

ALMOST 3,000 PROJECT PROPOSALS COMPETE FOR UNDEF FUNDING



UNDEF received 2,868 project proposals for its Sixth Round of Funding by the deadline of New Year's Eve 2011 – the second highest number in the history of the Fund. The project proposals originated from applicants in 138 countries, the vast majority being local civil society organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The proposals are now being assessed by independent consultants, a process in which each proposal will be judged on its inherent quality and scored against 10 set criteria:

- Does the proposed project advance the objectives of UNDEF?
- Does the applicant organization have a strong track record?
- Is the proposal technically sound in conception and presentation?
- Does the proposal make use of the UN's and UNDEF's comparative advantage?
- Would the proposed project have significant impact?
- Would the proposed project represent good value for money?
- Does the proposed project have strong prospects for successful implementation?
- Does the proposed project have strong prospects of sustainability beyond the project duration?
- Does the proposed project encourage inclusiveness?
- Would the proposed project enhance gender equality?

Because of the large number of proposals, the assessment process will be highly rigorous and competitive. In the following stage, a long list will be reviewed by the UNDEF Programme Consultative Group – comprising the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the UN Development Programme, UN Women and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. This will result in a short list to be reviewed by the UNDEF Advisory Board and ultimately submitted to the Secretary-General for approval.

Only those who advance to the short list will be contacted by UNDEF. This is expected to be in mid-2011, at which stage, short-listed applicants will be required to compose a draft project document to be negotiated with UNDEF – the final stage of the selection process.

In its first five Rounds of Funding, UNDEF supported more than 400 projects in over 150 countries. They all reflect a focus on strengthening the voice of civil society, ranging from exchanging electoral best practices and empowering marginalized communities to conducting training in new media and establishing grassroots schools for democracy.

IN THIS ISSUE

INSIDE UNDEF

Almost 3,000 proposals	1
New Advisory Board	2
Jeffrey Wright profile	2

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

African Charter	3
Africa electoral principles	3
Education électorale au Congo	3
Women's leadership school in Georgia	4
Media clinic in Central Asia	4
Women village leaders in India	5
Governance in Bangladesh Hill Tracts	5
Training women in China	6
Dialogue in Asia-Pacific	6

WORTH READING

Ban Ki-moon on Arab transition	7
Pakistan directory	7
India and UN parliament	7
Big Issue in Lagos	8
Nigeria procurement manual	8
Convention against corruption	8

INSIDE UNDEF

NEW ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTED FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM



The Secretary-General has finalized the composition of the new UNDEF Advisory Board -- the body which gives him policy guidance and recommends funding proposals for his approval. The Board is appointed for a period of two years and includes the Governments of the seven largest UNDEF donors as measured by cumulative contributions received 2009-2011: the United States, India, Sweden, Germany, Australia, Spain and France; and six Member States reflecting geographical diversity and commitment to democratic principles: Jamaica, Lithuania, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Uruguay.

The Board also includes three individual members: Michael Doyle, Professor of International Affairs, Law and Political Science at Columbia University and former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Planning, who remains as Chair of the Board; Shazia Rafi (Pakistan), Secretary-General of Parliamentarians for Global Action, a non-partisan international network of over 1,300 elected legislators from 131 countries. The network aims to promote peace, democracy, the rule of law, human rights



Michael Doyle



Shazia Rafi

and sustainable development. Ms. Shazia is an eloquent voice on all these issues and would contribute a welcome connection between UNDEF and parliamentarians around the world; Jeffrey Wright (USA), actor and founder of the Taia Peace Foundation

The Board includes two civil society organizations chosen for their expertise beyond a single country: Third World Network, an independent, international network of organizations and individuals working for the rights of peoples in the Global South, a fair distribution of world resources, and forms of development which are ecologically sustainable and answer to human needs; and WEDO, the Women's Environment and Development Organization, which works to ensure that women's rights, social, economic and environmental justice, and sustainable development principles -- as well as the linkages between them -- are at the heart of global and national policies, programmes and practices.



