender parity law that required at least 36 per cent of women on party lists during the 2019 parliamentary elections;
- **Arab Network for Women in Elections:** Supported the establishment of this voluntary network composed of officials from electoral management bodies, CSOs and women's organizations to encourage full and meaningful inclusion of women in electoral and political processes in the Arab region.

PRIORITIES FOR 2020

- Coordinate and provide UN electoral support in over 50 Member States;
- Deploy 70 to 80 electoral missions to various parts of the world to provide timely and efficient support to Member States upon their request;
- Establish new electoral partnerships and strengthen existing ones with regional and inter-governmental organizations in conflict prevention efforts, gender and elections and peacemaking;
- Organize a first forum for electoral officials of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to provide a venue for sharing experiences and good practices on key electoral matters;
- Co-organize regional trainings with the Pacific Island Forum and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for their respective Member States on key electoral topics, including gender and elections.