



UN Volunteer Ferdinand Koanari (right), serving with UNDP to provide electoral support in Burkina Faso, inspects electoral supplies delivered for the elections in the city of Sebba. (UNV Burkina Faso, 2016)

Strengthening democratic societies through transparent and peaceful elections

On average, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides electoral assistance to about 60 countries a year, taking a partnership approach and working closely with the UN Electoral Assistance Division of the Department for Political Affairs and other global, regional and country level partners. The strategy commonly involves the mobilisation of UN Volunteers and countless local volunteers who support communities and governmental institutions in the process.

Democratic elections provide a crucial opportunity for citizens to shape their governing structures and freely chose the leaders that will lead the nation on their behalf. The [United](#)

[Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP) promotes credible and inclusive elections by supporting countries to establish independent electoral bodies and prevent electoral conflict and violence. UNV offers support in this area through its experience mobilizing UN Volunteers for electoral processes in [Timor-Leste](#), [Mali](#), Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and, most recently, [Kenya](#).

UNV has the capacity to rapidly mobilize qualified volunteers to support the organization of electoral processes by creating, designing and tailoring mixed teams of international and national UN Volunteers to handle various training, community mobilization, technical and logistical arrangements to ensure free elections.

UNV provides a solid roster of qualified UN Volunteers for electoral support, cleared by the [UN Electoral Assistance Division of the Department for Political Affairs](#), and is the only United Nations entity capable of mobilizing large numbers of highly qualified volunteers to serve the UN system in developing and war-torn countries around the world—offering support where it is needed most.

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Skilled UN Volunteers provide trusted and valued support in UNDP’s electoral programmes. By applying culturally-sensitive approaches, they motivate community volunteers to participate, generating a sense of ownership that fosters inclusive and peaceful elections.”

—Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator

Ensuring peaceful elections in Kenya

During the 2017 General Elections in Kenya, [12 UN Volunteer peace coordinators](#) were on the ground serving with UNDP to collaborate with a team of more than 200 peace and cohesion monitors across the country to support the national electoral process. They were serving as strategic linkages for national and regional electoral institutions, coordinating the

recruitment, training and mentoring of local and community volunteers over several months, and creating linkages for Early Warning SMS systems between the community structures and the response agencies to minimize impacts in the event of demonstrations or violence.

UN Volunteers in Kenya are also supporting County Peace and Cohesion Forums and ensuring that Peace Structures at the county, sub-county, ward and village-levels are established and constituted respecting the County Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Strategies put into place.

Providing electoral assistance in Lebanon

In 2016, a team of 12 national UN Volunteers served with the UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project (LEAP), providing information on the voting process, and answering calls through a hotline set up to service the population in the lead up to elections in the country.

“As a UN Volunteer, I assisted the Lebanese citizens by answering their questions and concerns about the elections,” says Rim Mroue, national UN Volunteer who supported UNDP’s LEAP project. “I encourage everyone, especially youth, to volunteer. It’s an experience not to miss – it builds character and strengthens one’s capabilities, and makes you feel like you’re making a positive difference for the people of your country.”

Increasing youth participation in Liberia

Five national UN Volunteers are supporting the UNDP “Enhancing Youth Participation in the 2017 Legislative and Presidential Electoral Process” project in Liberia as UNV Youth and Election Regional Coordinators. Their role is to get young women and men involved in the electoral process, building their capacity and skills to monitor, prevent and mitigate violence during and after the elections, and to ensure timely and quality reports and communication about the results, including best practices and lessons learnt.

Following the 2017 elections, the five UN Volunteers will submit reports and recommendations to the National Elections Commission, contributing to changes and improvements in national legislation, and potentially improving the quality of future elections.

Supporting elections in Burkina Faso

Following the October 2014 unrest in Burkina Faso, UNDP developed an Electoral Support Project to provide technical support to the organization of free and transparent elections. In collaboration with UNV, UNDP deployed 14 international UN Volunteers and 48 national UN Volunteers. These [UN Volunteers supported participation in the elections](#) in all regions of the country, including remote locations with difficult access.

With volunteer support, the Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante (the national independent electoral commission) and all its administrative levels managed to organize free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections. Furthermore, UN Volunteers laid the groundwork for future elections by collaborating with the Commission Électorale Communale Indépendante (independent local electoral commission) to create a national polling staff database.

In 2017, over 1,600 UN Volunteers are serving with UNDP in more than 100 countries around the world. Every year, over 6,500 UN Volunteers serve with UN entities in some of the most challenging environments across the world, and 12,000 UN Online Volunteers complete over 20,000 assignments online through the UNV Online Volunteering service.

 **Sub-Saharan Africa**

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Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions](#)