PRACTITIONER PROFILE: JEFFREY WRIGHT

UNDEF is delighted that Jeffrey Wright has accepted the Secretary-General's invitation to serve on the UNDEF Advisory Board for 2012-13. An award-winning US film, television, and stage actor acclaimed for his versatility, with roles in productions ranging from James Bond movies and Angels in America to the recent political thriller Ides of March and the Academy Award-nominated Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close, Mr. Wright is also the co-founder and chair of Taia Peace Foundation, which works to empower rural communities in Africa, especially in Sierra Leone. Mr. Wright has raised considerable awareness of the importance of community empowerment as a basis for lasting peace in post-conflict environments. As community development constitutes a leading share of UNDEF projects, Mr. Wright is well-positioned to support and advise UNDEF's work. "I value the Fund's mandate as it relates to linking local or traditional rural civil society into the wider democratic process," said Mr. Wright on his appointment. "My work in Sierra Leone through Taia has sensitized me to challenges around achieving the measurable ground-level impact requisite to stabilization and democratization. As UNDEF recognizes those challenges too, it is my intent to help bolster its capacity to address them and also to achieve other of the Fund's objectives."

The next issue of UNDEF Update will profile Board member Shazia Rafi.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD



AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY ENTER INTO FORCE WITH UNDEF BACKING

With UNDEF support, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance has now been ratified by 15 nations – a milestone which means the Charter will now enter into force.

To take effect, the Charter requires at least 15 Member States to sign and ratify. On 16 January 2012, Cameroon became the 15th country to deposit its instrument of ratification with the African Union Commission. As per Article 48 of the Charter, it will enter into force on 15 February, 2012.

For the past two years, UNDEF has financed an initiative by South African civil society organizations to build constituencies of support for the Charter, create national movements

as well as international solidarity to promote dialogue and awareness. When the project began, only two countries had ratified the document. The campaign, which is coordinated by IDASA, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, will now continue to seek the support of all Members of the African Union to ratify and implement the Charter.



UNDEF PROJECT LAUNCHES GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ELECTIONS IN AFRICA

A new set of guiding principles for free, fair and transparent elections in Africa was launched in Accra, Ghana, on the International Day of Democracy as part of a project made possible by UNDEF. The document, known as the Accra Principles for Electoral Justice, was presented on 15 September by the Association of African Election Authorities in conjunction with Tiri, an organization pioneering institutional and organizational integrity. The event formed part of an UNDEF-funded initiative in Africa to strengthen integrity standards of the electoral process, advance political accountability, build trust among key stakeholders, and improve the credibility of electoral decisions..

LES CLUBS D'ACTION EN RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO



En République Démocratique du Congo, le FNUD soutient un projet qui promeut la démocratie participative par la création de clubs d'action démocratique. Le projet est mis en œuvre par l'Organisation Paix, Unité, Réconciliation, Reconstruction, OPURR. Grâce au financement du FNUD, OPURR a été retenue pour faire la sensibilisation et l'éducation électorale durant les élections présidentielles et législatives de novembre 2011 en RDC. Les Clubs d'Action Démocratique ont été implantés à travers la ville de Kinshasa, pour renforcer les capacités des communautés dans l'exercice

de leurs droits politiques et socio-économiques. Le projet a aussi organisé des sessions de «formation de multiplicateurs». Le but est de former des acteurs de la société civile ainsi que des leaders de communautés sur la démocratie participative, les techniques de mobilisation sociale et de plaidoyer. Les personnes formées serviront à multiplier ces formations en les transmettant dans leurs milieux de résidence. Ils opéreront également en tant que mobilisateurs de proximité dans leurs communautés, afin de construire et renforcer la culture démocratique et citoyenne en RDC.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

FIRST UNDEF-FUNDED WOMEN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL LAUNCHED IN GEORGIA

The first UNDEF-funded Women Leadership School – one of four planned worldwide – was launched by the Women's Democracy Network in Tbilisi, Georgia on 27-29 January. The 25 participants, aged 19 to 35, include journalists, political party activists, university students and civil society representatives. A student mentor from the group was selected to help conduct the next Georgia session in the next few months in Kutaisi, providing an immediate opportunity to use the leadership skills she learned during the January training. The other three UNDEF-funded Women Leadership Schools will be in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Guatemala. Through a unique leadership development curriculum, the programme will build the capacity of women to participate in the democratic political development and governance of their countries.



UNDEF SUPPORTS NEW MEDIA CLINIC IN CENTRAL ASIA



In Central Asia, NGOs and independent media often have nowhere to turn for support on new media technology, with little or no in-house knowledge and commercial alternatives that are far too expensive. That's why UNDEF funds a new media clinic in the region. A new group of Central Asian journalists and NGO workers just completed a two-month training programme, which is run by TOL and focuses on using social media for advancing organizations' content and causes, as well as managing and maintaining websites in general. The programme included a basic course on managing websites built on the Wordpress platform, so that even a non-techie can easily set up and run a well-functioning site. Around 20 participants attended twice-weekly meetings in Bishkek; others took part via distance learning.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

WOMEN LEARN TO LEAD LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN INDIA



An UNDEF-funded project in Rajasthan, India, completed its work in 2011 to strengthen the leadership of women elected to Gram Panchayats, or village councils. The initiative, run by the Hunger Project, provided training to more than 2,000 elected women and raised the profile of women's political leadership by engaging with the Ministry of Rural Development, media, the state election commission, and

civil society. In addition to strengthening the knowledge and confidence of elected women, the programme addressed practical concerns, misinformation, and women's legal rights. As a result of the project, the participation of elected women in village council meetings has increased, as have joint initiatives on issues such as health, water, sanitation, education, violence, accountability and corruption.



BUILDING BETTER GOVERNANCE IN THE HILL TRACTS OF BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, UNDEF funds an initiative to advance pro-poor and democratic governance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The project works in over 200 villages to step up interaction between organizations of poor tribal peoples and local government administration. It recently held a series of activities in the districts of Baghaichari, Rangamati and Kaptai, including courtyard capacity building sessions on democracy and good governance; sharing sessions between villagers and field staff; advocacy facilitation; group work presentation; baseline survey sessions; and social mapping. Because the Chittagong Hill Tracts are governed by dual administrations -- the Ministries for Local Government and for Hill Tracts -- there is often confusion over roles and responsibilities, as well as disputes over rights, resources and services, especially for the poor. The initiative is implemented by Green Hill, a non-partisan local NGO based in the area.



NEWS FROM THE FIELD



TRAINING WOMEN TO LEAD IN RURAL CHINA

A task force formed to support China's rural women's participation in local politics convened in Shaanxi province in November 2011, as part of an UNDEF-funded project to empower women in areas where patriarchal values still dominate village governance. The group brought together representatives from Shaanxi, Heilongjiang and Hebei as well as Huazhong Normal University to discuss strategies and best practices. A few weeks earlier, the project held extensive training sessions in survey and interviewing techniques in Heilongjiang Province. The overall UNDEF-funded initiative engages marginalized rural women in village-level governance and helps raise their awareness of democratic participation; seeks to mobilize them to participate in village elections; strengthens their decision-making skills; and trains them to monitor public affairs at the village level. The project is implemented by Women's Watch China, a local NGO. It is one of three projects funded by UNDEF in China.



NURTURING DIALOGUE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

In parts of the Asia-Pacific region, traditional systems of representative democracy continue to face serious challenges. Citizens in some countries are increasingly disillusioned with their governments – citing problems of lack of legitimacy, transparency and accountability. There appears to be a deep and widening chasm between the governing and the governed, leading to mutual mistrust and inadequate opportunities for meaningful dialogue, negotiation and collaboration.

This is why UNDEF supports a project in the Asia-Pacific region to improve the quality of interactions between citizens and the state, by developing and testing a training module and establishing a regional civic education practitioners' network. The project, DG Dialogue, a flagship programme of DG Bridge, is implemented by the Australian Electoral Commission. In 2011 the organizers held a national workshop in Kathmandu to

customize dialogue, followed by the trialling of new democratic governance activities in remote Doti District, northwest Nepal. The project has also held training sessions and workshops in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere, drawing participants from many other countries throughout the region.

The programme works to bring together citizens and government representatives into a shared and "safe" space; support opportunities for joint reflection and learning; mediate conflict and building trust; guide and facilitate dialogue and joint action planning; support the ongoing implementation of concrete collective actions, and create an ever-expanding pool of trained local facilitators to support processes of democratic dialogue in the long-term.



WORTH READING



ARAB WORLD: BAN KI-MOON HIGHLIGHTS UNDEF ROLE IN TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

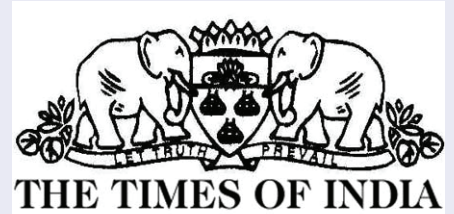
'Looking to the future, we know that business as usual, business as it has always been done, will no longer suffice. As I begin my second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I want to emphasize that the United Nations will be always here for you and with you. We are firmly committed to help Arab countries through this transition, by every means... The United Nations Democracy Fund is helping to strengthen civil society. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations and UNDP are working together to support free and fair elections. This is just a small sample of what we at the United Nations are doing; the United Nations system is fully engaged, the United Nations and its staff are dedicated to your future.'

-From the Secretary-General's keynote address to a high-level meeting on reform and transitions to democracy in Beirut on 15 January

PAKISTAN: UNDEF PROJECT BRIDGES DEMOCRACY GAP



An UNDEF-funded [online directory](#) of parliamentary committees and NGOs was launched by PILDAT to bridge the divide between Pakistan's Parliament and civil society. It will serve as a resource tool for Parliament to facilitate the use of professional research sources in addressing issues relevant to the Committees. Linking parliament and parliamentary committees with civil society organizations -- including professional bodies, research and advocacy groups -- are essential in providing an independent view from society about issues under consideration. This is even more essential in Pakistan, where Parliament and parliamentary committees have limited in-house research capacity. The linkages will also help civil society organizations put their perspectives to the parliamentary committees and thus further the causes they are working for.



INDIA: AS LEADING UNDEF FUNDER, NEW DELHI IS URGED TO BUILD UN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

An [op-ed article](#) in The Times of India, highlighting India's support for UNDEF, argues that India should work to establish a global parliamentary assembly at the UN. "India itself is a laboratory for democracy on a large scale and thus can offer its extensive experience in building a workable UN Parliamentary Assembly," the piece notes, adding: "It is also the second largest contributor to the UN Democracy Fund". The purpose of a parliamentary assembly at the UN, the writer argues, would be to facilitate policy on genuinely global matters. Its democratic and representative nature, vesting it with unprecedented legitimacy, would ensure that it acts as a unifying force at the global level and does not become just another white elephant in the UN system.



WORTH READING



THE BIG ISSUE HITS THE STREETS OF LAGOS WITH UNDEF BACKING

The Big Issue Lagos, a new and pioneering Nigerian street magazine funded by UNDEF, was launched in November 2011. It is part of an UNDEF-supported project in six African countries to use street papers to advance local democracy and employment. The initiative is implemented by the International Network of Street Papers.



NIGERIA: UNDEF FUNDS MANUAL TO MONITOR PROCUREMENT



An UNDEF project in Nigeria has launched **facilitator's manual** for procurement monitoring, as part of an overall initiative for civil society to effectively observe and monitor public procurement, help legislative committees carry out their procurement oversight functions, and educate procuring entities and selected business organizations on the basic provisions of Nigeria's Public Procurement Act. The project is implemented by the Public and Private Development Centre. The project is implemented by Transparency International.

UNDEF-FUNDED REPORTS ASSESS COUNTRIES' PROGRESS TO COMPLY WITH UN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION

The UNCAC Coalition, a group of civil society organizations monitoring how countries are implementing the UN Convention against Corruption, has published a series of **reports** evaluating review processes and compliance with Convention standards in specific countries. The reports form part of an UNDEF-funded project to strengthen civil society's role in monitoring corruption. The reports cover Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Lithuania, Mongolia, Morocco, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam and Zambia.



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